

PhD in Public Health Sciences

Student Handbook

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Department of Public Health Sciences

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Disclaimer: This Handbook describes the program, policies, and practices of the UNC Charlotte PhD program in Public Health Sciences. In the event of a conflict between this document and University documents on any issue, University documents shall have precedence.

Who is Covered by the Requirements Given in this Handbook: All applicants to the PHS PhD program and current program students are governed by the policies described in this Handbook.

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UNC Charlotte Public Health Science Programs

Mission of the UNC Charlotte Public Health Programs

The UNC Charlotte Public Health Programs represent the CEPH unit of accreditation as a public health program (The Program) within the Department of Public Health Sciences. The Program includes the MSPH, BSPH, and PhD Degree programs. Our related undergraduate minor and graduate certificate programs are reviewed by CEPH, but are not part of our unit of accreditation.

Program Mission, Values, and Goals

The Program Mission and Goals statement reflects the consensus of our faculty and internal and external stakeholders. Our Public Health Programs mission supports and reinforces the mission of the Department, College, and University, and is likewise supported by the mission of its constituent degree programs. The values are embodied in our curricula and the manner in which students, alumni, and stakeholders are engaged in ensuring the continuing evolution of the public health programs.

The Public Health Programs at UNC Charlotte produce practitioner-scholars and leaders prepared to promote and improve human health across the lifespan; to support the optimal organization and management of healthcare locally, nationally, and internationally; and to deliver efficient, effective, and accessible high quality health services, particularly to vulnerable populations.

The Public Health Programs values professional and academic integrity and ethics, collegiality, engagement with the community, and responsiveness and innovation in its pursuit of attaining the highest possible standard of health and well-being.

The UNC Charlotte Public Health Programs implements its mission through a set of complementary and reinforcing instructional, research, service, and diversity goals. These goals then provide the framework for defining, assessing, and evaluating students and the curricula.

The PhD in Public Health Sciences

Public health is a broad field encompassing many disciplines, activities, and stakeholders, and is focused on serving entire populations from communities, cities, and counties, to states and nations. As early as 1920 public health was defined as “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health and efficiency through organized community effort” (Turnock, 2004), and more recently as “fulfilling society’s interest in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy” (also Turnock citing IOM). Public health encompasses research in social and behavioral health factors, epidemiology, environmental and occupational health, biostatistics, and health policy. These five core areas form the basis for public health research and practice and are required teaching for any accredited public health school or program. Currently, the PhD in Public Health Sciences offers a single concentration in behavioral sciences.

The PhD program in Public Health Sciences is designed to prepare students to work with researchers, clinicians and community partners in addressing public health problems from a multidisciplinary perspective. Emphasis in the program is in research methods including statistical analysis, survey design and scale development; and professional skills relating to ethics, research conduct and teaching. Students choose a formal concentration with required courses and then an individualized specialty content area comprised of elective courses.

Administratively located in the Department of Public Health Sciences (<http://www.publichealth.uncc.edu>), the PhD in Public Health Sciences is interdisciplinary, consistent with the nature of public health. This approach allows the PHS PhD Program to incorporate multiple perspectives and draw on the strengths of scholars from diverse disciplines. The PhD Program in public health sciences is primarily designed for full-time students. Part-time students will be admitted based on discussion and approval by the Program Director and the Executive Committee.

Graduates of the PhD Program in Public Health Sciences will be prepared for employment as researchers and academic scholars in various settings, including colleges and universities, federal and state governmental agencies, public health organizations, health care organizations and advocacy organizations.

Mission of the Doctoral Program in Public Health Sciences

The focus of the PhD in Public Health Sciences is to train researchers and professionals with skills essential to address contemporary public health problems at the individual, community and population level, with an emphasis on health determinants related to the prevention and management of disease and disability among diverse and vulnerable populations. Working with the community in multidisciplinary teams to understand and develop programs that address the broad social-ecological factors that influence health behavior and thus health outcomes is the primary emphasis of this doctoral degree.

The program has goals in three areas: instructional, research, and service which are inherent in the field of public health.

- Goal 1 (instructional): prepare graduates with analytical skills to conduct research on population health factors in a variety of public health and community settings;
- Goal 2 (instructional): prepare independent scientists and scholars with focused writing skills to obtain appropriate research funding and to write for publication;
- Goal 3 (research): prepare graduates to design, conduct, and analyze concentration specific research relating to public health using advanced quantitative and qualitative methods;
- Goal 4 (service): prepare independent scientists and scholars with communication and methodological skills necessary to advance and disseminate public health knowledge to community/lay, practitioner, academic, and scientific audiences; and

- Goal 5 (service): instill graduates with enthusiasm for interdisciplinary collaboration and solid principles necessary to engage in culturally competent and ethically sound research practices with all participants and colleagues.

Core Competency Goals of the PhD Program in Public Health Sciences

Graduates from the PhD Program in Public Health Sciences will encompass eight core knowledge and skill competencies common to all doctorally-trained public health research professionals. The PhD in Public Health Sciences with a concentration in Behavioral Sciences focuses on training doctoral level researchers in the discipline of health behavioral research as it relates to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of disease and disability. The framework underlying the outcomes and competencies of this behavioral training is largely adopted from the American Academy of Health Behavior (AAHB) outcomes of doctoral level training (American Academy of Health Behavior Work Group on Doctoral Research Training, 2005). However, there is considerable overlap between the AAHB and the American Schools and Programs in Public Health (ASPPH) DrPH competency development project model (ASPH, 2009). These 8 outcomes guide doctoral training in Public Health Sciences in the Department of Public Health Sciences. They determine the breadth and depth of knowledge that students must obtain to graduate with a doctoral degree, regardless of their area of concentration.

Doctorally trained researchers from our programs will:

1. Possess substantive knowledge of the field (concentration specific)
2. Think theoretically and critically
3. Frame significant research questions
4. Establish research partnerships with the community [and other researchers]
5. Design research
6. Collect and analyze data
7. Communicate with various audiences about research
8. Model professional and ethical conduct

PhD Core Competency Outcomes

These 8 outcomes form the core competencies that guide the planned and future doctoral level training programs established in the Department of Public Health Sciences. These competencies are consistent with the goals and objectives of our CEPH accreditation (Council for Education in Public Health). The 8 outcomes are expanded into 56 competencies that PHS PhD graduates will demonstrate during their coursework, research and teaching experiences, fieldwork, and dissertation.

1. Possess Knowledge of the Field
 - a) Describe the historical foundations of public health, health behavior, health promotion, and health education
 - b) Apply major and emerging theories of health behavior within the context of a social ecological framework

- c) Describe how culture and health behaviors influence health disparities
 - d) Describe the research on risk and protective factors associated with the major sources of human morbidity and mortality
 - e) Discuss the outcomes of major preventive interventions
 - f) Discuss major controversies in public health policy
2. Think Critically and Theoretically
- a) Distinguish conceptual or analytic issues from empirical issues
 - b) Understand different theoretical perspectives and what each illuminates and obscures
 - c) Read broadly, in other fields, seeking connections that are not at first obvious
 - d) Explain problems in the field using theory
 - e) Produce a synthesis of the research literature on a topic
 - f) Compare different ways of knowing
 - g) Compare across research methods and allied philosophical traditions
3. Frame Significant Questions
- a) Demonstrate expert knowledge of the research literature on a topic
 - b) Identify knowledge gaps of public health significance
 - c) Identify the inadequacies in existing measurement instruments and procedures that need to be challenged
 - d) Specify causal processes
 - e) Formulate clear research questions
 - f) Formulate a testable hypothesis or hypotheses
 - g) Identify critical elements of a research problem
4. Partner with the Community
- a) Build trusting relationships with people and groups in the community (broadly defined) who work on a health problem and have been affected by it
 - b) Understand how the profession and its research is viewed in the community
 - c) Connect one's research to the work of practitioners and community members in the field
 - d) Collaborate with other disciplines in the community
 - e) Build upon strengths and resources in the community
 - f) Ground research questions in practice, reflective of the needs of and priorities of the community, as well as theory
 - g) Engage communities as partners in the research process
 - h) Communicate research findings in ways that lay people can understand
5. Identify Appropriate Methods of Inquiry
- a) Identify threats to validity in quantitative and qualitative designs
 - b) Align researchable problems with appropriate methods of inquiry
 - c) Identify useful sources of data
 - d) Identify novel approaches to address research questions
 - e) Explain the advantages and disadvantages of different sampling strategies
 - f) Identify independent and dependent variables when appropriate

- g) Articulate the strengths and weaknesses of various methods of inquiry, including those selected for use in an investigation

6. Collect and Analyze Data

- a) Develop standardized research protocols for primary data collection in the field using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods
- b) Assemble secondary data from existing public and private sources to address research questions
- c) Understand methods of analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data
- d) Develop quantitative measures to assess theoretical constructs
- e) Develop psychometrically sound quantitative measurement tools
- f) Select statistical tests based on data structure and statistical assumptions
- g) Use appropriate analytical methods to clarify associations between variables and to delineate causal inferences
- h) Develop proficiency in using various statistical software packages
- i) Interpret quantitative and qualitative data

7. Communicate Research

- a) Understand characteristics of different audiences
- b) Gain experience with different genres and forms of dissemination (e.g. dissertation, empirical article, conceptual analysis, press release)
- c) Write precisely and plainly for technical and general audiences
- d) Present oral research effectively in professional and public forums
- e) Present findings to community members that are culturally appropriate

8. Model Professional and Ethical Conduct

- a) Demonstrate/understand the parameters of professional practice
- b) Apply principles of responsible conduct of research (RCR)
- c) Develop research protocols and materials that protect the privacy of individuals and communities involved in health research
- d) Demonstrate cultural sensitivity in ethical discourse and analysis
- e) Understand issues of individual autonomy versus protection of public welfare in designing and conducting health research
- f) Work in collaborative multi-disciplinary teams
- g) Demonstrate teaching skills and experience

The Concentration in Behavioral Science

Public health by its very nature is interdisciplinary to include scientists, practitioners, and community partners from a broad spectrum of disciplines and organizations working together to improve the populations' health. As more and more health problems are recognized as stemming from social issues such as poverty and crime and as the prevention and treatment of those problems becomes the responsibility of the individual as well as the community, the need for trained researchers in the social and behavioral sciences with a public health focus becomes even more critical (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006). Virtually every health issue in the US has a behavioral component whether viewed from the level of either the individual,

family, health care provider, or the larger health care system.

