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## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Health Behavior and Health Education (HBHE) is part of the School of Public Health (SPH), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). HBHE offers the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. The *Guidelines* describe the principles guiding doctoral training and the requirements for the PhD.

In light of the dynamism of the field of health behavior and health education, the *Guidelines*, including the doctoral training principles and degree requirements, are periodically reviewed and updated by the faculty. Two other documents contain important information and regulations: (1) *The Record of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill* and (2) *The Graduate School Handbook*. Both documents are on the Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.unc.edu/>). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with all requirements, rules, policies, procedures, and deadlines in these documents.

## PRINCIPLES GUIDING DOCTORAL TRAINING

Doctoral training in HBHE prepares researchers who demonstrate outstanding skills in advancing understanding of health-related behaviors that contribute to critical public health problems and in research aimed at developing, evaluating, and disseminating interventions to ameliorate those problems. Students gain research skills that can be applied to domestic and global health problems and that prepare them for leadership roles. A set of principles guides training.

- An appreciation of the history and philosophy of public health and health behavior and health education, as well as understanding similarities and differences of these fields from other social science disciplines, is a necessary foundation to address contemporary problems and formulating research.
- Health behavior research is guided by the application of theory. Theory helps illuminate the interplay among biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors associated with health behaviors and how those factors are relevant to health-

related interventions. Students are expected to critically evaluate and use a range of theories at multiple levels to guide research on health behavior and to develop, implement and evaluate health-related interventions in a variety of settings.

- Mastery of research methods, including principles of research design and data analysis, is essential to health behavior and health education research. A firm grasp of research methods and the process of scientific inquiry is a basis for informed decision making. Students are expected to demonstrate skills in reasoning and in gathering, synthesizing, and interpreting empirical evidence.
- Health behavior and health education is inherently an interdisciplinary field and requires the ability to reason and act in an integrative manner. The multifaceted nature of the field is reflected in emphases on research and practice, etiology and prevention, theory and methods, as well as intersections among multiple levels of determinants and the range of settings in which interventions are developed. Students should demonstrate and apply understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of the field to health behaviors and health-related interventions.
- The ability to communicate is fundamental to planning and executing interventions, reporting health behavior and health education research findings, and obtaining research funding. Students should speak and write clearly, accurately, and suitably for the intended audience. Critical skills are the ability to report research objectively, insightfully, and in the context of theory and prior research and to prepare compelling justifications for proposed research, programs, and policies. These skills are requisite to publishing research findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Doctoral training in HBHE follows these principles and is accomplished through mentoring, courses, practica, and, ultimately, the conduct of dissertation research. The principles are reflected in doctoral learning objectives. Faculty scholarship also reflects these principles through faculty members' diverse training, theoretical perspectives, and areas of expertise, all of which are unified by the shared mission of understanding and improving the health of populations.

## DOCTORAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Doctoral students are expected to develop competencies in behavioral and social science theory, research methods, health education principles and practices, and professional issues. These learning objectives are minimum objectives that form the foundation of doctoral training. All students have additional learning objectives and develop specialized and in-depth competencies in areas of interest.

### *Behavioral and Social Science Theory*

- Understand the value of theories and conceptual models in analyzing and developing solutions for public health problems.
- Identify and critically evaluate theories, conceptual models, and concepts relevant to health behavior and health education.
- Articulate the assumptions, either explicit or implicit, that underlie selected theories, conceptual models, and concepts.
- Apply theories and conceptual models at multiple levels to guide understanding of biological, psychological, social, and environmental determinants of health.
- Use theories and conceptual models at multiple levels to inform the planning, implementation and evaluation of health education programs in multiple settings.

### *Research Methods*

- Demonstrate understanding of principles of research design and statistical analysis.
- Demonstrate understanding of the strengths and limitations of quantitative and qualitative methods in research and evaluation designs and analyses.

