

PhD, Public Health 2025-2026 HANDBOOK

Department of
Global and Community
Health



George Mason University

2025-2026

Student Handbook
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM

DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information enclosed, this Handbook is updated only once each year prior to the start of the fall term. No student handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question regarding university or program policies. George Mason University (GMU) College of Public Health, Global and Community Health Department (GCH) reserves the right to make changes at any time with respect to admission requirements, course offerings, degree requirements, services, policies, or any other subject addressed in this handbook. GMU GCH expressly disclaims any liabilities that may otherwise be incurred.

Students are accountable for familiarizing themselves with the handbook contents and for compliance with the policies and procedures contained herein.

We wish you the best in your course of study and look forward to helping you reach your goals.

Sincerely,

GMU College of Public Health, Department of Global and Community Health Faculty and Staff

Welcome to the Department of Global and Community Health PhD in Public Health program at George Mason University!

We are excited to work with you on your academic journey in public health. The field of public health continues to evolve to address emerging and persistent public health challenges and each class of students brings with them unique perspectives and new interests to address these challenges. We are here to ensure the best training experience that will support you to become tomorrow's public health research leaders.

This doctoral program is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the national accreditor for schools of public health. The program will prepare you to think critically as public health scientists, develop subject matter expertise and analytical skills to become successful independent researchers, and respond to the most pressing public health challenges facing Virginia, the nation, and the world.

This handbook includes information about important academic and communication policies, course of study, expected milestones and addresses your major questions about the program.

Your program consists of three important components:

1. **Coursework:** You will complete coursework across a broad spectrum of public health topics, covering social and structural determinants on health, health behavior, health inequities, global health systems, communicable and non-communicable diseases of global importance, epidemiology, and biostatistics. You will then gain depth of knowledge related to either epidemiology or social and behavioral sciences.
2. **Professional Development:** You will gain important professional development experience through mentored research and teaching pedagogy, a course in grant writing, doctoral research seminars and working closely with a faculty mentor and doctoral committee.
3. **Research Experience:** By completing a rigorous doctoral dissertation research project you will gain experience in conducting novel research and gain a depth of knowledge relating to a specific topic that will make you an expert in that area.

You will also develop connections to the faculty in the department as well as the other PhD students. Some are facilitated by the program, and it is also expected that students will take initiative to cultivate such connections. These relationships are vital to your professional development and success in the field.

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

- Contains essential information about the processes and procedures you must follow to meet the requirements for advancing to doctoral candidacy.
- Explains the steps for completing your dissertation research project and defending your dissertation.

We are dedicated to your success and are looking forward to helping you reach your academic goals!

Sincerely,

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Department Overview

The PhD in Public Health program is housed in the Department of Global and Community Health in the College of Public Health. Faculty are engaged in a wide range of public health research endeavors and are available to discuss current research opportunities and activities in the department with you.

Departmental Vision

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

Departmental 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.

Doctoral Program Staff

We have a team available as your primary resources for the program including your assigned Faculty Mentor, the Director of the Doctoral Program, and the Academic Coordinator. The Director of the Doctoral Program, Dr. Jhumka Gupta (jgupta4@gmu.edu) and the Academic Coordinator, Mr. Isaac Chomitz (ichomitz@gmu.edu), are your first points of contact for questions about required coursework, paperwork, program guidelines, and timelines.

Degree Requirements

This program is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the national accreditor for schools of public health. Each CEPH-accredited program goes through a rigorous accreditation process on a regular basis.

The PhD program requires that students¹:

- Complete at least 72 credits of graduate-level coursework with a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA (B or higher average);
- Successfully pass the Department's Qualifying Examination;
- Fulfill the mentored research requirement;
- Complete the Doctoral Faculty Preparation course;
- Pass the Defense of the Dissertation Research Proposal;
- Develop and conduct independent research culminating in a doctoral dissertation in the approved format;
- Successfully defend their dissertation during a public presentation.

¹ <https://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/public-health/global-community-health/public-health-phd/#requirementstext>

PhD in Public Health Concentrations

There are two concentrations in the PhD in Public Health program: epidemiology and social and behavioral sciences. 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 year of their matriculation into the program. Degree requirements for the 2025-2026 Academic Year are listed below. Links for degree requirements from previous academic years can be found in archived catalogs.

Competencies

Those completing the PhD in Public Health will achieve several competencies. A competency is the capability to apply or use a set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform "critical work functions" or tasks in a defined work setting. The following table summarizes the program competencies and the courses and academic activities that are designed to achieve those competencies.

Coverage of Competencies for PhD Degree, Both Concentrations
1. Identify strategies for addressing health inequity using multi-sectoral collaborations.
2. Critically analyze the scientific literature.
3. Produce original reproducible and ethical research in a specific area of public health research.
4. Communicate the results and implications of public health research.
5. Analyze using epidemiologic methods, how social determinants, policies, and cultural concepts influence population health inequities

Coverage of Competencies for PhD Degree in Social & Behavioral Sciences Concentration
1. Utilize strategies for monitoring and evaluating social and behavioral public health interventions
2. Utilize a broad range of methodological approaches for designing, constructing, or assessing instruments in social and behavioral health research.
3. Develop research protocols for social and behavioral health research studies using randomized, quasi-experimental, natural experiments, or hybrid designs.
4. Analyze current and emerging social and behavioral theories, models, and multi-level approaches that are used in public health research and practice

Competencies for PhD Degree in Epidemiology Concentration
1. Compare strengths and limitations of different epidemiologic study designs for a given research hypothesis

2. Using appropriate study designs, address complex methodologic problems in causal inference, including validity and bias
3. Apply appropriate analytic tools to address methodologic challenges, including confounding, information bias, selection bias, in epidemiologic data.
4. Utilize statistical techniques for the analysis of longitudinal, multilevel, survival, and other epidemiologic data.

Program of Study

The PhD in Public Health program of study requires completion of 72 credits of graduate coursework divided among four components: a core set of classes, faculty preparation and professional development, a set of concentration classes, and dissertation research. Up to 30 credits may be waived for students who have completed relevant post-baccalaureate work with approval from the Director of the Doctoral Program and the Faculty Mentor.

