



MS GLOH GRADUATE HANDBOOK

2025-2026



GEORGE
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UNIVERSITY®

Welcome

to the Department of Global and Community Health
in the College of Public Health
Master of Science in Global Health program at George Mason University!

Dear Student,

Congratulations on joining the George Mason public health community. We're happy that you're here!

In the MS, Global Health program, you will complete course work across a broad spectrum of public health topics, covering the sociocultural influences on health and behavior, global health systems, communicable and non-communicable diseases of global importance, migrant health, epidemiology, and biostatistics.

The degree program is designed to prepare you to conduct global health-related research. Through coursework and thesis research, you will be equipped to work in the diverse cultural and multidisciplinary environments inherent in global health.

This handbook is your guide to the successful and timely completion of your degree. Specifically, the handbook:

- Lists the courses you must take and the order in which you should take them.
- Contains essential information about the processes and procedures you must follow to meet the thesis requirement.
- Includes important contact information regarding course planning.

We are dedicated to your success and are looking forward to helping you reach your academic goals. Please review this handbook carefully to make this process as smooth as possible.

Sincerely,

Rima Nakkash, DrPH (she/her/hers)

Professor and Interim Chair

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Jenna Krall, PhD (she/her/hers)

Director of Masters' Degree Programs

Associate Professor

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Department Overview

Our Vision

Our vision is the optimal physical, mental, and social well-being of the diverse populations of Virginia, the nation, and the world.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide exceptional public health educational experiences through an inclusive academic community and high-quality undergraduate and graduate educational programs. We are committed to conducting innovative research that addresses domestic and global health problems to improve health and well-being, especially among marginalized communities.

Educational Offerings

At the Masters' level, GCH offers two-degree programs and three certificate programs. **For all programs, the most up-to-date information is provided in the [University Catalog](#).**

The information provided in this handbook is designed to provide guidance and to help you plan for your time at Mason. However, your academic advisor is likely to be the best resource to help you plan your course of study. It is important to note that most courses are not offered every semester, and some may not be offered every year. Your academic advisor can help you plan for and understand when specific courses are likely to be offered. However, there may be times when educational offerings need to shift due to circumstances beyond the department's control. In those situations, we will work with you to ensure that these changes will not adversely impact your progress through your program.

Master of Public Health

The Master of Public Health (MPH) is a widely recognized professional degree for those wishing to enter or advance in the field of public health. Our Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited degree prepares students with the foundational public health knowledge and competencies to address the most pressing and emerging health problems. Core courses provide a broad foundation in public health knowledge and skills. Concentration courses offer more advanced training and education in one of seven concentrations. There is a separate handbook for students in the MPH program.

Master of Science in Global Health

The CEPH-accredited Master of Science (MS) in Global Health is a research-intensive degree that prepares students to conduct multidisciplinary research on health issues of global importance. Students complete coursework on these issues as well as in epidemiology, biostatistics, and research methods. The required thesis provides students an opportunity to work closely with a GCH faculty member to systematically investigate a problem or issue with global health implications.

Graduate Certificates

We offer three graduate certificates:

- **Certificate in Public Health (Generalist):** This program introduces students to the core concepts of public health. For students planning to apply to the MPH degree program after completion of the generalist certificate, there is a simplified application process if they have earned a grade of "B" or better in all coursework.

- **Graduate Certificate in Epidemiology:** This program prepares students to apply the principles and methods of epidemiology to health research. The program emphasizes the development of skills such as study design, data collection and management, data analysis and interpretation, and communication of research findings. All students in the certificate program must complete introductory courses in public health, epidemiology, and biostatistics and then choose three elective courses in areas such as infectious disease epidemiology, chronic disease epidemiology, social epidemiology, and advanced epidemiological methods.
- **Graduate Certificate in Global Health:** The 18-credit hour Global Health Graduate Certificate provides students with competencies and applicable skills to promote health in a global context, emphasizing comparative global health metrics; the socioeconomic, environmental, and other risk factors associate with transnational health concerns; and ethical and effective strategies for preventing and controlling infectious and non-communicable diseases in diverse populations.