- Critically analyze research and evaluation studies from the literature in terms of the appropriateness of their research designs, measures, data analytic strategies, results, and conclusions.
- Conceptualize a research problem or an evaluation issue and identify appropriate research designs to address the problem.
- Understand a range of data analytic methods and select and apply the most appropriate ones to address specific research questions.
- Demonstrate skills in reasoning and in gathering, synthesizing, and interpreting empirical evidence.

### *HBHE Principles and Practices*

- Identify and critically examine important historical, philosophical, and conceptual issues that have shaped public health and health education.
- Recognize the interdisciplinary nature of health behavior and health education, while understanding similarities and differences with other social science disciplines.
- Identify the role of cultural, social, environmental, and behavioral factors in determining disease, effective disease prevention, health promoting behavior, and medical service utilization.
- Demonstrate ability to draw on theory, research, and practice to present compelling justifications for proposed research, programs, and policies.
- Analyze specific public health problems and issues in terms of their ethical and ideological underpinnings.

### *Professional Issues*

- Seek out and develop mentored relationships with faculty, practicum advisors, and others.

- Function effectively and productively, both independently and as part of a team, in academic and/or professional positions.
- Communicate research findings and conclusions in a clear and concise manner in both oral and written forms and at the appropriate level for the intended audience.
- Demonstrate the ability to write manuscripts of publishable quality for peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- Identify research funding sources and write grant proposals to support original research.
- Apply effective strategies and techniques to teaching and/or training.
- Uphold the highest ethical standards in planning, conducting, and analyzing research involving human subjects.
- Identify common ethical dilemmas that arise in teaching, practice, and research and evaluation roles.
- Interact sensitively, effectively, and professionally with persons from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, and professional backgrounds, and with persons of all ages and lifestyle preferences.

## **RESIDENCY AND ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Students must register full-time in the Department (nine or more credit hours per semester) for the Fall and Spring semesters during the first two years. Part-time enrollment is not allowed during the first year. Full-time enrollment exceptions in the second year may be made under special circumstances, subject to approval of the department chair and director of the doctoral program. See Section 2.7 of *The Graduate School Handbook* for minimum residence requirements. The Department strongly recommends that students continue to maintain residency at least until the oral qualifying examination is passed and the dissertation is underway.

In keeping with policies of the Graduate School and University, students are required to be enrolled during any semester, including Summer Sessions I and II, when they are completing practica, have their formal first year review, take the written comprehensive examination, take the oral qualifying examination, and defend the dissertation. Students also must be enrolled during any semester when doing dissertation research or writing or making use of faculty, or departmental or university resources.

### **Leave of Absence**

Students in good academic standing may request a leave of absence from the Department for a defined period of time (up to one year), during which no academic progress is made. After consultation and approval from the academic advisor and director of the doctoral program, students should complete a Request of Leave of Absence form, which can be downloaded from the Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.unc.edu/>). Students should give the completed form to the departmental registrar, who files the application with the Graduate School..

## **ACADEMIC ADVISING AND PROGRESS REPORTING INFORMATION**

### **The Academic Advisor**

Students are assigned a faculty academic advisor upon entering the doctoral program. The Department considers student preference, match of faculty and student research interests, and faculty availability in assigning advisors. The academic advisor is responsible for approving activities that satisfy course requirements. If appropriate, either the student or advisor may decide later that another faculty member is more suitable as academic advisor for that student. These types of changes occur routinely with the only potential barriers being the availability of a departmental faculty member qualified and willing to serve as advisor, and approval of the director of the doctoral program.

Although doctoral students are expected to work independently and be responsible for making appropriate progress in the program, students work

closely with their advisor and other faculty. The advisor guides the student in identifying courses and practica and assisting with any problems affecting the student's relationships with faculty, colleagues, or the Department as a whole. Students are responsible for seeking meetings as needed with their advisors. We encourage students to get to know and work with a range of faculty during their first two years in HBHE.