The PhD program in Public Health is designed for full-time students, with *rare* exceptions. Successful completion of the program requires a commitment of full-time enrollment in coursework in addition to mentored research prior to advancing to candidacy, and full-time faculty mentored research after a student has advanced to candidacy. Rare exceptions to allow part-time students may be made and are at the discretion of the Doctoral Program Academic Committee (DPAC).

The University requires doctoral students advance to candidacy within six (6) years of their first semester of enrollment, and to complete all program requirements within nine (9) years of their first semester of enrollment. Students may take leaves of absence, but unless these are related to approved medical and/or family leaves, these leaves do not alter the requirement to complete all requirements within nine (9) years of matriculation. Additionally, a student must apply for reenrollment after a leave of more than two semesters. Students who will not meet the nine-year time limit because of compelling circumstances beyond their control may petition for an extension. Failure to meet the time limit or to secure approval of an extension request shall result in termination from the program. See AP.6.9.2 in the University Catalog for additional information.

Course Planning

The most accurate list of required courses can be found in the catalog (catalog.gmu.edu) and will vary by concentration and year of matriculation. The Program of Study form (Appendix A) is intended to assist the student in planning for the doctoral course of study. Students are expected to update this form in consultation with the Faculty Mentor, Director, and Coordinator each semester.

The master Schedule of Classes can be found on [Patriot Web](#) each term for specific meeting times, dates, and locations. Please note that the Doctoral Research Seminar will be offered every term, and students are expected to attend each term until they complete the doctoral program.

Getting the most out of your doctoral training

The development of professional rapport with the Departmental and other faculty and other PhD students is an important component of doctoral training.

To facilitate your professional development, the program provides a variety of professional development opportunities, and participation in these should be taken as seriously as coursework. These include: opportunities for faculty-mentored research, working in interdisciplinary research teams, presenting scientific findings to colleagues, building networks of colleagues, learning to mentor, and teaching. Additionally, working closely with and building a professional relationship with your Faculty Mentor are key components of doctoral training. Thus, we encourage students to participate fully in the life of the Department by attending research seminars and faculty/staff job talks, meeting regularly with your mentor(s), and offering feedback to other students on their work. These activities help prepare students for their own presentations and expose students to a wider scope of current research in the field. Students are also strongly encouraged to attend Program events such as alumni panels, meetings with visiting faculty, and professional development workshops. Students are expected to approach these activities with curiosity and willingness to integration to other aspects of their PhD journey. Beyond GMU, students are highly encouraged to attend and present their research at professional meetings, publish in peer-reviewed journals, and join professional associations. Students may also be offered opportunities to serve as student representatives to committees and/or to provide feedback on proposed curricular and policy changes.

Classes

While many classes are 3-credit didactic courses, we would like to highlight the courses that repeat or are unique to our program.

GCH 890: Doctoral Research Seminar in Public Health

The course will expose students to ongoing research at George Mason University and emphasize professional development activities such as peer review, exposure to scientific research, scientific communication skills, preparing for the job market, and career planning.

This course will be taught every semester and all PhD students are required to enroll in it every semester in their first three years of the program and are strongly encouraged to attend the seminar thereafter. Once students have advanced to candidacy, they will be expected to attend 3 times per semester, including being a presenter for their dissertation research in progress. Students will enroll for 0 credits per semester. In the term before or of advancing to candidacy, students will enroll for 3 credits to earn a total of 3 credits during their time in the doctoral program. This semester will be determined in consultation with the Faculty Mentor and Director of the Doctoral Program.

The primary purpose of GCH 890 is to introduce students to the “hidden curriculum” in academia, including skills and strategies that are not necessarily taught within courses. The purpose of 890 is not to be a forum for socializing or tailored dissertation clinics. Even if students are planning for a career outside of the academy, they will still be able to transfer the strategies. Students benefit the most from 890 by reading materials in advance, participating in discussions/seminars, and integrating lessons learned/key takeaways into their ongoing research and scholarly activities. Students are in different stages of their training and it functions as an opportunity for all to learn from each other.

PH 850 : Teaching Practicum

Having a strong teaching dossier is often a critical component of a graduate's future academic job search. Additionally, public health professionals working within and outside the academy often have important responsibilities that rely on the ability to explain public health concepts to the public, supervisors, policymakers, and/or employees. Therefore, facility with teaching is an important skill needed by all PhD graduates, even if their professional goal is not in the academy.

PH 850 provides our graduates with the background and pedagogy needed for effective higher education instruction and in other professional contexts. Students will gain a background in pedagogy, including developing syllabi, lesson planning, and active learning. This course is offered at 3 credits.

After satisfactory completion of PH 850, students are eligible to serve as a Graduate Lecturer (GL) as instructor of record for compensation in consultation with the Director of the Doctoral Program and the Faculty Mentor. The availability of Graduate Lecturer positions can vary year to year. The process for selecting PhD student graduate lecturers is determined by the GCH Department and the Academic Programs Director.

Academic Policies

Academic Advising

The Director of the Doctoral Program and Academic Coordinator are the best resources for determining initial course sequencing, scheduling, and transfer of credits. Your Faculty Mentor is your best resource for guidance on professional development, dissertation opportunities, and developing professional networks.

Please note:

- Students who do not discuss course planning on a regular basis risk taking courses out of sequence, missing important requirements, and potentially delaying graduation.
- Not being aware of program requirements or personal scheduling conflicts are not valid reasons to request a requirement waiver or substitution.
- Students are expected to familiarize themselves with course offerings and course policies as written in the handbook prior to discussion with program staff.

Transfer of Credit

Students who have been admitted to the PhD in Public Health program and who have completed relevant post-baccalaureate coursework degrees may request a transfer of credit up to 30 credits in consultation with the Director of the Doctoral Program and Faculty Mentor. It is rare for students to transfer all 30 credits, even with a related graduate degree. Students may not transfer credit for coursework taken as part of a previous graduate program for GCH 890, or PH 850.