There is a separate handbook for students in the certificate programs.

Communication

Communication and George Mason Email

All Mason students are provided with a George Mason email account. Students **must** use their George Mason email accounts when communicating with university faculty and staff. University officials will use email as the best means of communicating with students. Students are responsible for:

- Activating their George Mason email account.
- Using their George Mason email account to send and receive all University-related communication and content.
- Checking their George Mason email accounts regularly.

University faculty, staff, and administration are not responsible for, and will not respond to, any email sent using a non-university email account. This measure protects student privacy and ensures that email messages are not lost through spam filters. Please see mail.gmu.edu for more information.

Email Signature

All Master's degree program students are encouraged to have a signature in their email. Please follow this format for signatures.

[Name], MS, Global Health Candidate
George Mason University
Department of Global and Community Health
College of Public Health
[Optional: Pronouns]

Academic Advising

Ms. Sarah Liu is the academic advisor for all MPH, MS, and certificate students in GCH. Her office is located on the 5th floor of Peterson Hall, room 5601. Her email is sliu16@gmu.edu. Ms. Liu meets with students to discuss course planning, and programs of study, and answer other academic questions.

Students should plan to meet with the academic advisor at least twice per year:

- in the middle of the fall term to plan for spring classes, and
- in the middle of the spring term to plan for summer and fall classes.

Students wishing to meet with Ms. Liu are responsible for scheduling a time to meet through [Microsoft Bookings](#).

Important notes about advising:

Students who do not discuss course planning regularly risk-taking courses out of sequence, missing important requirements, and potentially delaying graduation. Ignorance of program requirements or personal scheduling conflicts are not valid reasons to request a waiver or substitution.

Changing Programs

Mason students enrolled in one GCH graduate program and who are interested in changing to a different degree program in GCH (e.g., from the MS in Global Health to the MPH program) may request to change their program. Students should discuss the implications of making such a change with their academic advisor before requesting the change or enrolling in classes. Students should not expect all

courses to transfer from one degree program to another, and changing degree programs may delay graduation. Students are responsible for completing the degree requirements associated with their current degree until a request for a degree change has been approved.

Complaint Procedures

There are a variety of channels to report complaints, depending on the specific issue.

Course Concerns – Informal Processes

Students with concerns or issues about a course must first communicate directly with the instructor of the course. If communication with the instructor does not resolve the situation, the student should contact their academic advisor. If the student does not feel comfortable speaking with Ms. Liu, they should contact the Director of Masters' Programs, Dr. Krall at jkral@gmu.edu

Grade Appeals

The College of Public Health Office of Student Affairs works with all academic departments within the college, as well as university support services, to ensure a positive experience for students throughout their academic careers. They manage the procedure of grade appeals within the college. More information is [found here](#).

Protected-Class Discrimination or Ethics Violations

The Office of Access, Compliance, and Community (OACC) has a intake form for complaints regarding protected-class discrimination or ethics violations. Visit the OACC website for more information at oacc.gmu.edu.

Sexual or Interpersonal Misconduct Report Form

The Office of Access, Compliance, and Community has a report form for complaints regarding alleged incidents of sexual or interpersonal misconduct. Visit the OACC website for more information at oacc.gmu.edu.

Program Feedback

The Department of Global and Community Health is committed to delivering the highest quality graduate programs and providing a first-rate academic experience for all students.

- You may contact any faculty or staff member in the department when you have comments or suggestions for improvement.
- Graduate Students for Public Health (GSPH) is a registered student organization where students can network with fellow students, alumni, and professionals. GSPH is also a place in which students can provide anonymous feedback to the Chair of the Department of Global and Community Health. [Join GSPH at Mason 360](#).

Program Policies

Time Limit

Master's degree and Certificate students have six years from the time of first enrollment as degree-seeking students complete their degrees. Students who will not meet the six-year time limit because of

compelling circumstances beyond their control may petition for a one-year extension. Refer to [AP 6.4.5](#) for graduate student's parental leave policy and time limit.