### **First Year Progress Review and Academic Committee**

At the end of the student's first year, the student and academic advisor form an academic committee to assist both the student and advisor in formally reviewing the student's progress in the doctoral program. The academic committee has four members: the student's academic advisor, the director of the doctoral program, and two other faculty members approved by the faculty advisor, at least one of whom must be from within the department. At least one week before the formal progress review, the student must give committee members a printed summary report including (1) educational and professional objectives, (2) completed and proposed coursework, (3) practica descriptions and contracts, (4) description of other involvements and responsibilities (e.g., research assistantships, fellowships), (5) list of questions for the committee, and (6) current curriculum vitae. Within a week after the review, the student must prepare a brief summary statement of the committee's evaluation and recommendations. The student must provide a copy of the summary statement to the advisor, each committee member, the director of the doctoral program, and the registrar for inclusion in the student's permanent file.

If determined to be appropriate by the faculty advisor, the advisor can activate the academic committee for additional meetings before or after the first year progress review.

### **Written Progress Reports**

Beginning at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> semester and every semester thereafter until graduation, the student must provide a written progress report via email to the academic advisor (or dissertation committee chair, if one has been selected), the director of the doctoral program, the chair of the department, and the registrar for inclusion in the student's permanent file. The report should be submitted no later than the date of the last day of exams on the

Academic Calendar for the Fall and Spring semesters and should be no longer than two pages.

For students who have not yet passed the oral qualifying exam (i.e., defended the dissertation proposal), the report should identify the following: (1) the dissertation topic or progress toward identifying a topic; (2) the research questions or progress toward formulating research questions; (3) the likely chair or possible candidates and faculty with whom students have met to discuss their dissertation topics and/or their research question(s); (4) plans over the next 4 to 6 months to move closer to being ready for the oral qualifying exam; (5) barriers to progress; and (6) how the Department can help the student achieve the goal of progressing to, and ultimately passing, the oral qualifying exam.

For students who have passed their oral qualifying exam, the report should include the following information: (1) date of the oral qualifying exam; (2) names and department affiliations of dissertation committee members; (3) subject area or working title of the dissertation; and (4) report of progress since the oral qualifying exam (or since last end-of-semester progress report, whichever is more recent), including what stage(s) of the dissertation process the student is in (e.g., data collection, analysis, writing up results); (5) expected date (month and year) of the dissertation defense; and (6) any problems, special circumstances, successes (e.g., wrote and obtained a grant) since the last report.

### **Progress Meetings**

Beginning at the 8<sup>th</sup> semester, students who have not successfully passed the oral qualifying exam must schedule an annual progress review meeting with a committee made up of at least three HBHE faculty members including: (1) the dissertation chair (or academic advisor if the chair has not yet been selected); (2) the director of the doctoral program or chair of the department; and (3) one or two other HBHE faculty members. While welcomed as members of dissertation committees, non-HBHE faculty are not appropriate as members of the proposal progress meeting group. Students should submit copies of the written progress report to all committee members one week prior to the progress committee meeting.

## Departmental File

Each student has a permanent file maintained by the departmental registrar. Copies of progress meeting materials, progress reports, practicum contracts, and all other paper work related to the student's academic career are stored in the file. It is the student's responsibility to provide copies to the registrar.

## DOCTORAL TRAINING SEQUENCE

Students must meet all requirements within eight years from the date of first registration in the HBHE doctoral program. Table 1 shows the general timetable of steps in the doctoral program. A semester number followed by "+" indicates the earliest semester that the event typically happens.

**Table 1: Doctoral Training Sequence and Timetable**

<b>Academic Event</b>	<b>Semester after Entry</b>
First year progress review	2
Completion of minimal course and seminar requirements <sup>1</sup>	4
Completion of biostatistics and epidemiology SPH core course requirements <sup>2</sup>	4
Completion of primary practicum requirements	4
Completion of secondary practicum requirements <sup>3</sup>	4+
Completion of environmental science and health policy SPH core course requirements <sup>2,3</sup>	4+
Written comprehensive examination	5
Selection of doctoral dissertation committee	5+
Written progress reports <sup>4</sup>	5+
Oral qualifying examination <sup>5</sup>	5+
Admission to doctoral candidacy	5+
Submission of dissertation	6+
Oral defense of dissertation	6+
Award of doctoral degree	6+

<sup>1</sup>9 of the required 46 credits, exclusive of specific required courses and seminars, may be completed after the written comprehensive exam.