The ability to address social and behavioral factors across multiple levels requires a breadth and depth of methodological skills, which include basic quantitative approaches as well as qualitative techniques. An increasing focus of public health social and behavioral research is on community-based, participatory research (CBPR), acknowledging the need to have community participants establish public health priorities and approaches to developing and testing solutions to health problems (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). Multiple institutes within the National Institutes of Health have program announcements to solicit CBPR proposals.

The concentration in Behavioral Sciences emphasizes investigation of health determinants related to the prevention and management of disease and disability among diverse and vulnerable populations in the United States. Working with the community in multidisciplinary teams to understand and develop programs that address the broad social-ecological factors that influence health behavior and thus health outcomes is the primary emphasis of this concentration. Coursework for the PhD in Public Health Sciences with a concentration in behavioral sciences has a dual emphasis on qualitative and quantitative methods, and the development, application, and measurement of theory to understand the social and cultural factors that influence health behavior. Graduates are prepared to work in academia, conduct large-scale behavioral research projects, or work in government or health-related venues.

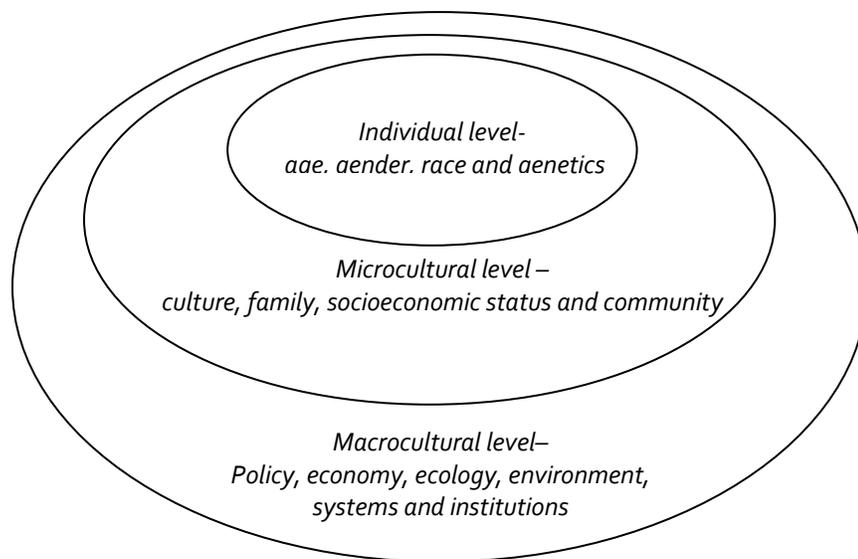
Behavioral Sciences Overview

As one of the core areas of public health, the behavioral sciences focus on understanding and influencing the social determinants that affect health behavior within populations, societies and communities. Medicine is concerned with individuals and uses a biomedical approach to heal patients who have disease “...public health regards the community as its patient. ...Public health focuses on preventing illness.”(Schneider, 2006). As in other fields, public health researchers and practitioners use a biopsychosocial approach to health and illness. The *population* focus of public health, however, distinguishes the aims of public health activities and research from other disciplines, and spans across institutions, communities, geography and culture in an effort to improve human health. Thus, public health researchers and faculty come from diverse backgrounds in medicine, psychology, sociology, nursing, anthropology, geography, gerontology, and economics.

The behavioral sciences concentration is guided by the social ecological model (McElroy & Jezewski, 2000). An emphasis on behavioral sciences encompasses more than just examining individual health behaviors related to disease to include social determinants of health including: family structure (marriage, divorce, childbearing), the environment (air quality, built environment, workplace, neighborhood), changes in policy (Medicare prescription benefit or welfare to work programs), and changes in social conditions (increased crime, literacy, immigration) (Braveman, Egerter, & Mockenhaupt, 2011; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006). These interactions occur at multiple levels of the ecological model (see Figure 1): individual, microcultural and macrocultural (McElroy & Jezewski, 2000). Research and knowledge about behavioral influences on health and illness must necessarily examine the multiple social contexts and interactions that can influence an individual’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Examining the multilevel causes of disease to improve health and prevent illness is at

the forefront of our nation's strategy to improve population health (Mabry, Olster, Morgan, & Abrams, 2008).

Figure 1. Analytic domains in the experience of health and illness (Note: Redrawn and modified from McElroy and Jezewski, 2000.)



References

- Braveman, Egerter, & Mockenhaupt, 2011
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006).
Mabry, Olster, Morgan, & Abrams, 2008
McElroy & Jezewski, 2000
Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003).
Schneider, 2006)

Admission Criteria and Application Requirements

Applications to the PHS PhD program must be submitted through an online available through the website of the Graduate School at UNC Charlotte (graduateschool.uncc.edu). The website includes general admission requirements. All applications must be submitted on-line. Applicants should review the requirements thoroughly before applying.

Priority Application Deadline: January 10

For fullest consideration of admission and financial awards applications need to be completed by January 10. This deadline is especially important for applicants who want to be considered for assistantships or for fellowship opportunities.

Final Application Deadline: March 15

Applications completed after January 10 but by March 15 will be reviewed and decisions regarding admission made on a space-available basis. Consideration for assistantships will be made based on availability.

Admission Requirements

In addition to the general requirements for admission to the graduate school, the following are required for admission to the PhD Program in Public Health Sciences:

1. Master's degree in public health or a related field with a minimum GPA of 3.5 (A=4.0) in all graduate work.
2. Competitive GRE scores taken within the past 5 years:
3. TOEFL if the previous degree was from a country where English is not the official language: Minimum score of 83 (Internet based), 220 (computer-based test) or 557 (paper-based test).
4. A statement of purpose in which the applicant details why she/he wants to pursue a PhD in Public Health with a concentration in Behavioral Sciences at UNC Charlotte.
5. Three letters of recommendation; at least two letters from former professors familiar with the applicant's graduate work.
6. Have completed a CEPH (Council on Education for Public Health) accredited Master's degree in public health. Students who have not completed a Master's degree in public health may be required to take additional courses as determined by the PhD Review Committee upon review of current CEPH requirements. Such courses will be specified at the time of admission into the program. (see below Pre-Requisite Course Work.)

Credit Transfer

To obtain approval to receive transfer credit, the student must submit an *Application for Transfer of Credit into a Graduate Degree Program* form (available on the Graduate School web site), approved by the PHS PhD Program Director, to the Dean of the Graduate School. If the courses being transferred are from another institution, the student must include an **official** copy of the transcript along with the request. **The University is not obligated to accept any courses for transfer credit. No more than six semester hours of transfer credit will be considered for acceptance into the PHS PhD program.** Undergraduate courses are not transferable for graduate credit. Graduate courses that appear in the undergraduate section of a transcript are

only transferable if the Registrar of the institution where the credit was received can verify in writing that the graduate courses in question were not counted toward the student's undergraduate degree requirements. The grade in any course accepted for transferred credit must be "A" or "B" as defined by UNC Charlotte. Courses that have been graded on a Pass/No Credit or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis will not be accepted for transfer. Although the credit for a course may transfer, the grade will not be used to calculate the graduate GPA at UNC Charlotte. Courses accepted for transfer are subject to the same time limitation as courses taken in residence. To be considered for transferred credit, the courses must have been undertaken at a regionally accredited institution. Courses in which credit is accepted must be clearly relevant to the PHS PhD curriculum.

The UNC Charlotte Graduate School stipulates that students may transfer up to 30 credits of coursework from another doctoral program at a regionally accredited university, upon approval of the PhD Program Director. Credit for dissertation research cannot be transferred.

This PhD program limits master's level transfer credits to at most 6 credits; those 6 credits only apply toward Specialty Content courses, the Ethics Seminar (HLTH 8601), or the Measurement course (HLTH 8281). The PhD Program Director, in conjunction with Program Faculty, approves graduate level transfer credits. Students must apply for transfer of graduate levels courses within the first year of enrollment, or within one semester following completion of the course if taken during the PhD program. Only courses in which the student earned a grade of B or above (or its equivalent) may be transferred.