Students who need to take some time off during their program should fill out a leave of absence form and when coming back would need to fill out a re-enrollment form. Please refer here to access the [General Leave of Absence form](#).

Failure to meet the time limit or to secure approval of an extension request shall result in the termination of the program. See [AP.6.9.2 in the University Catalog](#) for additional information.

Academic Warning

A student will receive a notation of “Academic Warning” whenever a grade of C or F is earned. Candidates must have a minimum GPA of 3.00 in coursework presented on the graduation application. The record may include no more than six (6) credits of C or F, and may not show more than one (1) F. This means:

- (1 C; 2 C's; 1 C and 1 F; or 1 F): a student may still graduate if their GPA is 3.0 or above.
- (3 C's): a student is dismissed from their program.
- (2 C's and 1 F): a student is dismissed from their program.
- (2 F's): a student is dismissed from their program.

Repeating Courses:

Students are allowed one (1) attempt to repeat a graduate course in which a grade of C or F is earned. If a course is repeated, the grade received in a repeated course will replace the earlier grade in the calculation of the GPA, even if the more recent grade is lower. Duplicate credit is not earned. All courses taken and the grades earned remain part of the student's transcript. Students must repeat a course that is a prerequisite for another course in the program. Graduate students may repeat no more than two (2) courses in their stated program of study.

Academic Standards

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, co-authored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in the university’s procedures. Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University’s academic community.

[Learn more about the academic standards process](#), including sanctions. Sanctions may include suspension, dismissal, or academic termination.

Generative AI

As stated in the section above, unauthorized assistance means using, accessing, or providing assistance to others when such assistance is not permitted per the university, course, or assignment instructions/policy. Unauthorized assistance also includes submitting academic work that was created, in whole or part, by using unauthorized material. This includes using Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, etc.) when not permitted for the assignment.

Use of Generative AI tools should follow the fundamental principles of the Office of Academic Standards. This includes being honest about the use of these tools for submitted work and including citations when using the work of others, whether individual people or Generative AI tools. Check the syllabus for each course for more information, and contact your professor with any questions. Please note that different instructors and different courses may have different policies on Generative AI use.

The Office of Academic Standards has stringent sanctions for students who have deemed to violate the standards. Use of Generative AI may violate one or more of the three types of violations, including unauthorized assistance, fabrication, or plagiarism. [Learn more](#).

University Guidelines and Policies

Mandatory Reporting

Faculty members are designated as “Responsible Employees,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per [University Policy 1412](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, contact one of George Mason’s confidential resources: [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (SSAC) (703-380-1434) or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s [Title IX](#) Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing.

Chosen Names and Pronouns

Students can identify their chosen names and pronouns through Patriot Web. Chosen name and pronouns may be used in many areas, including on class rosters, Canvas, and other systems. The department of Global and Community Health supports the use of preferred pronouns. However, there

may be some areas where George Mason is legally required to use a student’s legal name or where system/application limitations may not use chosen names or pronouns.

For the purposes of this policy, pronouns are limited to three options: he/him/his, she/her/hers, and they/them/theirs. For more information, go to <https://registrar.gmu.edu/updating-chosen-name-pronouns/>.

Student Resources

The following is a list of resources available to graduate students at George Mason University.

University Resources		
Office	Resources	Website
Office of the Registrar	University Calendar Registering for classes	registrar.gmu.edu
University Career Services	Support in creating resumes, cover letters, and finding jobs and internships	careers.gmu.edu
IT Services	Technology support, including George Mason email, Canvas, Duo, etc.	its.gmu.edu
Office of Student Financial Aid	Student loans	www.gmu.edu/financial-aid
Office of Student Accounts	Tuition payments	studentaccounts.gmu.edu
Office of Graduate Life	Social and academic support for graduate students	graduate.gmu.edu/graduate-student-life
University Libraries	Citations Research assistance Study rooms	library.gmu.edu
Office of Disability Services	Registering for classroom and testing accommodations for a documented disability	ds.gmu.edu
Student Services Center	Contact for questions pertaining to financial aid, billing, registration, and other central services	mssc.gmu.edu
Student Involvement	Enhancing the student experience Registered Student Organizations	mason360.gmu.edu
Academic Standards (formerly Academic Integrity)	Honor Code	academicstandards.gmu.edu
Military Services	Assists U.S. Military veterans, their dependents, and survivors	military.gmu.edu