<sup>2</sup>Applies only to students without a prior MPH.

<sup>3</sup>Must be completed before the oral qualifying exam.

<sup>4</sup>Required at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> semester and every subsequent semester until graduation.

<sup>5</sup>As of the 8<sup>th</sup> semester, students who have not passed the oral qualifying exam must schedule a progress meeting. The progress meeting is scheduled annually thereafter until the oral qualifying examination is passed

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to complete a minimum of 46 credits exclusive of: (1) the master's degree; (2) SPH core courses for the MPH; (3) practica; and (4) dissertation research (Table 2). The SPH core courses are required only of students without an MPH from a school of public health and include one approved course each in: epidemiology, biostatistics, health policy and administration, and environmental sciences and engineering.

**Table 2: Minimal Course Requirements (46 Credits)<sup>1,2</sup>**

Area	Number of Credits
<i>Behavioral and Social Science Theory</i>	10
HBHE 130: Social and Behavioral Science Foundations of Health Education*	4
Two advanced theory courses <sup>3,4</sup>	6
<i>Research Methods</i> <sup>5</sup>	21
HBHE 250: Applied Research Methods in Health Behavior and Health Education*	4
HBHE 251: Seminar in Advanced Research Methods*	2
HBHE 260: Research Grant Proposal Development*	3
A statistics course in linear regression* <sup>6</sup>	3
A statistics course in categorical data analysis* <sup>7</sup>	3
Two advanced research methods courses <sup>3,4,8</sup>	6
<i>Health Behavior and Health Education Principles and Practices</i>	6
HBHE 310: Doctoral Seminar: Historical and Conceptual Bases of Public Health*	2
HBHE 311: Doctoral Seminar: Development of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Interventions*	3
HBHE 312: Doctoral Seminar: Professional Issues* <sup>9</sup>	1
<i>Electives</i> <sup>3,10</sup>	9

\*Required before the written comprehensive exam.

<sup>1</sup>Students should consult *The Record of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill* for course descriptions and the UNC-CH on-line *Directory of Courses* (<http://regweb.oit.unc.edu/courses/index.php>) for up-to-date information on course offerings.

<sup>2</sup>Because departmental resources are required throughout the student's program (e.g. the use of state vehicles, departmental telephones, printers and copiers) students must register for HBHE 340 (in the Fall semester) and HBHE 341 (in the Spring semester) during the first academic year and pay departmental fees of \$125 for each course. 1 credit (not counted in 46 total) is attached to either HBHE 340 or HBHE 341.

<sup>3</sup>Graduate level courses offered in HBHE or other departments.

<sup>4</sup>One of the two courses is required before the written comprehensive exam.

<sup>5</sup>Students are assumed to have skills in data management using SAS programming language, including, for example, constructing and merging datasets, data transformations, creating variables, and documenting data in codebooks. Students without data management skills should take a course in data management (e.g., BIOS 111, EPID 150) or other training opportunities (e.g., Odom Institute short courses).

<sup>6</sup>BIOS 145, EDUC 284, HPAA 373, SOCI 209, or as approved by the doctoral program director.

<sup>7</sup>BIOS 165, HPAA 274, or as approved by the doctoral program director.

<sup>8</sup>Students are encouraged to take a structural equation modeling, longitudinal/multilevel data analysis, or advanced qualitative data analysis class for at least one of these courses.

<sup>9</sup>Additional workshops on professional issues are scheduled periodically.

<sup>10</sup>Students are encouraged to choose electives in HBHE and other departments, take additional advanced methods courses, and select courses that reflect their substantive interests.

## Credit for Previous Coursework

Students may request that up to 15 graduate credits be applied toward the 46 required course credits. The courses for which credits are given must be equivalent to those that are required by HBHE, and a grade of P (or B) or higher must have been received from an accredited graduate institution. Thesis and dissertation credits do not apply toward the 46 credits.