Courses taken to fulfill the master's level prerequisite public health courses do not count toward the 63 credit total.

Pre-requisite Course Work

Students who graduated with a master's degree from a CEPH accredited program or school are assumed to have met the required prerequisite foundation courses. Students entering with a master's degree in a field other than public health must complete the Required Prerequisite Foundation courses in Public Health in the first year of starting the program in consultation with the PhD Director and/or Advisor. These prerequisite foundation course credits do not count toward the 63 semester credit hours required for the PhD.

Required Prerequisite Foundation courses in Public Health (9 credits)

HLTH 6200	Introduction to Public Health
HLTH 6202	Community Epidemiology (introductory epidemiology)
HLTH 6203	Public Health Data Analysis (introductory biostatistics)

Advising, Coursework, Enrollment and Requirements

Academic Advising

All course selections require the approval of the PHS PhD Program Director as the student's academic advisor.

During the first year of full-time study or two years of part-time study, students are expected to begin to narrow the focus of their research interest to an area of proposed dissertation study. Each student will typically identify a Dissertation Committee Chair during the second year of full-time study. Once the Dissertation Committee Chair is selected, she or he becomes the student's academic advisor for the remainder of the program. The Dissertation Chair will advise the student in her or his area of specialization, guide the student in recommending additional courses relevant to the planned dissertation. The Dissertation Chair also will guide the student in the selection of additional dissertation committee members. Note that dissertation advisors must be members of the PhD in Public Health Sciences Program Faculty or members of the Affiliate the PhD in Public Health Sciences Faculty with a Program Faculty member as co-chair of the dissertation committee.

Course Requirements and Options

The PhD in Public Health Sciences consists of 63 post Master's degree credit hours including five major areas:

1. Core public health courses in methods (15 credits)
2. Professional seminars (9 credits)
2. Concentration courses (12 credits) – currently only the Behavioral Sciences concentration is available
3. Specialty content focus (9 credits)
4. Dissertation (18 credits)

As defined in the Graduate Catalog, a semester course load totaling nine credit hours is considered full-time. Doctoral-level courses are considerably more time-consuming than most courses at the master's level, and doctoral students should also typically be involved in conducting research in collaboration with faculty. Students should not register for more than 10 credit hours in a given semester. A course load less than nine hours is considered part-time.

Required courses in the PhD curriculum include the following.

Core Public Health Courses: Methods (15 credits)

HLTH 8201	Introduction to Quantitative Research Design (3)
HLTH 8270	Applied Biostatistics: Regression (3)
HLTH 8271	Applied Biostatistics: Multivariate (3)

HLTH 8281	Measurement and Scale Development (3)
HLTH 8282	Health Survey Design and Research (3)

Core Public Health Courses: Professional Seminars (9 credits)

HLTH 8601	Ethics in the Public Health Profession (3)
HLTH 8602	Communicating and Disseminating Research (3)
HLTH 8603	Teaching Portfolio (3)

Concentration Courses- Behavioral Sciences (12 credits)

HLTH 8220	Theories and Interventions in Behavioral Science (3)
HLTH 8221	Theory Generation in Behavioral Sciences (3)
HLTH 8222	Theory Generation and Analysis in Behavioral Sciences (3)
HLTH 8223	Social Determinants of Health (3)

Specialty Content Courses (9 credits)

Specialty content areas are developed in consultation with the doctoral student's advisor and make use of expertise and course offerings on the UNC Charlotte campus. Specialty content areas can focus on a specific population (e.g. older adults/gerontology or maternal and child health (MCH)), a health issue (e.g., AIDS), or approach (e.g., psychology). A specialty content area should cover literature related to: health and social policy issues, epidemiology of a health condition/population, relevant theories or approaches related to the condition/population, and/or current topics in the area. Coursework in the specialty content focus must be at the 6000-8000 level.

Behavioral Science Concentration:

Students may select one of the areas listed below to provide depth in a chosen area of special interest:

- Aging/long-term care
- Chronic disease management
- Health disparities
- Health promotion
- Maternal and child health
- Mental health
- Research methods

Students may define an area of interest not listed pending approval of the Program Director, Dissertation Committee Chair/faculty advisor, and other faculty as needed. A student may also select another relevant area of interest, providing it can be fulfilled with existing graduate courses or through independent study courses with PHS PhD faculty.

Dissertation (18 Credits)

The doctoral program of study must include 18 hours of research credit including dissertation credit. The doctoral candidate must be continuously enrolled in dissertation credit hours until the semester of graduation. Students can register for dissertation credits beginning with the semester in which the comprehensive exam will be taken.

Other Requirements

All newly admitted doctoral students are required to enroll in the online non-credit course, GRAD 8990 - Academic Integrity. This course is administered by the Graduate School. Students must successfully complete this course prior to registering for the next semester.

Directed Study Courses (Independent Study)

There are no specific limitations imposed by the Graduate School on the number of directed study credits for a PhD student. Students considering more than a total of 6 credits of directed study should consult with the Program Director. In general, students may not take a directed study class to satisfy a required course. Students should consult with the PHS Program Director if there is some circumstance that warrants this course of action. The Program Director must approve all independent study courses taken to fulfill requirements of the PHS PhD program.

Graduate Certificate Opportunities

With careful course selection, students can also earn a Graduate Certificate in a specialty area, often with few or no additional courses. Graduate certificates are available in Gerontology, Communication Studies, Applied Ethics, Emergency Management, Gender Sexuality & Women's Studies and Healthcare Information Technology. Please consult the Graduate School website for more information (graduateschool.uncc.edu).

Enrollment Requirements

Grade Requirement for Continued Enrollment

Students must maintain a minimum, cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (A=4.0) in all course work taken in the program. An accumulation of two C grades will result in suspension of enrollment in the doctoral program.

A grade of U or NC constitutes an automatic termination of enrollment.

Students who do not pass the qualifying comprehensive exam, the dissertation proposal defense, or the final dissertation defense are automatically terminated from the program.

Limit on Enrollment in the PhD Program

All work listed on the student's Application to Candidacy form offered for the PhD in Public Health Sciences, including any transferred credit, must be completed within an **eight year** period beginning with the first doctoral course in which the student is registered.

Continuous Registration Requirement

From the Graduate Catalog: Students in graduate degree programs are required to maintain continuous registration (fall and spring semesters) for thesis, dissertation, project, or directed study until work is completed. Students are not required to enroll in any summer term unless they are using campus facilities or they are completing degree requirements in that term. Students using University resources should enroll in the number of graduate credit hours that best reflects the amount of resources being used (typically three (3) or more graduate credit hours). The continuous registration requirement begins with the semester in which the student first registers for his/her thesis, dissertation, project, or directed study.

GRAD 9999 (Doctoral Graduate Residency Credit) has no fees associated with it (only tuition) and is only a one credit. This course meets Graduate School requirement for continuous enrollment during final term prior to graduation when all degree requirements (including dissertation) have been completed. This course is non-graded, and credit for this course does not count toward the degree. It may be repeated once. Doctoral students that are not using University resources and have already defended their dissertation – but have yet to graduate – can register for 1 credit hour of GRAD 9999.

If students are going to have an active dissertation committee and use University resources doctoral students are to continue to enroll in 3 dissertation credit hours even though they have completed the 18 dissertation credit hours.

Leave of Absence from the 2013-2014 Graduate School Catalogue: Current students who are not enrolled and are not using University resources may apply for a leave of absence. Students choosing this option must file a Graduate Academic Petition for a leave of absence that states they will not use University resources during the leave period. If the leave of absence extends beyond one calendar year, the student's matriculation is closed and the student must re-apply for active status in the graduate program. International students on F-1 visa/status must remain continuously enrolled until the thesis, dissertation, project or directed study is completed. Those international students who wish to apply for a leave of absence are advised to consult with the International Student/Scholar Office prior to filing the Graduate Academic Petition for leave of absence. Students experiencing a medical emergency should contact the Dean of Students Office. Students with questions about the leave of absence option can contact the Center for Graduate Life

Students must be enrolled during the term (semester or summer) in which they graduate from the University.

Academic Standards, Progress, and Graduation Requirements

UNC Charlotte requires that graduate students maintain academic standards as outlined in the Graduate School Bulletin.

Graduate students must average at least B (3.0 on a 4 point system) over all courses attempted as part of the requirements to qualify to receive a graduate degree.

Complied with relevant university policies and procedure including Candidacy and Diploma. The timely application and payments of fees for candidacy and for the diploma (See Graduate school website for specific deadlines and fees

Useful websites are listed below

Application for degree: http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/gs_forms.html/
https://selfservice.uncc.edu/pls/BANPROD/twbkwbis.P_GenMenu?name=homepage

Application for candidacy form:

<http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/CAND%20DEG%209%2002.pdf>

Accumulated Low Grades

Doctoral studies typically require excellence in academic performance. A student earning a large number of “B” grades as a doctoral student should recognize that this may indicate questionable preparation for the dissertation, and may be viewed negatively by some potential employers—particularly colleges and universities. A total of two C grades or a single grade of U results in suspension. A suspended student may not register for classes unless approved for reinstatement. If the program reinstates a student, a subsequent grade of C or U will result in immediate dismissal from the program. If a program does not approve reinstatement, the student is dismissed from the program. (Note that even a single C grade is unexpected in doctoral study; it is unlikely that the PHS PhD program will consider reinstating a student in this situation in the absence of unusual extenuating circumstances.)