Office of Fellowships	Grants, fellowships, and awards	graduate.gmu.edu/financial-support/grants-fellowships-awards
College of Public Health Resources		
Scholarships	General and department scholarships	publichealth.gmu.edu/students/scholarships
Student Affairs	Assists students with policy-related needs	publichealth.gmu.edu/students/contact-student-affairs
Career Advising	Advising and outcomes specific to degrees in CPH	publichealth.gmu.edu/students/careers-advising-and-outcomes
Student Activities	Hosted by the Office of Student Affairs	https://publichealth.gmu.edu/students/student-resources-activities

Student Involvement

Students are encouraged to get involved beyond the classroom. We do have a student-led organization called Graduate Students for Public Health (GSPH), which some of our students are in. Joining GSPH will be a great opportunity to connect with not only GCH students but other public health students in the college.

The 2025-2026 E-board members are:

- President:** Annie Reiss
- Vice President:** Esraa Dafaalla
- Treasurer:** Mayuree Rimpisiri
- Secretary:** Hope Johnson
- Communications Coordinator:** Bárbara Haines-Pérez

You can register for student organizations through [Mason360](https://mason360.gmu.edu/).

Online Education Experience at Mason

The Department of Global and Community Health aims to provide a high-quality online learning experience where students can acquire the knowledge and develop the skills necessary to advance their career in a public health-related setting. It is important to note that online learning requires an additional commitment to master the technology associated with the course, and to be successful, students must devote the time necessary to master Canvas, including the mobile app. If you are new to online learning or need a refresher on the basics of online learning visit Mason Online: [Online Learning Basics](#).

Technology Requirements

Students are required to have access to a computer that can access all functions on Canvas, including videos, a compatible web browser, a reliable high-speed Internet connection, a webcam, and word processing and presentation software. [Microsoft Office is available to students for free](#).

Visit the [Getting Started](#) page from IT Services.

Technical Support

There are times when you will experience technical difficulties. When you do have a technical problem, go to the Information Technology Services website at <https://its.gmu.edu/>. Their support includes email, telephone, chat, and in-person.

Canvas Technical Questions

General Canvas course support <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/canvas-student-help/>.

Tips for a Successful Online Experience at Mason

There are numerous strategies to facilitate your online learning success. As posted on Mason Online, [Tips for a Successful Online Experience](#) include:

- Be realistic.
- Take responsibility for your own learning.
- Stay linked with Mason.
- Know the syllabus.
- Organize your time.
- Create a study space.
- Check your technology.
- Stay connected.
- Consider the rules of Netiquette.

Netiquette Guidelines – Professional Behavior Expectations

Certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and instructors through online means. The following provides some guidance, but professors may have additional guidance or requirements for their courses.

- The subject of an email should accurately reflect its contents. For example, do not use “Hello” as a subject, and do not leave the subject line blank.
- Always use your professors’ proper title: Dr. or Professor. Unless specifically invited, **do not** refer to them by first name.
- Always identify yourself and what class you are taking with your professor.
- Sign your email with your name. Better yet: Add a signature line so that your name is always at the bottom of the email. This must be done for each device you use.
- Avoid vague words, jargon, and sarcasm.
- Limit or eliminate the use of exclamation points, bolding, capital letters, and emoticons or emojis.
- All graduate-level communication should have correct spelling and grammar. Avoid slang terms and texting abbreviations (such as “u” instead of “you”).
- Edit meticulously.
- Plan carefully on who you CC on messages.

Message Board Netiquette

- Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of course material.
- Take your posts seriously and review and edit your posts before sending.
- Always give proper credit when referencing or quoting another source.
- Be sure to read all messages in a thread before replying.
- Do not repeat someone else's post without adding something of your own to it.
- Avoid short, generic replies such as "I agree." Include why you agree to add to the discussion. If needed add appropriate references to your messages.
- When you disagree with someone, you should express your differing opinions in a respectful, non-critical way.
- Do not make personal or insulting remarks.
- Be open-minded.