Students must provide documentation in support of equivalence for courses for which they are requesting credit, such as a course syllabus, transcript, term paper, and/or instructor testimony. Equivalence is determined by the instructor of the equivalent course at UNC-CH in consultation with the advisor and director of the doctoral program. To waive HBHE 250, students must pass an exam administered by the course instructor during the first week of the Fall semester. Students must make waiver requests in writing, with final signed approval by the director of the doctoral program. A copy must be placed in the student's departmental file.

Credit reductions do not influence the residency and enrollment requirements or comprehensive examination procedures.

HBHE 251, 260, 310, 311, and 312 cannot be exempted, and prior credits earned in courses or seminars similar to these courses cannot be applied toward the 46 credits.

## Minor Degree

Students may elect to complete a formal minor in another department. A minor consists of at least 15 credits hours in the minor department and any other requirements specified by the minor department. To count toward the minor, all credits must be for courses listed (or cross-listed) in programs other than HBHE. Minor credits may count for both the minor degree and HBHE course requirements. Additional minor credits do not have to be completed during the first two years. The minor must be approved in advance by the student's advisor and the director of the doctoral program and the director of graduate study in the minor department.

## Manuscript Preparation

The ability to publish research findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals is fundamental to a research career. Although not a formal course requirement, students are encouraged to seek opportunities prior to the dissertation research for writing data-based manuscripts using either quantitative or qualitative methods as both a contributing co-author and lead author. HBHE 350: Research Manuscript Development offers a structured environment for learning skills related to developing and writing a manuscript and may be selected as an elective course. Students also may complete manuscripts as part of a research practicum, in the context of a research assistantship, in collaboration with a faculty mentor, or through some other circumstances. Students are encouraged to discuss their research interests with faculty to learn of opportunities for collaboration on manuscripts.

## Language Requirement

The Department has no foreign language requirement for the PhD degree.

## PRACTICA

### Introduction

The fundamental assumption of the practica requirement is that, with proper mentorship, knowledge and skills can be enhanced by practical experience. Students complete a primary practicum in research and a secondary practicum in teaching, research, or some other experience that enhances professional skills (e.g., an internship in a congressional office, government agency, or non-profit organization). More student time is devoted to the primary practicum (480 hours) than to the secondary practicum (240 hours).

Each practicum is individually designed by and for the student. A practicum can occur within either the Department or another organization. The mentor is usually a member of the faculty of the Department, or an adjunct faculty member, but that is not required. Regardless of where the

practicum takes place and the affiliation of the mentor, the HBHE faculty advisor is responsible for assuring that the student has a worthwhile and appropriately mentored practicum.

Practica are often, but are not required to be, paid learning experiences. Hours spent on mundane and/or repetitive paid activities that do not require the student to use (or develop) new skills may not count toward practicum hours.

### **Primary Practicum**

The primary practicum is designed to enhance knowledge and skills in research by work on one or more research projects. The practicum may involve: designing and implementing a research project, including development and evaluation of a health promotion and disease prevention intervention; carrying out data analyses; writing manuscripts; assuming responsibility for part of a project; or a combination of these activities.

Students must register for HBHE 317 for a total of 4 credits for the primary practicum; practicum credits do not apply to the 46 required course credits.

Students must devote the equivalent of 15 hours per week for two regular semesters (32 weeks) for a total of 480 hours. The primary practicum can be completed in one or two years and work can occur in the summer. Students may distribute the 480 hours across more than one project to optimally match their practicum learning objectives.

The primary practicum must be completed prior to taking the written comprehensive exam.

### **Secondary Practicum**

The secondary practicum is designed to enhance knowledge and skills in teaching, research, or another area relevant to professional goals. A secondary practicum in research must involve work on one or more different projects than in the primary practicum and different skills must be emphasized.

Student must devote the equivalent of 15 hours per week for one regular semester (16 weeks) for a total of 240 hours. The practicum may be completed in one or more semesters and work can occur in the summer.

Students must register for HBHE 317 for a total of 2 credits for the secondary practicum; practicum credits do not apply to the 46 required course credits.

The secondary practicum must be completed prior to the oral qualifying exam.