Program Progress

Doctoral students and candidates are evaluated annually to ensure that they are making sufficient progress to complete the degree in a timely manner. This evaluation is especially important during the dissertation process when students have less programmatic interaction and structure as they work more independently conducting their dissertation research. Each year students will complete a checklist of scholarly activities and submit their curriculum vitae accompanied by a formal cover letter highlighting significant academic accomplishments and progress toward the degree. These materials will be submitted to the student’s dissertation Chair or Advisor and then forwarded to the PHS PhD Program Director. All materials are due by March 1.

Time Limits for Completion:

- Students must pass all sections of the comprehensive exam within 1 year of finishing their required course work.
- Students may not defend their dissertation proposal before passing all components of the comprehensive exam.
- Students must pass their dissertation proposal defense within 6 months of passing the comprehensive exam.
- Students must pass their dissertation defense within 5 years of the proposal defense, but not later than the end of their 8th year following matriculation as a doctoral student.
- Students must complete their degree, including the dissertation, within 8 years of first registering as a doctoral student.

Deadlines for Form Submission

Deadlines for submission of various forms, such as for Admission to Candidacy and Application for Graduation in a particular semester, are available in the Academic Calendar, <http://www.registrar.uncc.edu/calendar.asp>. Students should note that dates for submission of candidacy forms and applications for graduation occur very early in each semester; for May graduation, for example, the date for the Application for Graduation and the final date for the Application for Candidacy typically occurs in the 3rd week of January. The Application for Candidacy for a Degree and the Application for Candidacy for Graduate Certificate forms are paper forms that are available from the “Graduate School Forms” page of the Graduate School Website at: http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/gs_forms.html. Similarly, the last day to file a dissertation with the Graduate School for May graduation typically occurs no later than the 3rd

week of March. See the Academic Calendar for exact dates that apply for a given semester.

Residency Requirement

The student must satisfy the UNC Charlotte continuous residency requirement for the program by completing 21 credit hours. Residency is considered to be continuous if the student is enrolled in one or more courses in successive semesters until 21 hours are earned. Continuous enrollment in fall and spring semesters is adequate for the purpose of establishing continuous residency.

The purpose of the residency requirement is to ensure that doctoral students benefit from and contribute to a broad array of educational and professional opportunities provided on the UNC Charlotte campus. When establishing residency, it is expected that the student will interact regularly with faculty and peers by regularly participating in courses, seminar series, and actively use the library and other facilities, including laboratories, available for graduate education.

Graduation

During the semester before the PhD candidate expects to receive the degree, the candidate will review his/her academic record and progress on the dissertation with the chair of his/her dissertation committee. If the chair of the dissertation committee agrees that all work on the dissertation, including the defense, is likely to be successfully completed by the end of the following semester, the candidate will complete the *Application for Degree* form on Banner Self Service. The candidate will then be billed by Student Accounts for the Application for Degree fee. Graduation announcements may be ordered through the campus bookstore. Caps, gowns, and hoods may be either rented or purchased through the bookstore.

The student signs the form and submits it to the advisor, who verifies that the listed courses fulfill the requirements for the degree. Once all signatures are in place, this constitutes an agreement between the student and the University, guaranteeing that the student will receive the degree if the listed courses are completed satisfactorily. For this reason, the form *must* be completed well in advance of graduation; otherwise graduation may be delayed.

Comprehensive Examination and Dissertation

Comprehensive Examination

Summary of Steps

The comprehensive exam includes a written and an oral component and serves as the qualifying exam. As detailed more fully in the *Public Health Sciences Ph.D. Student Handbook*, all PhD students must pass a comprehensive exam after completing the core methods, concentration, and specialty content courses, and prior to the dissertation proposal defense, typically after year two of the program. Students must take the exam within 12 months of finishing all of the required coursework. To sit for this examination, the student must have at least a 3.0 GPA and must have removed any conditions upon admission.

The comprehensive exam is offered twice per year, and all students sit for the exam at one of these two times. The exam consists of three sections: 1) Concentration; 2) Methods; and 3) Specialty Content area. The oral exam provides an opportunity for the student to further elaborate on written exam responses and demonstrate mastery of the core competencies. The Chair of the comprehensive qualifying exam committee will be a member of the PhD Program Faculty. The written exam takes place during a one week period, followed by an oral examination within three weeks. The first two sections of the written exam follows an in-class format, while the specialty content section is in the form of a take-home exam customized for each student. Students are recommended to meet with their specialty content faculty to develop a content reading list from which questions are drawn. Students may not defend their dissertation proposal until they have successfully passed all components of the comprehensive exam.

Grading the comprehensive exam

The overall written and oral exam outcome is graded as honors, pass, or fail. Each exam component is graded honors pass, pass, conditional pass, or fail. Only one component can be graded a conditional pass and the student still receive an overall pass on the exam. A conditional pass will require additional coursework or creation of scholarly products, as determined by the committee and completed within 6 months. Students passing the exam and receiving an honors pass on two or more of the components are considered to have passed with honors. If students fail one or more components of the exam, the failed components can be retaken only once. The entire exam can be retaken only once; this option is solely at the discretion of the Exam Committee.

The Dissertation Process

The dissertation is an original research project conceived, conducted, analyzed, and interpreted by the student to demonstrate expertise in her/his concentration and chosen specialty area as it relates to public health. The research must make a distinct, original contribution to the field of public health research. Students cannot register for dissertation credits until they have passed their comprehensive examination. Students must complete a minimum of 18 credit hours of

dissertation research activity. Per University policy, students must be continuously enrolled in dissertation credit hours beginning with the semester after the dissertation topic proposal is approved, through and including the semester of graduation.

Note regarding forms: the forms described below are required by the Graduate School. So that the PHS PhD program has a complete record of each student's progress, each form should be submitted to the PHS PhD Program Director. A copy of each form will be included in the student's program file. The PHS PhD Program Director will forward the original forms to the Graduate School.

Definition of the Doctoral Dissertation

An appropriate dissertation provides an *original* and *significant contribution* to public health research within the candidate's chosen field of concentration as judged by the candidate's doctoral dissertation committee. The dissertation is the culminating research experience of the PHS PhD program.

"Original contribution" implies that the body of work undertaken and intellectual contribution of the research is the candidate's own. It is expected that the candidate will be an expert in the contributions of other scholars to provide a foundation for his or her original research.

"Significant contribution" implies that the result of the dissertation scholarship notably advances a useful area of public health research as judged by peer scholars. The most meaningful criterion in this regard is that the research is judged by the committee to be appropriate for submission in at least one or two manuscripts to scholarly peer-reviewed journals.

It is our expectation that doctoral candidates will be able to demonstrate competent application of theory and research methods that are appropriate to the research question in the area of study; research methods include qualitative or quantitative methods, or mixed methods.

Selecting a Dissertation Chair

The student should select a dissertation Chair, who must be a member of the PhD Program Faculty or a Doctoral Affiliate Faculty member as a co-chair with a program faculty member. The selection and/or invitation of a dissertation Chair should be discussed in consultation with the Program Director and/or faculty advisor. The dissertation Chair will guide the student in formulating their dissertation committee and through the dissertation process. Chairs must be familiar with PHS PhD policies and procedures, and must have content or methods expertise to contribute to the dissertation research. Students must work with their Chair to identify other potential committee members who will provide relevant expertise to the dissertation research project. Having identified a Chair who agrees to serve in that role, the student should work closely with the Chair on identifying other committee members, and should approach other faculty about serving on the committee only after consulting with the Chair.

Forming a Doctoral Committee

The dissertation committee consists of at least 5 members. All members must have a Graduate Faculty appointment at UNC Charlotte. The committee membership constellation can be one of the following:

- a) Chair from PHS and has served on doctoral committee with a graduated student, at least

one other PhD faculty from PHS, two additional faculty members, and the appointed Graduate School representative.

- b) At least 3 PhD faculty from PHS department, one other faculty, and the appointed Graduate School representative.

Members from the larger university and professional practice community are encouraged but not required. The committee guides the student in refining the dissertation topic, the development and defense of the dissertation proposal, ensuring scientific rigor of the research, conducting the dissertation research, writing the dissertation, and the dissertation defense. Committee members should reflect content, theory and methods expertise needed for the student to complete the research.

Experts outside the university who can contribute usefully to the dissertation committee can also be nominated for participation. This requires: (1) adjunct faculty status in one of the departments of the College of Health and Human Services, (2) admission to the UNC Charlotte Graduate Faculty, and (3) admission to the PHS PhD Participating Faculty. It should be noted that the approval processes just described can take several months; students who want to involve an outside expert should plan accordingly.

Form: Once the committee members have been finalized, the student submits the form, “*Appointment of Doctoral Committee*” to Graduate School after obtaining the signatures of each member. At that time, the Graduate School appoints the 5th member.