Degree Requirements

Master of Science in Global Health

Degree requirements are designated by the academic year during which they were published in the [University Catalog](#). Students are responsible for meeting the degree requirements that were stipulated in the catalog of their matriculation into the program. Degree requirements for the 2020-2021 Academic Year are listed below. Links for degree requirements from previous academic years can be found in archived catalogs.

Global Health Core (18 credits)

Course	Title	Semester offered	Credits
GCH 500	Foundations in Public Health	Fall/Spring/Summer	3
GCH 543	Global Health	Fall	3
GCH 626	Migrant Health	Spring	3
GCH 640	Global Infectious Diseases	Fall	3
GCH 645	U.S. and Global Public Health Systems	Fall/Spring/Summer	3
GCH 650^	Global Non-Communicable Diseases [RP: GCH 543]	Spring	3

RP: Required Prerequisite

Research Core (12 credits)

Course	Title	Semester offered	Credits
GCH 712	Introduction to Epidemiology	Fall	3
GCH 651	Behavioral Research Methods	Fall	3
GCH 804	Biostatistics for Public Health I	Fall	3
GCH 805^	Biostatistics for Public Health II [RP: GCH 804]	Spring	3

RP: Required Prerequisite

Thesis (6 credits)

Course	Title	Semester offered	Credits
GCH 799	Thesis Research		3
GCH 799	Thesis Research		3

Electives (6 credits)

Course	Title	Credits
EL	See Patriot Web or the University Catalog for the list of approved electives. Other electives may be taken with advisor's approval.	6

Course Planning

Overall Course Schedule

To help students with academic planning, courses are likely to be offered each year in accordance with the Overall Course Schedule described below. Please note that the weekly meeting days and times may change each year. Check the Schedule of Classes on [Patriot Web](#) each term for specific meeting times, dates, and locations.

Fall Courses

GCH 500 – Foundations in Public Health	GCH 727 – Advanced Methods in Epidemiology II (Alternating years)
GCH 543- Global Health	GCH 655 – Public Health Equity and Justice
GCH 604 – Fundamentals of Epidemiology & Biostatistics	GCH 691 – Project Management in Public Health
GCH 611 – Health Program Planning & Evaluation	GCH 712 – Introduction to Epidemiology
GCH 609 – Community Assessment & Partnerships	GCH 732 – Chronic Disease Epidemiology
GCH 640 – Global Non-Communicable Diseases	GCH 780 – Practicum Seminar
GCH 645 – U.S. and Global Public Health Systems	GCH 804 – Biostatistics for Public Health I
GCH 651 – Behavioral Research Methods	GCH 824 – Advanced Data Analysis for Epidemiologic Research
<i>Various Electives</i>	

Spring Courses

GCH 500 – Foundations in Public Health	GCH 645 – U.S. and Global Public Health Systems
GCH 535 – Public Health Preparedness & Response	GCH 720 – Public Health Problems in a Changing Society
GCH 607 – Evidence-Based Public Health Practice	GCH 722 – Infectious Disease Epidemiology
GCH 609 – Community Assessment & Partnerships	GCH 726 – Advanced Methods in Epidemiology I
GCH 610 – Health Behavior Theory	GCH 772 – Social Epidemiology
GCH 611 – Health Program Planning & Evaluation	GCH 780 – Practicum Seminar
GCH 620 – Public Health Promotion Strategies	GCH 790 – Practicum in Public Health
GCH 626 – Migrant Health	GCH 805 – Biostatistics for Public Health II
GCH 650 – Global Infectious Diseases	<i>Various Electives</i>

Summer Courses

GCH 500 – Foundations in Public Health	GCH 645 – U.S. and Global Public Health Systems
GCH 551 – Rural Public Health	GCH 762 – Environmental Epidemiology
<i>Various electives</i>	

Recommended Course Sequences

The following provides recommended course sequences for the MS in Global Health. If you have any questions about the course sequencing, contact Ms. Liu.