To fulfill the secondary practicum in teaching, the student must be involved in teaching a two or three credit undergraduate, master's level or doctoral course. (Students are strongly encouraged to serve as a teaching assistant for HBHE 131: Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health, the SPH core course required of non-HBHE majors.) Minimum student responsibilities are described below. The student must be mentored by a faculty member and devote a total of 160 hours to teaching responsibilities (i.e., approximately 10 hours a week over a 16-week period). In addition, students must complete two or more workshops for graduate students offered by UNC-CH's Center for Teaching and Learning and designed to prepare students for instructional responsibilities in their future careers (e.g., "The Job-Search Teaching Portfolio," "Leading Discussion and Lab Sections"). Completion of the workshops satisfies the remaining required hours. During or at the conclusion of the practicum experience, each student should begin to articulate a teaching philosophy as a precursor to developing a teaching portfolio.

#### *Minimum Student Responsibilities (at least two)*

- Developing or significantly modifying a course syllabus as part of course planning
- Developing and implementing the equivalent of three hours of class instructional sessions (e.g., lectures)

- Grading student assignments that require detailed, qualitative, evaluative feedback; i.e., merely grading multiple choice answers does not meet this requirement
- Facilitating discussion groups

### **Faculty and Student Roles**

Consideration of practica begins at the time of matriculation. The student and faculty academic advisor together are responsible for identifying prospective practica assignments and mentors.

Practica must be approved by the student's academic committee. Approval usually occurs at the formal progress review meeting at the end of the first year of study. Minor changes in originally-approved practica must be approved by the advisor; major changes must be approved by the academic committee.

Faculty mentorship is at the core of all practica. The faculty mentor is expected to provide opportunities that will allow the student to fulfill his or her practicum requirements and to provide feedback to the student on his or her performance of major responsibilities.

The faculty advisor has an integral role and the final responsibility for assuring that the student has the opportunity for a worthwhile practicum, even when the advisor is not the mentor for the practicum.

### **Written Documentation of Practica Experiences**

Before a practicum begins, the student prepares a written statement that specifies learning objectives, lists the skills to be enhanced, and describes activities that will contribute to the objectives. The statement is signed by the student, the faculty advisor, and the mentor (if different from the advisor) and placed in the student's departmental file.

Before a practicum requirement is considered complete, students must write a brief (one to three double-spaced pages) reflective statement about the practicum experience. The original learning objectives should be included

as an addendum and a significant part of the write-up should relate to those objectives (i.e., briefly describe the objectives that were met, as well as the ones that were not, reflect on the unanticipated things that were learned or experienced as a result of the practicum). Students also include a brief self-evaluation as part of the write-up. This document is then read and signed off on by the student, the practicum mentor, and the faculty advisor, and placed in the student's departmental file.

### **Waiving Practica**

Because practica have such significant potential for being valuable learning experiences, and knowledge and skills in research, teaching, and other professional skills can always be enhanced, extremely compelling reasons are necessary for a practicum requirement to be waived. Extensive prior experience is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a waiver. Waiver of a practicum requirement requires the unanimous approval of the student's academic committee and the written approval of the director of the doctoral program.

## **THE WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

The written comprehensive examination tests competency in social and behavioral science theory, research methods, and health behavior and health education principles and practices. The exam is designed for students to demonstrate critical thinking, ability to integrate knowledge and understanding across competency areas, and readiness to undertake the dissertation. The student must be registered with the Graduate School for the semester in which the comprehensive examination is given. The examination is normally administered during the opening of the student's fifth semester. To be eligible for the exam, students must have completed at least 37 of the 46 required course credits, including all courses required before the comprehensive exam as indicated on Table 2, and the research primary practicum.

The written comprehensive examination committee is made up of six faculty members from the Department. They are appointed by the chair of the Department. The director of the doctoral program is one of the six

members, is a permanent member, chairs the committee, and administers the examination. The committee may invite others, including persons other than departmental faculty members, to contribute to preparing and grading examination questions.