Writing the Dissertation Proposal

The student in conjunction with the dissertation committee will agree on the dissertation topic. It is also at this time that students will indicate their preferred dissertation format – either the “traditional” 5 chapter model, or the 3 manuscript model. The dissertation proposal for both options consists three chapters: (1) introduction to the problem including the importance of the problem, significance of the proposed research, the research question and hypotheses; (2) conceptual model and literature review; and (3) a detailed methods section including sampling, recruitment, measures, data analysis, and limitations.

With the guidance of the Dissertation Chair, students work with each committee member individually to develop the scope and direction of the dissertation. Students provide the overall idea for the dissertation including major concepts to be investigated, measures to be used, and strategy for primary or secondary data analysis. Committee members work with students to establish the rationale for the project, refine the scope and ensure feasibility of the dissertation research project.

Defending the Dissertation Proposal

Students, with the permission of the Chair, will schedule their proposal defense. The proposal defense is an open session presentation to the student’s dissertation committee and PHS department students and faculty. Committee members must receive the final dissertation proposal at least 2 weeks prior to the proposal defense date. Students will make a 20-30 minute presentation summarizing the research proposal. The audience will ask questions, and after the student has responded to their questions, they will be excused. Committee members will then ask questions about the proposed research plan. The student will be excused from the meeting to

permit the committee to discuss the merits of the proposal, after which the student will return to the meeting to receive the committee's comments and any required modifications to the research plan. Successful defense of the dissertation proposal advances the student to doctoral candidacy. Approval of the dissertation proposal constitutes a contract between the student and the committee. *Any substantive change in scope, research questions or hypotheses, analytic approach or format, requires the full agreement of the committee and could necessitate another proposal defense.*

The overall written and oral proposal defense outcome is graded as honors, pass, or fail. Each proposal chapter/paper is graded honors pass, pass, conditional pass, or fail. Only one proposal chapter/paper can be graded a conditional pass and the student still receive an overall pass on the exam. A conditional pass will require additional substantive revisions, as determined by the committee and completed within 6 months. Students passing the exam and receiving an honors pass on two or more of the proposal chapters/papers are considered to have passed with honors. If students fail one or more proposal chapters/papers of the proposal defense, the failed chapter/paper can be re-defended only once. The entire proposal can be re-defended only once; this option is solely at the discretion of the Dissertation Committee.

Candidacy

The dissertation topic may be proposed after the student has passed the qualifying examination. The dissertation topic proposal must be defended at a meeting of the student's advisory/dissertation committee. A written dissertation proposal must be submitted to the dissertation committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. A doctoral student advances to candidacy after the dissertation proposal has been approved by the student's dissertation committee and the Graduate School. Candidacy must be achieved at least six months before the degree is conferred.

Members of the committee are physically present at the Proposal Defense. The Graduate School provides for one exception only for a single committee member who may participate remotely via audio- or videoconferencing, where the latter is preferred. Remote participation requires the form, "*Approval of Remote Committee Participation.*" All conditions listed on the form must be fulfilled.

A student who fails to complete the Dissertation Proposal Defense satisfactorily may be given the opportunity to revise components of the research proposal under the direction of the Chair and/or to repeat the Proposal Defense, at the discretion of the Dissertation Committee; a second failure results in dismissal from the PhD program.

Forms: After successful completion of the Oral Proposal Defense, the student submits three forms, "*Graduate School Petition for Topic Approval*", "*Report of Comprehensive exam or Qualifying exam (Doctoral)*" and "*Application for Admission to Candidacy*". Remote participation of one committee member requires the form, "*Approval of Remote Committee Participation.*"

Human Subjects Considerations

If human subjects will be used in the dissertation research, the Petition for Topic Approval requires the attachment of the IRB approval. Students are expected to work closely with their

Dissertation Chair to prepare and revise the required IRB documents, forms, consents and protocols. All dissertation-related materials must comply with ethical review guidelines current at the time of review. Students are required to submit all required documents for review and receive formal approval prior to beginning any research involving human subjects.

Conducting the Dissertation Research

Students will plan, conduct, analyze, and interpret an original research project as described in the research proposal. Regardless of whether students collect primary data or analyze secondary data, they must follow all applicable protocols for Human Subjects Protection.

Writing the Dissertation

The dissertation is a substantive product documenting the student's original research, findings, and conclusion. The standard format is a 5 chapter model: Introduction including background and significance; conceptual model and literature review; methods; results; discussion and conclusion. Students may also follow the 'three paper or manuscript' format, which consists of: an introductory chapter that outlines the area of research and the manuscripts that follow, followed by three complete publishable manuscripts, and concluded with an integrating/synthesizing chapter that emphasizes findings and themes across the papers and research and practice implications. Students are encouraged to work with their dissertation Chair as a primary reader, sharing multiple drafts of individual chapters. Students should work with their committee members as methods and content experts in reviewing drafts of the dissertation chapters.

While the student writes the dissertation, s/he is required to maintain continuous enrollment in HLTH 8901 for dissertation study until the dissertation is completed. The continuous enrollment requirement begins in the semester after the dissertation proposal is approved. Students conducting dissertation research should meet regularly with their committee Chair and other members of the committee. At a minimum, the student must meet with the committee Chair at least once each semester.

The traditional dissertation has a five-chapter format:

Chapter One: Introduction: A relatively brief statement of the topic, its importance to the field of public health and its significance in terms of the contribution that it will make to the literature.

Chapter Two: Literature Review: A thorough review of all literature relevant to the topic. This should include any theories or conceptual models that have been applied. The literature review should be focused on developing hypotheses to be tested and/or research questions to be addressed; the chapter should conclude with the hypotheses and/or questions. The conceptual framework driving the research should be described and diagrammed.

Chapter Three: Methods. A description of all methods to be used to complete the research. All variables should be described. The analysis approach, qualitative or quantitative, should be described, as well as how the hypotheses and/or research questions will be addressed.

Chapter Four: Results. All results should be presented. Descriptive findings are usually

presented first, followed by bivariate, and then multivariate. Results can also be organized by hypotheses and/or research questions.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations. This chapter should include a brief summary of the findings, a discussion of the results with respect to the literature that was previously reviewed, the strengths and limitations of the research, a discussion of the implications of the research for policy and practice, and suggestions for future study.

Separate manuscript format:

Chapter One: Introduction, as described above.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will be replaced by three manuscripts. Each manuscript must be complete and prepared for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Typically, the focus of the three manuscripts are a combination of the following: (a) the literature synthesis equivalent to Chapter 2; (b) the conceptual model and theory development; (c) presentation of a new methodological approach as developed and used in the research; (d) an overview of methods and findings related to research aims; or (e) the in-depth presentation of the methods and findings related to the main aim. Each manuscript includes a title page, abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion sections, as well as references, and tables/figures. Appendices to the manuscripts may provide additional detail.

A final chapter must be included, briefly summarizing in reasonable detail the dissertation findings as presented across the manuscripts, and discussing implications for public health policy and practice, as well research extensions. The specific final format of the dissertation will be determined by the dissertation committee.

Forms: When the chair of the dissertation committee agrees that all work on the dissertation, including the defense, is likely to be completed successfully, the candidate completes the “*Application for Degree*” and submits it to the Graduate School. The application is submitted through Banner Self Service. See the section, “Deadlines for Form Submission,” below.

Defending the Dissertation

Each candidate must pass a final examination over the contents of the dissertation. Sometimes called the "dissertation defense" or the "dissertation oral," this meeting is open to all members of the University community and must be announced to campus. The announcement of the final defense can be disseminated through the Academic Affairs listserv, *Campus News*, or the posting of flyers on campus. The announcement of the dissertation defense should include identification of the student's full name, the date of the defense, the location of the defense, the time of the defense, the title of the dissertation, the name of the Chair of the dissertation committee, and a brief Abstract of the dissertation. No student is permitted to take the final examination more than twice.

The dissertation defense is scheduled when the dissertation Chair and the student concur that the student has a final product that meets with initial committee member approval. The dissertation defense is a public research presentation open to the UNC Charlotte academic community. The student makes a formal presentation of the research, the findings, the results, and the

interpretation and implications. Non-committee, audience members may ask questions. When these questions are concluded, the audience will be excused, and the committee members will engage in asking questions. When all questions have been put forth, the student will be excused and the committee will make its determination. The outcome of the exam is pass or fail. A passing evaluation might include conditions for revisions prior to the final acceptance of the dissertation. A failing evaluation results in the student's dismissal from the program. The Final Examination on the dissertation research, commonly called the Dissertation Defense, is the culminating activity of doctoral studies. Typically the dissertation chair and committee should not schedule the defense until they are reasonably confident that the dissertation is likely to be approved, either as-is or with relatively minor revisions. The Graduate School requires that the dissertation must be submitted to the committee **at least three weeks** before the date of the final examination in which the dissertation is defended.

The student also must inform the PHS PhD Program Director of the final dissertation title, and the place and time of the scheduled final examination, at least 3 weeks before the final examination. The final examination is open to the university community.