Option 1: Full-time

Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026	Fall 2026	Spring 2027	Summer 2027
GCH 500 GCH 543 GCH 712	GCH 626 EL GCH 645	EL	GCH 640 GCH 651 GCH 804 Submit Master's Thesis Committee Designation Form	GCH 799 GCH 805 GCH 650 Submit Master's Thesis Proposal Approval Form	GCH 799
9 credits	9 credits	3 credits	9 credits	9 credits	3 credits

Option 2: Part-time

Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026	Fall 2026	Spring 2027	Summer 2027	Fall 2027	Spring 2028
GCH 543 GCH 712	GCH 626 GCH 645	GCH 500	GCH 651 GCH 804	EL GCH 805	EL Submit Master's Thesis Committee Designation Form	GCH 640 GCH 799 Submit Master's Thesis Proposal Approval Form	GCH 650 GCH 799
6 credits	6 credits	3 credits	6 credits	6 credits	3 credits	6 credits	6 credits

Code Legend:

EL Select an Elective course. In total, six credits of electives and six credits of thesis (GCH 799) are required for the degree. See Degree Requirements for list of required courses

Thesis Policies

Faculty Thesis Advisor

When you applied to the program, you indicated a professor with whom you would like to work, and that faculty member agreed to work with you on your Master's thesis. This is your faculty thesis advisor, and they will guide you through the thesis process. The faculty thesis advisor will serve as chair of your thesis committee. Please be sure to keep in regular contact with your faculty thesis advisor so you can formulate a plan for your thesis, starting in the fall of your first year.

Changing Faculty Thesis Advisors

Students may request a different faculty thesis advisor in exceptional circumstances. The switch needs to be discussed with the Director of Masters' Programs and approved by the Department Chair. A change of faculty thesis advisors will only occur in exceptional circumstances and is not guaranteed. If your faculty thesis advisor leaves Mason, the Director of Masters' Programs will work with you to assign a new faculty thesis advisor.

Finding a Thesis Topic

In consultation with your faculty thesis advisor, you will identify a topic for your thesis. Multiple considerations must be weighed when identifying a topic, including:

- Your interests and skills.
- The research interests and expertise of your GCH faculty thesis advisor, other Mason faculty, and other available experts.
- Available time (including both day-to-day availability and long-term timeline).
- Available resources (grant funding, equipment needs, etc.).
- Relevance and novelty of the topic to global health.
- Ethical considerations.

Mentor contract

Before beginning work on the thesis, students must sign and submit the Mentor Contract to initiate thesis work with their faculty thesis advisor (i.e., before enrollment in GCH 799). Full-time students usually enroll in the first three credits of GCH 799 in the 2nd spring semester. During this first three credits of GCH 799, students will develop a thesis committee and write a thesis proposal.

Once fully signed, the faculty thesis advisor will send the Mentor Contract to the Director of Masters' Programs and the MPH Program Coordinator. Turning in the Mentor Contract informs the Director of Masters' Programs to create a 3-credit section of GCH 799 specifically for you. The MPH Program Coordinator will send you the CRN to register for the course.

- ⇒ Form: [Mentor Contract Form](#)
- ⇒ Submit to: Director of Masters' Programs (Jkrall@gmu.edu) and the MPH Program Coordinator (Sliu16@gmu.edu)
- ⇒ Allows you to register for first 3 credits of GCH 799 (Thesis Proposal Research)

GCH 799: Proposal Research

Full-time students usually enroll in the first three credits of GCH 799 in the 2nd spring semester. During this first three credits of GCH 799, students will develop a thesis committee and write a thesis proposal.

Developing a committee

The master's thesis committee is composed of at least three members, at least two of whom must be graduate faculty in the Department of Global and Community Health (GCH). Faculty not members of the GCH graduate faculty or other appropriate person not affiliated with the university may serve as the third member. Your faculty thesis advisor will work with you to establish the committee.

The faculty thesis advisor is primarily responsible for directing your research and writing activities, while you are responsible for keeping all committee members informed of the scope, plan, and progress of the research as well as the writing of the thesis.

