

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES IN PUBLIC HEALTH

Program Director: Bart Bingenheimer

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) creates a cadre of professionals who are uniquely equipped to provide public health expertise and conduct research in the field of SBS. Upon completion of the PhD, these accomplished researchers will be prepared to apply their research and analytical skills to a range of research questions as well as implementation, evaluation, and advocacy needs of various cultural and socioeconomic groups and communities.

The PhD degree program prepares professionals to make significant scholarly contributions to the scientific and evidence base of public health. The PhD program trains strong theoretical, methodological, and practical scholars whose contributions could be as practitioners or academicians. Students are well-trained in a substantive health area with a strong background in social and behavior change theory, study design and evaluation, and statistical methods.

Visit the program website (<https://publichealth.gwu.edu/programs/social-and-behavioral-sciences-phd/>) for additional information.

ADMISSIONS

Visit the Milken Institute School of Public Health website (<https://publichealth.gwu.edu/>) for additional information about academic programs and information about GWSPH. Graduate admissions information, including application requirements and deadlines, can be found on the GWSPH Graduate Admissions website (<https://publichealth.gwu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/>).

REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled: 48 credits, including 8 credits in foundational and research methods courses, 16 credits in program-specific courses, 15 credits in elective courses, and 9 credits in dissertation preparation and dissertation research. In addition, students must successfully complete a comprehensive examination.

Code	Title	Credits
Required		
Foundational and research methods courses (8 credits)		
PUBH 6080	Pathways to Public Health	
PUBH 8001	Doctor of Philosophy Seminar on Cross-Cutting Concepts in Public Health	
PUBH 8475	Research Ethics and Integrity in Domestic and International Research	

PUBH 8416	Study Design and Evaluation Methods
PUBH 8418	Applied Statistical Analysis
or PUBH 6862	Applied Linear Regression Analysis for Public Health Research

Program-specific courses	
16 credits	
PUBH 8417	Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis
PUBH 8419	Measurement in Public Health and Health Services
PUBH 8525	Advanced Topics in Social and Behavioral Sciences
PUBH 8526	Application of Structural Equation Modeling to Public Health Research
PUBH 8528	Advanced Topics in Critical Review of Social-Behavioral Theory and its Application in Public Health
PUBH 8534	Multi-Level Interventions for Health Promotion

Electives	
15 credits in elective courses selected in consultation with the advisor.	
Dissertation	
9 credits in the following courses:	
PUBH 8435	PhD Dissertation Proposal Development
PUBH 8999	Dissertation Research (taken for 7 credits)

Comprehensive examination

After completion of the course requirements, students take a comprehensive examination based on core courses. Upon successful completion of the examination, students officially enter the doctoral candidacy phase of the program.

Dissertation

Doctoral candidates prepare a written dissertation research proposal with guidance from their dissertation advisor and committee. Each doctoral candidate gives an oral presentation and defense to the committee who determines the student's readiness to commence the dissertation.

Doctoral candidates are required to conduct original research on a contemporary problem or issue. The dissertation includes at least one written manuscript and an oral presentation and defense.

Additional requirements for degree completion:

- Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) training requirement: All students must complete training regarding human subject protection regulation and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). To fulfill this requirement, students must complete the CITI course in The Protection of Human Research Subjects.
- Integrity quiz and plagiarism requirement: Students must review the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity (<https://students.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity/>), take the quiz within their first semester of study, and ensure documentation is submitted to the SPH Office of Student Records.
- Professional enhancement requirement: Students must attend/participate in eight hours of epidemiology conferences. To be cleared for graduation, students must submit required documentation of applicable professional enhancement activities to the SPH Office of Student Records.
- Completion of a graduate teaching assistantship program certificate. See the GTAP website (<https://gradfellowships.gwu.edu/graduate-teaching-assistantship-program-gtap/>) for additional information.
- Grade-point average: A minimum program grade-point average of 3.0.
- Time limit: The degree must be completed within seven years of matriculation.

Additional information regarding School of Public Health doctoral programs is available on the SPH website (<https://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/programs/doctoral/>).