The committee decides whether a student passes or fails the examination. A student who fails any part of the examination fails the entire examination. Students must retake only the failed part(s). At least three months must pass before students can retake the examination. The decision on examination dates will take into consideration any course work or other assignments recommended as remediation for the student. A student who fails the second examination becomes academically ineligible to continue in the program unless taking a third examination is approved by the Administrative Board of the Graduate School.

Unless authorized in writing by the director of the doctoral program, all exam questions as well as students' answers are available only to the students who wrote them, members of the doctoral examination committee, the student's advisor, and specially-assigned graders of the examination

## **THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

The major purposes of the dissertation are to provide the student with an educational experience that results both in: (1) a significant contribution to the field of health behavior and health education and (2) knowledge and skills to make continuing important contributions to the field. An acceptable dissertation is one that contributes to the theoretical, conceptual, empirical, and/or practice knowledge bases of HBHE. At a minimum, a dissertation must contribute to one of these knowledge bases and the doctoral candidate must identify the major focus or foci of the dissertation in terms of these four types of contributions.

The dissertation is a study or analysis of a contemporary public health problem or issue relevant to health behavior and health education, is based on social or behavioral science theory, and may use either quantitative or qualitative methods or both. A reanalysis of existing data sets, whether collected by others or by the student for another purpose, is allowed only when the student generates and tests original hypotheses.

## **The Dissertation Committee**

When a student's ideas about a dissertation topic and general research approach have taken form, the student identifies a member of the departmental faculty who agrees to serve as the chair of the dissertation committee. The dissertation chair need not be the same person as the academic advisor. Once a dissertation chair has been identified, he or she must be approved by the Graduate School. The committee consists of no fewer than five faculty members. A majority of the committee members, as well as a majority of the people passing the student on the oral qualifying exam or approving the doctoral dissertation, must be regular members of the UNC-CH Graduate Faculty from HBHE. Adjunct or non-permanent members of the graduate faculty can be given temporary graduate faculty status. As soon as possible after deciding who will be recommended to serve on the dissertation committee and no later than eight weeks prior to the oral qualifying exam, the student must submit to the departmental registrar a list of the committee members. An updated résumé must be provided for any committee member who is not on the UNC-CH faculty.

It is the responsibility of the committee members to examine the dissertation proposal and dissertation and to participate in the oral qualifying exam and defense of the dissertation.

## **The Oral Qualifying Examination**

Once the written comprehensive examination has been passed, the student is expected to submit to the dissertation advisor a formal dissertation proposal for tentative approval. Copies of the final proposal tentatively approved by the dissertation advisor must be given to the committee members at least four weeks before the qualifying examination.

The qualifying examination is a two hour oral examination focused primarily on the dissertation proposal, although questions may deal with any subject in which the student is expected to be competent. Students must notify the registrar at least one month prior to the meeting date to be sure that proper forms have been completed.

At the end of the qualifying examination, the committee may be satisfied with the proposal or grant a "conditional pass" contingent on the student

making minor revisions. If major revisions or a new proposal is recommended, the student then must pass a second qualifying examination. A student who fails this second examination becomes academically ineligible to continue in the program unless taking a third examination is approved by the Administrative Board of the Graduate School.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

Students may apply for admission to candidacy once they have passed both the doctoral written comprehensive and oral qualifying exam, have submitted an acceptable dissertation proposal, and completed all required course work. The application for admission to candidacy can be downloaded from the Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.unc.edu/>) and must be completed by the student and given to the departmental registrar, who files the application with the Graduate School.