Writing a Thesis Proposal

You must complete a thesis proposal and send it to your committee prior to starting work on the thesis (i.e., the final three credits of GCH 799). The thesis proposal will also be reviewed by the Director of Masters' Programs for appropriateness in fulfilling the requirements of thesis-level work.

The thesis proposal must include:

- **Research Question:** Work with your faculty thesis advisor and committee to craft a research design that you will employ to answer your question.
- **Literature Review:** Conduct a literature review on your topic to identify gaps in the existing literature and refine your research question. The literature review is a large portion of your thesis proposal. For help with literature reviews, go to <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/writing-a-literature-review>.
- Details on the methods and approach of your thesis, including:
 - Data collection
 - Data analysis
 - Feasibility of available resources
 - Timeline

Proposal and Committee Approval

Your committee must agree to serve on your committee, and approve and sign off on the master's thesis proposal. It is your responsibility to obtain the signatures of your thesis committee members. Once fully signed, the faculty thesis advisor will send it to the Director of Masters' Programs and the MPH Program Coordinator. Turning in Master's Thesis Proposal and Committee Approval Form informs the Director to create a 3-credit section of GCH 799. Submission of this form must be made prior to the next semester's registration deadlines (see the [Office of the Registrar](#) for dates). Your faculty thesis advisor will send you the CRN to register for the course.

- ⇒ Form: [Master's Thesis Proposal and Committee Approval Form](#)
- ⇒ Submit to Director of Masters' Programs and MPH Program Coordinator
- ⇒ Allows you to register for last 3 credits of GCH 799 (Thesis Research)

GCH 799: Thesis Research

Writing the Thesis

Once the thesis proposal is approved, you will then complete a written thesis. More details about the structure of the document are outlined in the GCH 799 syllabus. In brief, the thesis will be structured in

the form of a manuscript suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed research journal with additional content for supporting material or context.

The thesis must conform to the University Library's formatting requirements. The University provides thesis templates at <https://library.gmu.edu/udts/resources#templates>. More information is also below.

Information on GCH 799 Enrollment

You will enroll in GCH 799 for a total of six credits over at least two semesters. The first semester will be three credits and consist of writing the thesis proposal.

Students must register for at least 3 credit hours in their first semester of GCH 799. A special section of GCH 799 will be created for individual students by the Director or other course scheduler when specific forms are turned in before registration deadlines. Please get in touch with Ms. Liu when you plan to take GCH 799 the following semester.

Continuous Enrollment

After the first semester of thesis research, students must enroll for at least one credit of GCH 799. At the beginning of each semester a student registers for GCH 799, they need to develop and discuss with their faculty thesis advisor the level of work, deliverables expected and the timeline for those deliverables. Students must complete 6 total credits of GCH 799.

Master's students must maintain continuous enrollment in GCH 799, excluding summers, each semester until the thesis is complete and has met departmental and University requirements. Students registered in GCH 799 are graded "IP" or in progress until work is complete. See [AP.6.9.3 in the University Catalog](#) for additional information. If you wish to graduate in the summer, you must be enrolled in GCH 799 during the summer in which you plan to graduate.

It is important to keep in mind university timelines as well. The thesis requirement will not be met until the thesis is successfully defended and the completed manuscript has met university submission requirements.

Thesis Defense

Students must present their thesis work in a research seminar open to the university community, followed by a closed session question and answer period conducted by the thesis committee. Students must set up a meeting date, time, and location that works for all committee members.

The defense usually entails the thesis candidate's presentation to share results (usually about 30-40 minutes), followed by an open question and answer period with the committee and other attendees. The committee will then ask further questions and make suggestions aimed at improving the final thesis in a closed session.

Generally, it is recommended that your defense be at least a month before the University's final thesis submission date, to allow adequate time to make needed edits, for the committee to review edits (as necessary), and to obtain signatures.

Students may attempt the thesis defense up to two times. After a second failed thesis attempt, the student may be dismissed from the program.

The committee will sign off on the result of the thesis defense.