Students should contact the academic program coordinator and their mentor to initiate a transfer of credit proposal by date. Proposals must include the syllabi of any previous course proposed for a credit transfer and a justification of transfer endorsed by the mentor. Proposed transfers of credit are reviewed and must be approved of by faculty teaching the equivalent course as well as the doctoral program director.

Adequate Progress

Full-time Progress

Students are expected to make satisfactory, full-time progress towards their degree (i.e., be in full-time training) throughout their tenure in the doctoral program with rare exceptions. Full time progress is indicated by enrolling in a minimum of 6 credit hours each term (Fall, and Spring). Some scholarships require students to enroll for a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester (Fall and Spring). Credit hours may include course work and/or research hours. Beyond coursework, students' performance in mentored research as a GRA will also be monitored.

Grades

During coursework, due progress according to the PhD Program, is indicated by maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher in each term, receiving no grade lower than a B- in any required course, taking no more than one grade of incomplete in any term, not receiving a grade of incomplete failing (IF) or incomplete unsatisfactory (IU), and having no more than two grades of incomplete active at any point.

Receiving less than an A- in any required core or concentration coursework may raise concerns about the student's ability to successfully pass the qualifying examination. Therefore, any PhD student having difficulty in coursework and/or earning less than an A- in a required course should meet with their Faculty Mentor, the course instructor, and/or the Director of the Doctoral Program within one month of receiving a grade of B+ or lower to develop a plan to address any areas of weakness in the student's training.

When students are enrolled in GCH 998 or GCH 999, due progress is based on receiving a satisfactory grade (S) and on the annual report. The grade for these courses is based on meeting the objectives identified in the Dissertation Research Hours Agreement form (See Appendix C). The faculty mentor determines whether the objectives have been met or not and assigns a grade of S or NS.

Faculty Mentor and Academic Advising

A faculty mentor is assigned to each student at program entry. The faculty mentor is a faculty member with a primary appointment in the Department of Global and Community Health (typically with expertise that aligns with the concentration and stated interests of the advisee). Attempts are made to match each student to a faculty mentor who has the time and research area expertise to support the student's scholarly interests, even if their own research is not directly aligned with their mentee's.

The faculty mentor has the responsibility of assisting the student mentee in designing an academic program that meets the student's goals and fulfills the requirements of the program. The faculty mentor and the Director of the Doctoral Program guide the student to appropriate resources and research opportunities. In the first year, students should communicate with their faculty mentor and the Director of the Doctoral Program at least once per semester to plan their coming semester. Students bear the responsibility of consulting the mentor and Director when necessary and arranging periodic appointments. Course registrations must be approved by the mentor and Director prior to the start of the registration period for each term.

The faculty mentor assigned at the beginning of the program will often, but not always, serve as chair of the student's dissertation committee. It will be in the student's best interest to get to know several faculty members, and work on research for a variety of faculty to expand the student's ideas and research interests.

Per University policy, faculty members who are in the graduate faculty (tenured/tenure-track) within GCH are eligible and expected to advise doctoral students. Research-active term instructional faculty members may co-advise doctoral students or serve as committee members once they are admitted into the graduate faculty, but may not serve as the primary mentor.

Changing Faculty Mentors

Students whose research interests change may find that switching faculty mentors makes sense, particularly within the first two or three years of doctoral study. Ideally, if a student is going to switch mentors this would happen before the student begins working on the dissertation proposal. Students wishing to switch mentors should first verify that the proposed mentor is willing to mentor the student and has adequate time to support the student, and discuss with their current mentor. After the student has confirmed that the new mentor is willing to support the student, he/she should speak to the Director of the Doctoral Program who will facilitate a conversation between the student, the current mentor and the proposed mentor. Mentors must be part of the GCH Faculty.

Mentor changes after the dissertation committee has been constituted will rarely be considered and only with approval of the Director of the Doctoral Program and for extraordinary circumstances.

If the faculty mentor leaves Mason, the Director of the Doctoral Program will work with the student to identify a new faculty mentor. The prior mentor may remain on the committee as an external member or co-chair (when appropriate) so long as they maintain legacy graduate faculty status, but may not serve as the Chair, with limited exceptions.

Only in rarest and most extenuating circumstances will the Director of Doctoral Programs consider a change in Dissertation Chair that is initiated by the faculty mentor. For this reason, faculty mentors, including dissertation chairs, are expected to monitor the PhD student's progress, provide clear feedback, and document when expectations are not being met, and share such documentation with PhD mentees and with the Director of Doctoral Programs. The Director of Doctoral Programs can consult in extenuating circumstances in resolving such matters.

Progress Reports

All PhD students are required to submit 1) a Semester Progress check-in Survey and 2) an annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) after discussion with their faculty mentor(s). The Director of the Doctoral Program reviews the submitted documents and provides feedback to both the student and the faculty mentor. Returning students must submit the documents by a designated due date.

Semester Program Progress Check-in Survey: This is designed to help you reflect and discuss with your faculty mentor your academic and research progress and annual goals.

Individual Development Plan (IDP): This provides a guide to thinking and talking about your long-term goals, progress towards these goals, and potential barriers to meeting these goals. Although the IDP concept was initially developed as a tool to assist employees in career and personnel development, it is increasingly being used in research fields (both pre- and post-doctoral level training), and the NIH is now requiring it for all trainees who are supported by NIH funding (e.g., F31, T32). It is not a performance evaluation or a one-time activity. Rather, it should be viewed as a partnership between the student, their mentor, and the PhD Program, which is intended to make sure the student is receiving the training and support needed to accomplish their short and long-term goals. Students are invited (and encouraged) to consult with other appropriate faculty and public health professionals in completion of this document. Please see Appendix D for the IDP instructions.

Qualifying Examination

The purpose of the written qualifying examination (QE) is to evaluate whether students have achieved a minimum level of knowledge and skills covered in the core required courses to move forward to more advanced coursework and mentored research. The exam requires students to demonstrate their proficiency in applying the principles and methods of public health covered in the core PhD coursework. Thus, the QE is intended to ensure that students are broadly qualified in the practice of public health and are prepared to pursue mentored research in a specific area of epidemiology or social and behavioral sciences. The QE will typically include an SBS section, an epidemiology and biostatistics section, and an integration of SBS and epidemiology section.