Forms: All members of the committee must usually be physically present at the Dissertation Defense. The Graduate School provides for one exception only, for a single committee member who may participate remotely via audio- or videoconferencing. Remote participation requires the form, *Approval of Remote Committee Participation*. All conditions listed on the form must be fulfilled.

In some instances the dissertation committee may not approve the dissertation at the time of the first defense. In keeping with the Graduate School's regulations, no student is permitted to take the final examination more than twice.

Guidelines for the preparation of the dissertation are available from the Graduate School and on the Graduate School website.

Along with the accepted dissertation, the student files the form, "*Dissertation Defense Report for Doctoral Candidates*." This form requires the signatures of the entire dissertation committee, and should be completed at the conclusion of the successful dissertation defense.

The physical form of the dissertation is governed by the University. Dissertations must conform to required margins, paper type, and so forth, in order to be accepted by the Graduate School. The student should consult these resources at The Graduate School early in the dissertation process: *Manual of Basic Requirements for Theses and Dissertations* (July 2008), and also *Thesis/Dissertation Manual Sample Pages*.

The Graduate School requires publication of the dissertation on microfilm and in *Dissertation Abstracts International* by University Microfilms International of Ann Arbor, Michigan. The student is responsible for paying the microfilming and optional copyrighting fees. Any other arrangements for publications of the dissertation must not interfere with publication by University Microfilms International.

Support Opportunities for PhD Students

Graduate Assistantship

The Benefits of a Graduate Assistantship

Exceptionally qualified full-time students may be offered graduate assistantships. The assistantship provides a stipend (salary), currently \$18,000 per year for a 12-month position with a work commitment of 20 hours per week (excluding university holiday periods). Students with assistantships will assist faculty with research, teaching, and/or service. The PHS PhD program provides students an opportunity to teach selected undergraduate courses offered by the Department of Public Health, such as LBST 2214 Issues of Health and Quality of Life, and to do so under the supervision of the course faculty member. The PHS PhD program strives to match student research interests with those of the faculty with whom they are assigned for the graduate assistantship, although this cannot be guaranteed in every instance.

Students with assistantships of at least \$6000 are eligible for the University's Graduate Assistance Support Plan (GASP). GASP provides a highly competitive multi-year support package, used to attract and retain top tier graduate students to UNC Charlotte. The award package covers both resident and non-resident tuition (as relevant), and provides coverage under the University's student health insurance program. For NC residents the total award is approximately \$3600 for the academic year. For non-residents it is approximately \$13,800, which is *in addition to* assistantships and/or fellowship stipends. Other student fees are *not* covered by this award.

Students with assistantships must maintain good academic standing (B or better – GPA \geq 3.0).

Professional Responsibilities of Students with Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are intended to serve as an extension of the teaching and research mission of PHS PhD program and the College of Health and Human Services, by giving students experience in research and teaching in a mentorship relationship with faculty. Students with assistantships will also gain experience with fulfilling academic service needs, and in this way will learn more about becoming a productive and successful member of an academic community. While serving in on- or off-campus graduate assistantships, students are representatives of UNC Charlotte. As such, they will act with total professionalism at all times.

Graduate assistants are expected to provide service to the PHS PhD program, the College, the University, and the community. Such service can include attending orientation for 1st year PHS PhD students (for 2nd year students and above), mentoring 1st year doctoral students, attending faculty candidate research presentations, meeting with faculty candidates during times scheduled for students, service as an officer or active member of the PHS PhD student organization, membership on departmental, College, or University committees, assisting the Program Director with occasional information gathering required by the PHS PhD program and the College, performing service in the community as a representative of the PHS PhD program, and so forth. *Although success in the PHS PhD program is primarily judged by scholarship, the PHS PhD program takes the student's record of service into consideration when recommending students for fellowships and grants, including travel grants, tuition support, and competitive dissertation-year fellowships at the university.*

All graduate assistants are required to provide monthly reports of their work schedules and productivity as a requirement of retaining the graduate assistantship.

Graduate assistantships are typically arranged for 12 months annual commitment. Graduate Assistants receive University holidays, but are otherwise expected to work on their normal schedule throughout the 12 month period.

A graduate assistant must register for at least six graduate level semester hours during each semester in which an assistantship is awarded. Graduate assistants enrolled in the Graduate Assistance Support Plan (GASP) must register for a minimum of 9 graduate credit hours each term. **Students with support from the Graduate Assistance Support Plan must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA to be eligible for continued support.**

If a student does not have an assistantship, the Graduate School does not impose any limitations on either part-time or full time employment. Students with assistantships are limited to no more than 20 hours of total weekly employment. Thus, students with assistantships of 20 hours per week are not permitted to have additional employment. Students with assistantships who consider taking part-time teaching positions at the University must consult with the Program Director, as in this situation the number of hours devoted to the assistantship must be reduced to limit total weekly work hours to 20.

Conference Support and Travel

Support is conditional on availability of funds. Funds can be used to cover conference registration, air and ground travel, food and lodging.

Priority

Priority will be given to present an oral or poster presentation at national professional conferences, although professional regional and state conference travel also may be funded as resources permit; of the latter, North Carolina conferences will be given priority. Particularly in an era of tight budgets, conferences that might be viewed by the public as taking place in resort areas or related travel destinations will not be funded. For conferences in the spring through the end of the fiscal year, travel dollars will be reserved for students who are awaiting acceptance for submitted abstracts, assuming that the student has provided a copy of the submitted abstract and the conference information to the PhD Program Director; the student has met with the PHS administrative assistant to estimate conference travel costs.

Student conference travel receives the highest priority.

- a. Students are expected to seek funding from the UNC Charlotte Graduate & Professional Student Government. Students will not be reimbursed for support dollars that would typically be funded by GPSG travel funds. Travel forms are available at <http://gpsg.uncc.edu/treasurer/Forms.asp>
- b. Priority will be given to abstracts that include one or more PHS PhD faculty; however, students are encouraged to submit abstracts with or without faculty, and travel for the latter will be funded when possible.

- c. We cannot guarantee funding for all travel requests. Please do not assume that you have received a travel award until the PHS PhD Director has notified you.
- d. Conference funding is available to both full- and part-time students. Special State budget criteria apply to students who do not hold assistantships; although their conference travel may be fundable, students who do not have assistantships should consult with the PHS administrative assistant about the budget criteria details.
- e. Additional criteria, Professional Responsibilities of Students with Graduate Assistantships, apply to conference support as outlined in the Handbook: *“Although success in the PHS PhD program is primarily judged by scholarship, the PHS PhD program takes the student’s record of service into consideration when recommending students for fellowships and grants, including travel grants.”* Among other requirements, students with assistantships must be current in the submission of time sheets to be eligible for travel support from the PHS PhD program.
- f. Showing “appropriate restraint” in the budget request can increase the likelihood of funding; this can be shown by sharing costs among students (e.g., shared lodging), selecting low-cost lodging, etc.

Steps Involved

The process of applying for support includes the following:

1. Complete the travel application in Appendix C and provide the PhD Program Director a description of the conference, a copy of the accepted abstract and the acceptance notification, and a travel budget. Students working on travel budgets should consult with the PHS administrative assistant; however, it is the student’s responsibility to develop the initial travel budget and itinerary.
2. Make flight reservations, identifying a hotel (see item “i” regarding “appropriate restraint”), registering for the conference, and for making any related reservations or arrangements. Students are encouraged to work closely with the PHS administrative assistant regarding these arrangements, but making reservations for flights, lodging, and conference reservations are the student’s responsibility.
3. Provide all required receipts and evidence of conference attendance (e.g. boarding passes) to the PHS administrative assistant within one week following their return from the conference
4. For both faculty and students, by State budget requirements travel is limited to instances involving public safety, public health, job requirements, economic development opportunities and emergency situations. Provide a justification that addresses one or more of these categories. The PhD Program Director can help with this.

UNCC Student Resources

Graduate Institute

To be successful, graduate students must do more than excel in their academic work. Success requires that students develop skills like public speaking, professional writing and financial literacy. The Graduate School sponsors professional development opportunities for graduate students through the Graduate Institute. The Institute features teaching seminars, writing workshops, sessions on research skills, programs on writing the dissertation, and more. In addition to gaining new skills, students have the opportunity to network with peers from across disciplines. These workshops are covered through the usual tuition and fees, without addition

cost. You can find details about the Graduate Institute at:
http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/gs_profdevelopment.html

The Graduate School at UNC Charlotte also offers a broad array of other professional development activities, including career fairs, funding opportunities, and special guest speakers, throughout the year. PHS PhD students are updated about these opportunities through email announcements from the PHS PhD Program Director.

Career Services

The UNC Charlotte Career Planning and Placement Center offers career development services to both graduate and undergraduate students. The office is located at 150 Atkins Building. This office exists to serve students who need assistance in making a successful transition from college or graduate school to their chosen field or career. Their contact information is, Phone: 704-687-2231; Fax: 704-687-2683, internet: <http://www.career.uncc.edu/index.cfm>

Student services offered by the Career Planning and Placement Office include workshops on: career planning, internships, resume's and cover letters; effective interviewing.

Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services works with current undergraduate and graduate students along with prospective students to ensure equal access to UNC Charlotte's campus and educational programs. All services are dependent upon verification of eligibility. Once approved for services, students receive appropriate and reasonable accommodations which are based upon the nature of an individual's disability and documented needs. Their contact information is, Phone: 704-684-8073, Internet: <http://www.ds.uncc.edu/index.htm>

Counseling Center

The UNC Charlotte Counseling Center offers individual counseling to assist students with concerns of a personal nature by helping them develop better coping strategies, resolve conflicts and handle crisis situations. Typical concerns are depression, anxiety and stress, relationship issues, identity development, substance use problems, eating and body image issues. Further information is at: <http://www.counselingcenter.uncc.edu/>

Also available is a staff psychiatrist, through the Student Health Center, to assess whether medication may be helpful in addressing the student's concern or for follow-up on previously prescribed medications. The psychiatrist will write prescriptions when appropriate and follow-up with students to make adjustments to medications as necessary. Further information is at: <http://www.studenthealth.uncc.edu/>

Students who wish to consult with our psychiatrist should contact the Student Health Center directly at 704.687.7400. Students can also discuss a referral to psychiatry with a counselor at the Counseling Center. The counseling and psychiatry services are supported by the usual tuition and fees, and are available without additional cost.

Professional Student Organizations

Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG)

The purpose of the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG), according to the by-

laws, is to serve as an appropriate voice on campus for graduate students, to meet the various needs of graduate students, and to establish a liaison between graduate faculty, graduate students, and the University. The UNC Charlotte GPSG is here to serve as an advocate for students, and it will be as strong and effective as the passion and participation of its members; thus, your active participation will ensure that your issues are heard and addressed.

UNCC's AcademyHealth Graduate Student Chapter (AHGSC)

The purpose of UNCC-AHGSC is to foster an environment that contributes to the enhancement of the academic and professional concerns, goals, and careers of the graduate student in the Health Services Research Doctoral Program. UNCC-AHGSC membership is open to any UNCC student with an interest in graduate and professional development in health services research as exemplified by the breadth of research presented at the Annual Research Meeting and the health policy activities of AcademyHealth . The chapter meets monthly during the fall and spring semesters. Active members of AHGSC who regularly attend its meetings and participate in related activities may be eligible for travel funding through GPSG to support attendance at academic conferences.

Doctoral Student Responsibilities and Code of Ethics

Code of Student Academic Integrity

Students enrolled in any educational program in the College of Health and Human Services are required to demonstrate the highest ethical standards. These requirements pertain to both academic and professional behavior.

All PHS PhD students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity (<http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html>). *Please especially note: you are held accountable to this Code even if you violate it inadvertently.*

Violations include the following:

Cheating - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids, or other devices in any academic exercise. This definition includes unauthorized communication of information during an academic exercise.

Fabrication and falsification - Intentional and unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification is a matter of altering information, while fabrication is a matter of inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.

Multiple submissions - The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without instructor approval.

Plagiarism - Intentionally or knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The only exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the ideas, information, etc., are common knowledge.

Abuse of academic materials - Intentionally or knowingly destroying, stealing, or making inaccessible library or other academic resource material. Typical Examples: Stealing or

destroying library or reference materials needed by other students.

Complicity in academic dishonesty - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Applicable Policies

PHS PhD students are expected to be knowledgeable about and abide by the policies of the College of Health and Human Services and UNC Charlotte. The policies for the College of Health and Human Services (in the College of Health and Human Services Handbook) are located at: <http://www.health.uncc.edu/students/files/>. The Graduate School policies are located at: http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/gc_catalog.html. The University level policies can be found at: <http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/>. University policies that are highly relevant for PHS PhD students are:

- The Code of Student Responsibility (<http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-104.html>)
- The Code of Student Academic Integrity (<http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html>);
- Sexual Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedures (<http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-61.html>)
- Responsible Use of University Computing and Electronic Communication Resources (<http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-66.html>)

Note: Both the Graduate School and the College of Health and Human Services have adopted policies requiring students to demonstrate knowledge and awareness of academic integrity violations and policies. Both are in the process of developing an electronic tutorial on these topics, which all students will be required to complete. Please be alert for announcements regarding the availability of these tutorials.

Doctoral students are typically expected to have a thorough understanding of academic integrity issues as a result of their undergraduate and master's-level education. As a result, the PHS PhD program simply expects academic integrity. A doctoral student who commits any of the violations listed above may be dismissed from the PHS PhD program.

PHS PhD Program Faculty

Ahmed Arif, PhD, MD, Associate Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Epidemiology of asthma and occupational asthma, occupational epidemiology, public health data analysis. aarif@uncc.edu

Bruce Arrigo, PhD, Adjunct Professor and Professor, Dept of Criminal Justice, Adjunct Professor in Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Mental health services research from the perspective of medical sociology, bioethics, and law. barrigo@uncc.edu

Christopher Blanchette, PhD, Research Associate Professor in Public Health Sciences, Center for Pharmacoeconomic & Outcomes Research, Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute. Research interests: Pharmaceutical Health Services Research, Epidemiology, Medical Sociology. cblanchette@lrri.org

Mark Dehaven, PhD, Dean W. Colvard Distinguished Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Behavioral research and methodology, international Behavior. Mark.DeHaven@UNCC.edu

Andrew Harver, PhD, Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Asthma; dyspnea; COPD; symptoms. arharver@uncc.edu

Larissa Huber, PhD, Associate Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Reproductive epidemiology including unintended pregnancy, contraceptive failure, and trends in contraceptive use. lrhuber@uncc.edu

L. Michele Issel, PhD, RN, Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Evaluation of community-based health promotion programs and health services, case management and services for pregnant women, infants and new mothers, public health systems research, workforce development, quality improvement in governmental agencies, and publishing ethics.

James Laditka, PhD, DA, Associate Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Health services research, health disparities, gerontology, active life expectancy, preventable hospitalization and access to health care for people in vulnerable groups, promotion of brain health. jladitka@uncc.edu

Sarah Laditka, PhD, Associate Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Formal and informal long-term care, healthy life expectancy for older people, public health preparedness for frail and disabled older populations, and access to primary health care for people in vulnerable groups. sladitka@uncc.edu

Crystal Piper, PhD, Assistant Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Health education and behavior, health planning and evaluation, research methods, and health disparities. cpiper1@uncc.edu

Elena Platonova, PhD, MHA, Assistant Professor of Healthcare Management, Department of Public Health Sciences. Research interests: strategic health care management, public health

systems, and health services research; patient trust, patient satisfaction, and patient loyalty to primary care physicians. eplatono@uncc.edu

Sharon Portwood, PhD, JD, Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: xxxx. sgportwo@uncc.edu

Beth Racine, DrPH, Associate Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Nutrition and physical activity intervention, behavioral nutrition and food insecurity. efracine@uncc.edu

Bill Saunders, PhD, Assistant Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Delivery of health care to patients with mental illnesses, diabetes, and cystic fibrosis. Application of complex multiple data sources to health care research. wsaunde6@uncc.edu

Theresa Scheid, PhD, Professor, Sociology, Adjunct in Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Medical sociology, sociology of mental health and illness, social organization, social theory, research methods. tlscheid@uncc.edu

Gary Silverman, PhD, Professor and Chair, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Environmental health, water quality, global health, community health assessment. gsilverma@uncc.edu

Jim Studnicki, ScD, Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Data warehousing/mining of large scale databases (vital statistics, hospital discharges) for decision support for both clinical and public health research domains; physician and hospital performance; risk adjustment methodologies; community health status assessment. jstudnic@uncc.edu

Michael Thompson, DrPH, Associate Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Competency-based education; accreditation; community assessment; program evaluation; chronic disease; health disparities; community-based research. methomp1@uncc.edu

Jan Warren-Findlow, PhD, Associate Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Chronic disease self-management; aging; women's health; health disparities research. jwarren1@uncc.edu

PHS PhD, Behavioral Sciences Doctoral Affiliate Faculty

Dee Baldwin, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor in Nursing. Research interests: Cancer, Community/Public Health, Cultural Competence and Diversity, Healthcare Disparities, Healthcare Literacy, Race/Ethnicity/Culture, Social Justice. dbaldwi5@uncc.edu

Suzanne Boyd, PhD, Associate Professor, Social Work. Research interests: Child and adolescent mental health, adult mental health, consumer-operated services, peer support mental health services, building research capacity within organizations, program evaluations, recovery-based mental health systems. sboyd@uncc.edu

Maren Coffman, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor, Nursing. Research interests: Health literacy and access to health care in adult Latinos with diabetes. mjcoffma@uncc.edu

Judith Cornelius, PhD, Associate Professor, Nursing. Research interests: HIV prevention in African American families; HIV prevention in older African American women. jbcornel@uncc.edu

Boyd Davis, PhD, Professor, Applied Linguistics/English. Research interests: Discourse among individuals with cognitive impairment. bdavis@uncc.edu

Christine Davis, PhD, Associate Professor, Communication Studies. Research interests: Community children's mental health system of care. Christine.S.Davis@uncc.edu

Virginia Gil-Rivas, PhD, Associate Professor, Psychology. Research interests: Exposure to adversity (i.e., traumatic events, chronic illness, violence) and development of physical and mental health difficulties across the life-span. vgilriva@uncc.edu