- ⇒ Form: [GCH 799 Thesis outcome form](#)
- ⇒ Submit to the MS Program Director
- ⇒ Indicates the outcome of the thesis defense and next steps.

Additionally, two copies of the college signature sheet must be brought to the defense by the student. All committee members must sign the form. The form is then sent to the GCH Chair, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, and the College of Public Health Dean for signatures. The faculty thesis advisor assists the student in obtaining these signatures.

- ⇒ Form: [Master of Science in Global Health Signature Sheet](#)
- ⇒ Submit to library during formatting process
- ⇒ Allows you to graduate

University-level Thesis Submission, Formatting, and Approval

Thesis Format

University Dissertation and Thesis Services from the University Libraries provides resources to ensure proper formatting of the thesis at <https://library.gmu.edu/udts/resources>.

University Dissertation and Thesis Services Format Review

The University Libraries support students in the proper formatting of the thesis. More information can be found at <http://library.gmu.edu/udts>. Students must pay close attention to the deadlines established by the University Libraries to ensure adequate time for format reviews. You may wish to schedule an appointment with this office to ensure that you meet requirements early in the process.

Final Submission

The [University Dissertation and Thesis Services webpage](#) lists the steps needed to submit the final thesis to the university. It includes:

- Signature sheet of committee members and College of Public Health leadership
- Electronic copy of your thesis
- Transmittal Sheet
- Embargo Request Form

The University sends this information in an email to all students during the Format Review Process. See [AP.6.9.4 in the University Catalog](#) for additional information.

Other Considerations

Institutional Review Board and Human Subjects Training

All research must be conducted ethically and responsibly, [according to university policy](#). All investigators (faculty, staff and students) are required to complete the CITI Program training in human subjects' protection prior to conducting research using human subjects. The CITI Program is an on-line training program and can be found at www.citiprogram.org. This training requirement applies regardless of

whether such research receives external funding, and it applies to all academic levels. Research using human subjects or animals must be approved by the [Institutional Review Board and/or other relevant review unit](#) (Radiation Safety Committee, Institutional Biosafety Committee, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, etc.) prior to beginning research.

Students must submit materials on time according to the IRB (Institutional Review Board) Meeting Schedule or risk delayed data collection, thesis completion, and/or graduation.

Citations

The department does not have a required reference citation style, so you and your committee can decide what is most appropriate for your specific area of global health research. The University Libraries provides useful information at <https://infoguides.gmu.edu/citingdata>. We recommend managing your references with reference management software, such as [Zotero](#).

University Resources

The Writing Center's Writing Resources for Graduate Students: <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/for-graduate-students/writing-resources-for-graduate-students>

The University Libraries Dissertation and Thesis Services: <https://udts.gmu.edu/>

Full-time Graduate Student Checklist

Before Year 1

- Declare intent to enroll in admissions portal
- Review graduate student handbook and online orientation
- Attend College of Public Health graduate student orientation

Year 1

- Enroll in 9 credits per semester
- Meet with advisor to discuss future course planning, adjustment to graduate school, etc.
- Enroll in 3-6 credits over the first summer

Year 2

- Enroll in 9 credits per semester
- [Apply to graduate on Patriot Web](#) in final semester
- Complete GCH Student Exit Survey

Beyond Year 2

- Get an awesome job in public health and make a difference!
- Complete the Alumni Survey (sent ~1 year after graduation)
- Stay connected!

Career Activities to Do Throughout the Program

- Participate in events through University Career Services, including resume review, practice interviews, attend career panels and career fairs
- Participate in events held by Graduate Students for Public Health
- Go on informational interviews to build your network
- Meet with academic advisor and professors for professional and career advice
- Be active on LinkedIn

MS Competencies

1. Demonstrate independent research conduct through the completion of a research thesis related to a current issue in global health.
2. Explain roles, functions, funding sources, organizational structure, and involvement in global health of organizations in the global health arena.
3. Communicate epidemiologic evidence related to global health to lay and scientific audiences.
4. Utilize data and literature to recognize global health problems.
5. Describe the economic, environmental and social drivers of diseases of global health importance