The exam must be taken at the first opportunity following completion of all core coursework (excluding, GCH 830, GCH 890 and PH 850). Any student who does not pass the exam must retake the exam the next time it is offered for students. Not passing the exam in two attempts is grounds for dismissal from the program. Under extraordinary circumstances, students who do not pass for the second time may be offered the opportunity to petition to remain in the program, including a specific plan for remediation. This will be need to be reviewed and approved by DPAC. Students must pass the exam prior to defending their dissertation research proposals and in order to be eligible to register for GCH 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal.

The QE will focus on the competencies and learning objectives covered by the required core coursework (excluding, GCH830, GCH890, and PH 850). Announcement of the QE dates will be made 4 months prior to administration. All students are required to take the exam within the scheduled dates and testing siteno alternate exams or testing sites be offered.

Students have the right to seek accommodations for documented disabilities and medical conditions. Students must seek accommodations in coordination with George Mason's Office of Disability Services (<https://ds.gmu.edu/>).

Qualifying Examination Grading Policy

Students will either pass or not pass the QE. Not passing a single section on the first attempt of the QE will results in a retake of that section when it is offered the following year. Not passing multiple sections of the QE will result in a retake of the entire exam when it is offered the following year. The completed QE is graded by the Qualifying Examination Committee. Details of the qualifying exam are distributed in early spring semester at the latest. Final results are distributed to students prior to the fall semester.

Qualifying Examination Appeal Policy

Information on the department's QE appeal policy is meant to be an addendum to the college's grade appeal policy. <https://publichealth.gmu.edu/students/academic-policies-and-procedures/grade-appeal>

- a) Viewing QE grades and reviewer comments:
 - i. Only students who do not pass the QE will be given the opportunity to view their QE exam responses and grader comments/feedback.
- b) Instructor:
 - i. The first step in the procedure for College of Public Health students appealing a grade is to ask the instructor in writing to reconsider the grade and include a rationale for the grade appeal. The instructor that the students can initially appeal to is the PhD Director.
- c) Review Committee
 - i. In the event that the Department Chair approves that the appeal case move forward, the review committee will be comprised of the original graders.
- d) Grounds for appeal:
 - i. The following will be considered valid grounds for appeal, and should be included in the submitted rationale
 - 1. Environmental or time considerations. This may include a dysfunctional computer during the exam, for instance. The appeal committee will seek information/verification from the proctor in such instances
 - 2. Factual errors in terms of how a question was written or graded (i.e. if a question is factually incorrect or inconsistent with another part of the exam and different assumptions are not stated)
 - ii. Invalid grounds will include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Whether a difference in points/percentages would constitute passing or not passing
 - 2. Perceived scoring differences based on discussion with other peers.

It should be noted that if students do not pass the QE, they are still expected to attend required classes, including GCH 890. They are also still expected to submit IDPs in a timely manner. Students will work with their mentor to identify appropriate goals for career development.

Formulating a Dissertation Research Topic and Committee

As early in the program as possible the student should begin discussions about possible dissertation research topics with their faculty mentor, as well as other potential mentors, to define a suitable problem for the dissertation and to identify possible dissertation committee members.

The dissertation is the final product of the doctoral academic program. It is a written piece of original research that makes a novel contribution to the scientific literature and demonstrates the doctoral candidate's mastery of subject matter, methodologies, and conceptual foundations in their chosen field of study. This is generally achieved through consideration of a problem on the boundaries of knowledge in the discipline and is accomplished by identifying an overarching research question. The question must be addressed using a systematic, data-driven, and objective approach, with the results typically presented as at least three manuscripts suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. Typically, the overarching research question is addressed in an introductory chapter which justifies and contextualizes the current state of knowledge, and the results of the papers of publishable quality are synthesized in a concluding chapter that discusses how the results of the work presented in the papers advance the state of knowledge. Only work in consultation with the approved dissertation committee is considered to be part of the doctoral dissertation. Manuscripts submitted prior to registering for GCH 999 may be included as background material, but do not represent work completed as part of the PhD dissertation

In consultation with their faculty mentor and other experts, students will identify a topic for their dissertation. Multiple considerations must be weighed when identifying a topic, including:

- Student's interests and skills.
- The research interests and expertise of the faculty mentor, other Mason faculty, and other available experts.
- Available time (including both day-to-day availability and long-term timeline).
- Available resources (grant funding, available data, equipment needs, etc.).
- Relevance and novelty of the topic to public health.
- Ethical considerations.

Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee is appointed after the student has completed and passed the QE and has identified a general area of interest. Typically, the dissertation committee members will be selected while the student is working on their proposal with the approval of the faculty mentor and the Program Director. Typically the faculty mentor serves as the chair of the dissertation committee and assumes the primary responsibility for mentoring the student's research, and for supporting the student's professional development. In some cases, the faculty mentor may co-chair the committee with another scholar. At least one dissertation committee member must have expertise in the concentration that the student is in. The committee must be constituted in consultation with the dissertation chair, approval of the director of doctoral studies and prior to enrolling in GCH 998.

The student is expected to provide a one-page concept note that describes the proposed dissertation research topic to faculty that they would like to invite to serve on their dissertation committee. The student must complete the GCH 998 Dissertation Proposal Concept Form which includes a concept note, signatures from the committee members, faculty mentor and Director of the Doctoral Program (see Appendix E).

The dissertation committee is composed of at least three research-active scholars each with an earned a doctoral degree in a relevant discipline. All members must be approved of by DPAC at the time of concept note and 998 form submission. If there is a change in committee membership after the initial approval, the student must submit an amended form.

1. The **Dissertation Chair** must be a member of the graduate faculty in the Department of Global and Community Health (GCH).
2. The second member of the committee must be a full-time GCH faculty admitted to the graduate faculty and with scholarly expertise relevant to the field of study. The member may be from any department at the university.
3. The third member of the committee may be from Mason, and may be external to the GCH department. The third member must be admitted to the Graduate Faculty at Mason if not already.
4. Additional members may be added in consultation with the Dissertation Chair, and may be external to Mason. Careful consideration must be given to ensure the externally proposed committee member is able to fulfill all requirements of the dissertation committee.