Shanti Kulkarni, PhD, Associate Professor, Social Work. Research interests: Domestic violence theory and services (including dating violence), adolescent childbearing, families in poverty, and women's health. skulkar@uncc.edu

Susan McCarter, PhD. Assistant Professor, Social Work. Research interests: risk and protective factors in adolescence: specifically race/ethnicity and juvenile justice. smccarter@uncc.edu

Amy Peterman, PhD, Associate Professor, Psychology. Research interests: Quality of life (HRQL) for people with chronic health conditions (e.g., cancer, multiple sclerosis), Psychosocial oncology. ahpeterm@uncc.edu

Maggie Quinlan, PhD, Associate Professor, Communication Studies: Research interests: Ethnography, narrative/interpretive/rhetorical/feminist analyses; health, organizational and performative communication; social justice issues that affect marginalized populations including disability-rights and gender inequities. mquinlan1@uncc.edu

Charlie Reeve, PhD, Associate Professor, Psychology. Research interests: Intelligence-health relations, intelligence-religiosity associations, test anxiety. clreeve@uncc.edu

Dena Shenk, PhD, Professor, Anthropology. Research interests: Anthropology of aging; ethical issues in working with older adults; diversity in aging; social networks; formal and informal supports for aging, dementia care & communications. dshenk@uncc.edu

Lori Thomas, PhD, MSW, Associate Professor, Social Work. Research interests: Aging, homelessness, and mental health, religion and social welfare, and social work macro practice. LoriThomas@uncc.edu

Meredith Troutman, PhD, RN, Associate Professor, Nursing. Research interests: Instrument development and theory testing related to successful aging; investigation of how older adults characterize successful aging; identification of strategies for successful aging; health promotion in older adults. MeredithTroutman@uncc.edu

Lisa Slattery Walker, Professor, Sociology. Research interests: small group interaction, nonverbal behaviors, identity, emotions, gender, and expectations. lisa.walker@uncc.edu

Jennifer Webb, PhD, Associate Professor, Psychology. Research interests: Mindfulness, acceptance, and additional positive psychology-based approaches to enhancing the self-regulation of eating, appetite, weight, metabolism and overall well-being. jennifer.webb@uncc.edu

Appendix B: PhD Student Annual Progress Report

****DRAFT****

(revised August 12, 2014)

UNCC, CHHS, Department of Public Health Sciences Annual Assessment of PhD Student Progress

Student Name:

Advisor:

Academic Year Covered:

Please provide dates (month & year) on which the following milestones were completed.

Semester Matriculated:

Program proposal approved:

Semester in which completed required courses:

Semester in which fulfilled teaching requirement:

Date(s) of written Comprehensive Examination:

Date of oral Comprehensive Examination:

Date passed Comprehensive Examination:

Date of Dissertation Proposal Defense:

Date Dissertation Proposal approved:

Date of Dissertation Defense:

Date passed Dissertation Defense:

Semester(s) Leave of Absence taken:

Provide comments on leave:

1. What is your career goal?
2. What are your areas of research interest?
3. What is your dissertation topic? (Provide 300-500 word abstract)

Both faculty and student are required to make notes under Commentary and Plans.

Note: If you answer ‘No’ to any of the following but completed the previous milestone, then commentary on progress is mandatory.

Academic Milestones	Time Frame (full-time students)	Evidence of Progress	Progress	Commentary on Progress	Plans for the coming year
Completion of proposed/required course work	Within 7 semesters of admission	a) Take number of credits consistent with being FT/PT b) Completed within time frame proposed c) Incompletes resolved within one semester d) Taken 9 credits in specialty area	Yes No Yes No Yes No Yes No		
Completion of Comprehensive Examination	Within 1 year of completing coursework	File Committee Examination Report	Yes No		
Completion of Proposal Defense	Within 1 year of passing Comprehensive Exam	a) Appoint dissertation committee b) Hold (first) meeting within 2 semesters of passing Comprehensive Exam c) Provides advisor with written progress each semester	Yes No Yes No Yes No		
Teach one class	By end of semester in which defending proposal	Teach one class in accordance with UNCC/DPHS requirements for doctoral students	Yes No		

Conduct Dissertation Research	Ongoing between Proposal Defense and Dissertation Defense	<p>a) Meet at least once per semester with Dissertation Chair</p> <p>b) Produce written progress on Dissertation each semester</p> <p>c) Communicate with committee members at least once per academic year</p> <p>d) Receive IRB approval within 1 semester of passing Proposal Defense</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p>Yes No</p>		
Completion of Dissertation Defense	Within 7 years of matriculation	<p>a) File Intent to Graduate form</p> <p>b) Maintain IRB approval</p> <p>b) Successfully defend dissertation</p> <p>d) Advisor approve final copy</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p>Yes No</p>		
Research Milestones	Time Frame	Evidence of Progress	Progress	Commentary on Progress	Plans for the next year
Participates in research	Throughout program	<p>a) Work as RA on academic research project</p> <p>b) Participates in writing grant applications</p> <p>c) Participates in writing grant progress reports</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>		
Takes research	Throughout	a) Seeks and applies for dissertation	Yes/No		

initiative	program	funding b) Has initiated any research not specific to dissertation	Yes/No		
PROFESSIONAL MILESTONES	Time Frame	Evidence of Progress	Progress	Commentary on Progress	Plans for the coming year
Author manuscript in peer review journal (please attach an abstract)	By Comps defense for (a) Before defend dissertation, to have a minimum of 3 publications (accepted or in press)	a) Am able to identify one paper as possible manuscript b) Participate in manuscript preparation (2 or more authors) for scholarly journal c) Prepare first authored manuscript for scholarly journal d) Submit at least 1 first authored manuscript to scholarly journal e) Submit at least 2 co-authored manuscripts to scholarly journals f) Have accepted manuscript to newsletter or regional journal	Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No		
Primary presenter at conference of own material (please attach an abstract)	Throughout program	a) Regional presentation b) National poster presentation c) National speaker presentation d) International presentation	Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No		
Co-Presenter at conference	Yearly between Comps and defend	a) Regional presentation b) National poster presentation	Yes/No Yes/No		

	Dissertation	c) National speaker presentation	Yes/No		
		d) International presentation	Yes/No		
Community service	Throughout program	a) Serve on community agency board	Yes/No		
		b) Volunteer at community agency	Yes/No		
		c) Provide consultation to community agency	Yes/No		
University service	Throughout program	a) Serve on UNCC committee	Yes/No		
		b) Serve on CHHS committee	Yes/No		
Professional service	Throughout program	a) Serve as reviewer for conference presentations	Yes/No		
		b) Other, _____	Yes/No		

Appendix C: PHS PhD Independent Study Application

This proposal will serve as the course syllabus. It can be referred to in cases of grade challenges. After approval by the PHS Program Director, only changes agreeable to both the student and instructor are permissible. Changes must be in writing, signed by the student and faculty member, and approved by the PHS Program Director.

Title of proposed independent study course: HLTH 8800,

Number of credits:

Semester:

PHS PhD faculty member who will direct the independent study:

Objectives:

Assignments, projects, products, or other means of evaluating the student's learning:

Description of how the course fits into the student's plan of academic study and specialty area.

Projected resources, bibliography of readings, data to be analyzed, etc. (Include attachments as needed.)

It is the student's responsibility to verify that this course is added to his or her schedule, following approval by the PHS Program Director.

I understand and agree that an independent study course requires a minimum of 4 hours each week per credit hour during the spring or summer semesters, or approximately 9.3 hours each week per credit hour for summer courses. It is my responsibility to make appropriate arrangements with the faculty member for submission of completed work and evaluations.

Student Name Printed and Signature

Date

I agree to supervise this independent study on a regular basis, and to provide a final grade.

Faculty Name Printed and Signature

Date

PhD Program Director Signature/Approval

Date

Appendix D: PHS PhD STUDENT TRAVEL APPLICATION

NAME _____ E-MAIL _____

AMOUNT REQUESTED* \$ _____ LOCAL PHONE _____

PLEASE ATTACH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF THIS APPLICATION:

- 1) Name of conference or organization _____
- 2) Date of Conference _____
- 3) Site of conference _____
- 4) Has the abstract/paper been accepted for presentation? YES NO
- 5) Will you present the paper/abstract at the conference? YES NO
- 6) Have you applied for GPSG travel funds? YES NO
If yes, when? _____

NOTE: ALL APPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING. PLEASE CHECK EACH INCLUDED.

- 1) A copy of the accepted abstract;
- 2) A description of the conference (preliminary program);
- 3) A letter of support or endorsement from the applicant's advisor including an indication of the importance of the conference or event forum.
- 4) A copy of the acceptance notification to participate in the conference. An email invitation will suffice for application but a formal invitation or notation in the final conference schedule will be required to be submitted with receipts for payment.
- 5) Travel budget.

Signature of Applicant	Date
Signature of Advisor/Faculty Co-Author	Date
Signature of PhD Director	Date

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE PHS PhD DIRECTOR AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO TRAVEL.

Approved: YES NO Amount: \$ _____

*We cannot guarantee funding for all travel requests. Please do not assume that you have received a travel award until the PHS PhD director has notified you.