See [AP.6.10.5](#) for more detail.

The dissertation committee represents a team that provides disciplinary diversity, expertise, and perspective that enhances the quality and impact of the student's work. Each committee member should be chosen to support the student's work in specific ways and should add value to the committee.

The student is responsible for keeping all committee members informed of the scope, plan, and progress of the research as well as the writing of the dissertation. Typically students meet with their entire dissertation committees, as a group, at least once per month. Additional individual meetings with committee members may be scheduled as needed to facilitate the dissertation research. Distributing meeting minutes to all committee members to track progress, key decisions, and action items, is highly encouraged. Committee members who are outside of GCH must adhere to GCH dissertation policies.

Advancing to Candidacy

According to University Catalog [AP.6.10.4](#), advancement to candidacy implies that a doctoral student has demonstrated both a breadth and a depth of knowledge in the field of study, is capable of exploring problems on the boundaries of knowledge and has identified a research area that is likely to lead to a successful dissertation. Advancement to candidacy is achieved once the student has successfully completed all components of their dissertation research proposal.

Once the student has passed the QE and once the dissertation committee is formed, the student may finalize and prepare to defend their dissertation research proposal. At this time, the student is required to register for the course GCH 998 – Doctoral Dissertation Proposal (for 3 credits) in consultation with their faculty mentor and the Director of the Doctoral Program.

Students who advance to candidacy after the add period for a given semester must wait until the following semester to register for GCH 999 Dissertation Research. Only at this point may students call themselves “doctoral candidate.” Prior to this, they should refer to themselves as “doctoral student.”

GCH 998: Dissertation Proposal

Students will register for GCH 998, Dissertation Proposal, once they complete required core and concentration core courses (excluding GCH 830, 850, 890 and restricted and unrestricted electives) for the PhD, have passed the QE, and have the approval of the Dissertation Chair and Director of the Doctoral Program. In order to register for GCH 998, the student must submit the GCH 998 Dissertation Proposal Concept Form, which also requires a concept note and detailed timeline that they developed in consultation with their Faculty Mentor. The Faculty Mentor must approve the plan, and it must be submitted to the doctoral program coordinator prior to the add/drop deadline of the corresponding semester. GCH 998 Dissertation Proposal Concept Forms will be reviewed by the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee.

To receive approval of the GCH 998 Dissertation Proposal Concept Form, students must demonstrate familiarity with the literature in their proposed area(s) of research in the concept note. This includes preliminary reading of the literature to identify gaps in the field to justify the proposed PhD dissertation work. The GCH 998 Dissertation Proposal Concept Form does require pre-work, thus it is expected that the student has conducted the necessary preparatory work when writing the concept note. Only in rare and exceptional cases will systematic reviews be permitted to be part of the dissertation papers. In some circumstances where key milestones continue to not be met despite feedback from committee members, students will be graded as not satisfactory and register for 3 credits the following semester. The PhD Director will meet with the student and faculty mentor in such circumstances and will formulate a plan to address any challenges and shortcomings. With the exception of rare and extraordinary circumstances, students will be permitted to enroll in 998 no more than two times.

The Dissertation Proposal includes two components: a written proposal and an oral defense of proposal.

Written Dissertation Proposal

Before writing the dissertation itself, each student must prepare a dissertation proposal and defend it successfully. The purpose of the proposal is to demonstrate to the committee that the student has conducted sufficient preparatory work to be able to complete the dissertation. Passing the oral proposal defense constitutes approval for the student to undertake the proposed research and to begin writing the dissertation. Students should expect to spend several months writing the proposal. The proposal narrows the scope of research from broad fields or areas of specialization to more focused research questions or hypothesis.

The PhD student must work with their mentor in obtaining feedback on proposal drafts. The mentor must approve of all drafts prior to the student sending the drafts to other committee members.

The written dissertation proposal will include the development and justification of the proposed research questions/hypotheses, critical literature review, proposed study methods including the data analysis plan and expected statistical power, and detailed publication strategy. It must include the proposed study’s theoretical/conceptual foundations, and a methods section which includes the study design, study population, and proposed analytic methods for all components of the research. While the

structure of each individual student's proposal might differ somewhat, the following outline serves as a guide for both the student and the committee. In order to facilitate publication success, our department uses the three publishable manuscript approach as opposed to the traditional dissertation proposal. It should also be noted that some dissertations may yield more than three publishable manuscripts.

Detailed expectations regarding the structure of the written dissertation proposal can be found below.

Dissertation Proposal Structure

1. Title and Abstract: A working title for the dissertation and an abstract will head the proposal; the student should be able to state the purpose of the dissertation in one sentence.
2. Executive Summary: This section defines the area of inquiry, explains why it is important to the discipline or field, and shows how the dissertation relates to the broader area of research. This section should contextualize the proposed manuscripts/chapters, and how they relate to one another, and how collectively, the proposed work advances the field. The introduction also briefly states the research questions and it lays out the framework for the rest of the proposal. (This section should be approximately 4-5 pages in length)

For each manuscript/chapter, students are expected to address the following:

3. Significance: This section should include a **critical** review of the literature and the conceptual/theoretical basis and justification of the project. The literature review is not merely a descriptive list of related peer-reviewed publications or an annotated bibliography. It should focus on research directly relevant to the dissertation and show how the dissertation will contribute new knowledge to that literature. What is known, what are the gaps in current knowledge and how does dissertation seek to fill these gaps? How will the proposed work align and build upon existing research in the field (e.g. methods, study design, content area, population of focus)? This section should not simply be a summary of the existing research, but should clearly demonstrate analysis of the existing research. The section should also include the research question (s). After reading this section, the reader should have a clear understanding of how the proposed research will advance the field and why it is important for the field of public health. (This section should be approximately 6-8 pages in length)
4. Proposed Methods/Approach. This section should provide details on the methods being proposed to carry out the dissertation research. In addition to providing details, diagrams, charts, and tables are also helpful. The following should be included in this section (this section should be 8-10 pages in length)
 - Description of the dataset and study design, and how access to these data are being provided
 - Description of the study sample and how participants were recruited/will be recruited, including human subjects considerations
 - Description of data collection procedures

- Description of measures/variables of interest and proposed variable coding approach (including justification). Psychometric properties of measures should also be included.
- Proposed analytic methods and justification (include alternative approaches and why the proposed approach is superior to alternative approaches)
- Description of any preliminary descriptive analysis and proposed table shells and other data visualizations
- Statistical power considerations (if relevant)
- What are anticipated challenges/obstacles in completing your research and your contingency plans
- Expected limitations of the proposed research. For each limitation described, the student should also include a discussion on how that limitation may impact study findings/associations of interest.
- Strengths of the study
- How this paper/ chapter relates to other papers/chapters within the dissertation
- How this moves the field as a whole forward--methodologically, content-wise, practically (i.e. So What?)

5. Time Frame: The proposal should include a concrete timeline for completing the research. This should be in a visual chart form, with key milestones clearly delineated. A narrative should include potential challenges and delays, and how the student will address such challenges in completing the work within the timeline as outlined as well as contingency plans. (this section should be 1-2 pages in length)

6. Bibliography. This should include peer-reviewed and other reputable references. References should be in either AMA or APA format--this decision will be left to the committee chair. The use of Zotero is strongly recommended.

Oral Proposal Defense

The student will orally defend the proposal in a closed committee meeting in which the dissertation's impact, aims, and methods will be formally presented to the full committee. The committee may ask for clarification on any aspects of the proposal, and/or may ask questions about foundational knowledge to be sure that the student is academically prepared to complete the research, that the research will provide impactful knowledge and that the proposed work is adequately rigorous. Any critical information that the student plans to present in the oral proposal defense should be included in the written proposal, and vice versa. The oral proposal defense is not a substitute for the written proposal. The student will advance to candidacy once they successfully defend their dissertation proposal and meet any requirements of the dissertation committee (for example the dissertation committee may ask students to complete additional training in a specific method to better prepare them to complete their proposed research). The proposal defense presentation should be 30-45 minutes long, with an additional 30 minutes for questions and answers.

Scheduling: The student is responsible for securing the presentation forum for the proposal defense, requesting Multimedia support if needed, and sending a memo to committee members confirming the

date, time, and forum prior to the proposal defense date. All scheduling confirmations must be done by at least 2 weeks prior to the proposal defense date.

Proposal Defense Outcome: The outcome of the proposal defense is Unconditional Pass, or Failure. The consequence of a failure is decided by the Committee: (1) no re-defense; (2) re-defense. A no re-defense outcome may require a revised written proposal and point-by-point response to committee concerns. A re-defense would involve a revised written proposal AND involve an additional oral presentation. Students are permitted two attempts to receive an Unconditional Pass—two failures would result in dismissal from the program. The format and terms will be decided by the committee. The dissertation committee must complete the Proposal Defense Outcome Form and submit it to the program coordinator and program director. See Appendix F for the Proposal Defense Outcome Form. It should be noted that students should only schedule a defense if and when the committee deems that the student is ready to defend.

Dissertation

Once the student has successfully defended their Proposal for dissertation research, they may advance to conducting their dissertation research and can register for GCH999 Dissertation Research. The dissertation shows that a student is able to identify a gap in current scientific knowledge, identify scientifically valid ways of addressing this gap, conduct scientific research building on this approach, contextualize findings, present findings to the scientific community, and discuss research implications and recommendations. Students can only be eligible to defend their dissertation upon their committee's approval. Students may not apply for graduation unless explicitly approved by the dissertation committee.

GCH 999: Dissertation Research

The dissertation represents the independent scholarly or scientific research of the doctoral candidate. Often the dissertation is completed as three publishable manuscripts that all address a unifying research question. At least two of the manuscripts must be submitted to a peer-reviewed publication at the time of the dissertation defense. The dissertation committee is required to approve of the manuscript prior to submission to a journal. Proof of submission should be sent to the academic program coordinator (Isaac Chomitz) and is required prior to the dissertation defense. The specifics of each student's dissertation research will be developed in consultation with their Dissertation Committee, particularly the student's faculty mentor. Students in 999 are also required to present their dissertation research as a research in progress in GCH 890 as preparation for their official dissertation defense presentation.

Although the student may conduct preliminary work in support of the dissertation proposal, students are expected to conduct the majority of their dissertation research after they have successfully defended their dissertation proposal. Work published prior to defending their proposal may contribute to the scientific background justifying the dissertation's aims, but should not contribute to the dissertation. Students will register for GCH 999, Dissertation Research, the semester following the Dissertation Committee's approval of the dissertation proposal.

It should be noted that because public health is, by definition, an interdisciplinary field, it is expected that other researchers, particularly the faculty mentor and the dissertation committee, will be actively involved in the dissertation research. Further, learning to work in and lead interdisciplinary teams is a

fundamental skill in public health. However, the research question should be the student's own idea and the student should lead the intellectual work and research. The PhD student is expected to be the first author, while the committee chair is typically senior author on one or more of the dissertation manuscripts. Students should familiarize themselves with authorship guidance from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>

The dissertation is presented as a written document and should be submitted to the dissertation committee at least 21 days in advance of the dissertation defense date to allow committee members adequate time to review and comment on the document. The dissertation presented to the committee will be in the format of three publishable quality manuscripts, the executive summary, and the conclusion. The final version of the document will be prepared and approved following the dissertation defense. However, it is common for the committee to request that the student make revisions to the dissertation document prior to submitting it to the University. Except in unusual circumstances and with the approval of the PhD Program Director, revisions must be completed within 14 days following the dissertation defense.

The written dissertation document, as presented to the University, must also conform to the University Library's formatting requirements. The University provides templates at <https://library.gmu.edu/udts/resources#templates>. Our program will use the manuscript template, not the traditional chapter-based template. More information follows.

Dissertation Defense

The doctoral candidate will schedule the Dissertation Defense upon approval by the doctoral dissertation committee, coordinating with the program director/chair. Notice of a defense must be circulated to the university community two weeks before the defense date. The Dissertation Defense includes a public presentation of the scholarship included in the dissertation. The public defense should demonstrate the candidate's maturity of judgment and intellectual command of the chosen branches of the field of study. The presentation is 30-45 minutes long, followed by audience question and answer for 30 minutes.

The public presentation will be followed by a closed meeting of the dissertation committee. The committee may ask for clarification and/or ask questions regarding foundational knowledge to ensure that the candidate is ready to graduate. It is typical that the committee request revisions to the written dissertation document during this closed meeting.

At the close of the dissertation defense, the dissertation committee makes final judgments for approving the dissertation during a closed deliberation, without the candidate present. The doctoral candidate is responsible for making all required revisions promptly, submitting the original and required copies, and obtaining required signatures. Final approval for the dissertation is given by the doctoral dissertation committee and PhD Program Director/GCH Department Chair.

Dissertation Defense Outcome: The possible outcome of the Dissertation Defense is determined by closed vote as Pass, Conditional Pass, or Did not Pass. If one or more members require substantive changes to the dissertation (Conditional Pass), the specific nature of these changes and the time expected for the student to complete them will be provided to the student in writing. The revised dissertation must be submitted to each of the members for final approval. If one or more members feel

that the candidate's understanding of the written dissertation is inadequate, or that the dissertation in its present form is not acceptable, then the candidate has failed. Reexamination would be in order unless there is a unanimous recommendation to the contrary. This must take place within 6 months or the next term, whichever is sooner. See Appendix G for the Dissertation Defense Outcome Form.

University-level Thesis Submission, Formatting, and Approval

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. Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment with this office to ensure that they are meeting requirements early in the process. Please note that a formal review is required from Thesis Services as stated on their website, "There is a [Format Review](#) deadline in each semester; it is the Friday before the Final Submission deadline in that semester. In order for you to be eligible to graduate in that semester, you must receive an email from our office by the deadline stating that your formatting adheres to University Guidelines and that you have passed the Format Review."

Final Submission

The University Dissertation and Thesis Services webpage lists the steps needed to submit the dissertation to the university. It includes:

- Signature sheet of committee members and CHHS leadership
- Electronic copy of thesis
- Transmittal Sheet
- Embargo Request Form

The University sends this information in an email to all students during the Format Review Process. More information can be found at <https://library.gmu.edu/udts/process>. See [AP.6.9.4 in the University Catalog](#) for additional information.

Doctoral Student Funding

Tuition and Stipend Information

Scholarships for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) and Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) may be awarded by the College of Public Health, the Department of Global and Community Health or other funders. Each funding source will have specific registration and research requirements. It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with, and abide by, those specific requirements. Students may also be hired as Graduate Lecturers (GLs)

Graduate Research Assistants: Typically, GRAs will work with the faculty mentor assigned to them upon matriculation on a faculty-mentored research project for 20 hours per week for the duration of their fellowship. The research conducted as a GRA is separate from the dissertation research project although there may be some overlap. Responsibilities may include helping to conduct literature reviewers; collecting, coding, cleaning, or analyzing data; maintaining research records; preparing materials for grant applications; writing scholarly manuscripts; and developing materials for conference presentations. The specific duties and responsibilities should be clearly discussed with the faculty at the start of each semester. NOTE: GRAs who are supported by the College or Department may seek out research training from faculty members other than the faculty mentor initially assigned to them. Students may also choose to work with a different faculty member on funded research as a way to provide additional stipend support. Working with different faculty members also allows students to gain experience on different research projects, to get to know other faculty members, and to diversify their set of research skills. Deciding to work with a different faculty member on their research is not the same as choosing to change faculty mentors. Even so, the decision to conduct research with a faculty member who is not the assigned faculty mentor should be made in consultation with the current faculty mentor, proposed faculty member and DPAC.

Graduate Teaching Assistants: GTAs who are supported by the College or Department will be responsible for assisting faculty with course instruction, grading, preparing and editing instructional materials. Typically, GTAs will be expected to work on instruction for approximately 20-hours per week which is typically equivalent to 2 3-hour courses. When appropriate, GTAs may teach an undergraduate course as the Instructor of Record. GTAs may teach graduate courses once they have advanced to candidacy.

Graduate Lecturers: GLs are instructors of record for one course, and are paid on a course by course basis. Students must have satisfactory completion of PH 850 and have a previous Masters degree to be eligible for a GL position.

Students receiving stipends must be registered as full-time students as stipulated by the funder (Mason considers full-time as no less than 6 credit hours/term) during the period that they are receiving their stipend and be in good standing. Note that some Mason supported and other scholarships define full-time as 9 credit hours per Fall and Spring term. It is the responsibility of the student to understand the requirements of the funder and to ensure that they abide by those.

GRA Work Expectations

The GRA position is designed for PhD students to primarily conduct mentored research under the direction and in support of the research mentor's ongoing research studies. In essence, the faculty mentor is in charge and has final say over GRA activities. Students must allocate 20 hours/week on their professor's research and other projects as assigned by their mentor. It is expected that GRAs will also serve as a co-author on at least one publication and a lead/first author for at least one peer-reviewed publication each year. All peer-reviewed publications must be reviewed and approved by their research mentors prior to submission. Not obtaining such approval may result in a submission withdrawal. Journal and conference selection must be approved by their mentors.

Dissertation-focused research must not be included within the 20 hours/week. Time spent on dissertation research activities is accounted for in GCH 998 and 999 credit hours.

Additional projects of interest should be carried out outside of the 20 hours/week, unless there is explicit approval from research mentors. Students may have the option of independent study credits if additional projects are outside the scope of approved GRA activities.

External Funding

Given the importance of grantsmanship to PhD-trained public health scientists, students are encouraged to write a grant proposal to support their research in the second or third year of the program. Students who seek external funding should discuss their plans with their faculty mentor. The faculty mentor should ensure that policies and procedures for submitting proposals are in alignment with the Office of the Associate Dean for Research and the [Office of Sponsored Programs](#). The university and many foundations have research grant programs to support dissertation research and information about these can be found at the university's research support webpage.

Student Fees

Students are responsible for all fees, including mandatory student fees, new student fees, course fee, late registration fees, throughout their tenure in the doctoral program unless a Training Grant or other funding source specifically covers these fees.

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 online training program and can be found at <http://www.citiprogram.org/>. This training requirement applies regardless of whether such research receives external funding.

Research using human subjects or animals must be approved by the [Institutional Review Board and/or other relevant review unit](#) (e.g., Radiation Safety Committee, Institutional Biosafety Committee, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, etc.) prior to beginning research. This may involve multiple IRBs, depending on the scope of the proposed research and entities that are involved. A faculty mentor must be the investigator of record for any application to the relevant review board. Students must work closely with the faculty mentor to submit materials on time according to the IRB Meeting Schedule or risk delayed data collection, completion of dissertation, and/or graduation.

Academic Integrity

All work completed as part of the doctoral program, including the dissertation must represent the student's own intellectual scholarship and contribute to the field. The University takes academic integrity seriously. Students should speak with their faculty mentor and visit the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) with questions about cheating, plagiarism, stealing, or lying in the context of original academic work

Citations

The department does not have a required reference citation style; the student and faculty research mentor can decide what is most appropriate. The University Libraries provide useful information at <https://infoguides.gmu.edu/citingdata>. Students are encouraged to use 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://library.gmu.edu/udts>

Communication and Program Policies

Communication and Mason Email

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

- Activating their Mason email account.
- Using their Mason email account to send and receive all University-related communication and content.
- Checking their Mason email accounts regularly.
- Checking the Teams Channel at least once a day for departmental specific communication for the PhD program

University faculty, staff, and administration are not responsible for, and will not respond to, any email from enrolled students sent using a non-Mason account. This measure is taken to protect student privacy and ensure that email messages are not lost through spam filters. Please see mail.gmu.edu for more information.

Changing Programs or Concentrations

Students are admitted to the PhD in public health program and into one of two concentrations within and are expected to complete the program for which they were admitted. However, changes may be allowed with special permission.

Changing Concentrations

A change of concentration (e.g., from Epidemiology to Social and Behavioral Sciences) must be approved and reviewed by the Program Director and DPAC. Students should explore the impact on the length of time in program or funding with the Director of Doctoral Studies and their faculty mentor. Students must complete the Change of Program (Graduate) form which can be found on the Office of the Registrar site. Students scores on the QE and core coursework may also be considered.

Changing Degree Programs

Mason students enrolled in the PhD in Public Health may change to a lesser degree program within GCH (e.g., from the PhD program to the MPH program) with approval from the department.² Students must complete the Change of Program (Graduate) form which can be found on the Office of the Registrar site. Students should discuss options with their faculty mentor before requesting this change or changing classes. Such a change will impact funding, if received.

Feedback Procedures

There are a variety of channels to submit feedback and report concerns, 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 then reach out to the Director of Doctoral Studies, Dr. Jhumka Gupta at jgupta4@gmu.edu.

Grade Appeals

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

Protected-Class Discrimination or Ethics Violations

The Office of Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics (CDE) has an [intake form](#) for complaints regarding protected-class discrimination or ethics violations. Visit the CDE website for more information at diversity.gmu.edu.

Sexual or Interpersonal Misconduct Report Form

The Office of Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics (CDE) has a [report form](#) for complaints regarding alleged incidents of sexual or interpersonal misconduct. Visit the CDE website for more information at diversity.gmu.edu.

Program Feedback

The Department of Global and Community Health is committed to delivering the highest quality graduate degree programs and concentrations and providing an overall first-rate academic experience to all students. Suggestions may be made to any faculty member in the Department of Global and Community Health in confidence.

Student Code of Conduct

Students should familiarize themselves with Mason's student code of conduct <https://studentconduct.gmu.edu/our-process/university-policies/code-of-student-conduct/>

Mandatory Reporting

Faculty members are designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. To speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

² <https://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/GCP-Graduate-Change-of-Program-0421.pdf>

(703-993-2380). Assistance is also available from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing cde@gmu.edu.

Where to Find the Information You Need

The following lists a sample of the many resources available to graduate students at George Mason University. Refer to the online orientation in Blackboard for more resources. For even more services available at Mason, consult the online orientation in Blackboard.

Office	Resources	Website
Office of the Registrar	University Calendar Registering for classes Degree Works	registrar.gmu.edu
University Career Services	Support in creating resumes, cover letters, and finding jobs and internships	careers.gmu.edu
Office of International Programs and Services	Support and guidance for international students	https://oips.gmu.edu/
CPH Career Services	Career advising, internship, and job support for College of Public Health Students	https://publichealth.gmu.edu/students/careers-advising-and-outcomes
IT Services	Technology support, including Mason email, Blackboard, etc.	its.gmu.edu
Office of Student Financial Aid	Student loans	financialaid.gmu.edu
Office of Student Accounts	Tuition payments	studentaccounts.gmu.edu
Office of Graduate Student Life	Social and academic support for graduate students	gradlife.gmu.edu
Office of the Provost – Graduate Education	Provides information on graduate funding	provost.gmu.edu/academics-and-research/graduate-education
University Libraries	Citations Research assistance Study rooms Educational workshops	library.gmu.edu
Office of Disability Services	Registering for classroom and testing accommodations for a documented disability	ds.gmu.edu
Student Involvement	Enhancing the student experience	mason360.gmu.edu

Gender Identity and Pronoun Use

Students and employees are able to identify their chosen name and pronouns through Patriot Web. Chosen name and pronouns may be used in many areas, including on class rosters, Blackboard, and other systems. However, there may be some areas that Mason is legally required to use a student's legal name or where system/application limitations may not use chosen name or pronouns.

For the purposes of this policy, pronouns will be 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/>.

Appendices

Appendix A. Program of Study Form

Appendix D Individual Development Plan Instructions

Appendix E GCH 998 Dissertation Research Proposal Concept Note form

Appendix F for the Proposal Defense Outcome Form

Appendix G for the Dissertation Defense Outcome Form