### **Dissertation Format**

Dissertations can follow the traditional monograph format or a manuscript format. The manuscript format requires two or more journal-length manuscripts of publishable quality that could be altered slightly for submission to refereed journals, accompanied by additional sections and/or appendices that provide detail normally included in the monograph dissertation format but excluded from articles (e.g., a more detailed literature review, questionnaires, details on data collection). For examples, see dissertations on file in Suite 308 Rosenau Hall. The final format of the dissertation is determined by the student's doctoral dissertation committee but must be in compliance with the Graduate School's regulations about dissertation format and content as outlined in the *Guide to Theses and Dissertations*. These regulations specify that there be: (1) one integrating TITLE PAGE for the entire collection of manuscripts included in the dissertation, with individual manuscripts presented as chapters; (2) a single ABSTRACT synthesizing the substance of all the articles presented; (3) a single, overall TABLE OF CONTENTS that can contain manuscript titles as chapter titles; and (4) either reference sections at the end of each manuscript that are clearly identified in the Table of Contents, or one single set of references for all of the manuscripts. Finally, a consistent and progressive pagination and consistent typeface and font size must be maintained throughout the entire dissertation.

### **Dissertation Defense Timeline**

The written dissertation must be in final form prior to the defense. Following the defense, substantive changes should be minimal, at most a few pages. To achieve these goals, each committee member needs to have reviewed thoroughly the entire finalized document well in advance of the defense. The timetable of events around the defense is shown in Table 3 and elaborated below. Adherence to the timetable should help assure that students go into the defense with a dissertation of high quality. The timetable must be adhered to by faculty and students in HBHE. Adherence to it by committee members not in HBHE may not be feasible, however, and expectations for level of participation in reviewing drafts by non-HBHE faculty are negotiated by the student, dissertation chair, and non-HBHE faculty committee members.

*Several weeks in advance of the anticipated defense date:* Because of the need to coordinate multiple schedules, the student may schedule a tentative defense date with committee members before having approval to go forward with the defense. When scheduling the date, the student must make it clear to committee members that the date is tentative and contingent on receiving approval from all committee members to go forward. The student may not use an impending start date for a job, postdoctoral fellowship, or other obligation as a reason for not rescheduling the defense date when rescheduling to a later date is indicated.

*At least six weeks prior to the tentative defense date:* After receiving approval from the chair to do so, the student should submit a complete draft of the dissertation to the committee members for review and comments. At this time, the student should schedule a meeting within two to three weeks to discuss the committee member's feedback and desired revisions. At that meeting, the committee member affirms whether it is appropriate for the student to go forward with the defense or to reschedule the date pending further revisions.

If any committee member is not satisfied that the dissertation is ready to be defended, the student must revise the dissertation, distribute it to the committee for another round of review, and re-schedule the date of the defense. Before the defense can be announced, the chair must affirm with

each committee member that the student is ready to go forward with the defense.

*At least two weeks prior to the defense date:* The chair sends an announcement via email to all faculty, students and the registrar in HBHE that gives the title of the dissertation and the date, time, and location of the public presentation. The abstract should be attached. Students should arrange for the dissertation presentation to be announced on the school wide calendar. (See the Department chair's assistant for help with this task).

**Table 3. Dissertation Defense Timeline**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>
Schedule tentative date for defense with committee members and reserve room(s) for public presentation and private defense	Several weeks in advance	Student
Submit dissertation draft to committee	At least 6 weeks before the tentative date	Student
Meet with committee members	At least 3-4 weeks before the tentative date	Student
Confirm with committee members that the defense can proceed <sup>1</sup>	3 weeks before the tentative date	Chair
Email the dissertation abstract, date and location of the public presentation to HBHE faculty, students, and the registrar	2 weeks before the defense date	Chair
Announce public presentation on weekly SPH calendar	Schedule for the week of the defense	Student

<sup>1</sup>Approval to go forward does not imply that the student will pass the defense.

### **Dissertation Defense**

The student gives a 30 to 40-minute summary of the dissertation at a public meeting to which all HBHE faculty and students are invited. Fifteen to 20 minutes are allocated at the end of this presentation for questions from the general audience. The public presentation is a formal presentation and

should not include any celebration that is appropriately reserved until after successful defense of the dissertation. Upon completion of this question-answer component, the dissertation committee meets with the candidate in a closed session for the defense. This closed meeting will usually last 60 to 90 minutes. Although all committee members have earlier affirmed that the student is ready to go forward with the defense, this affirmation does not imply that the student automatically passes the defense.

### **PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Training in ethical issues related to research involving human subjects is required of all students who are engaged in the planning, conduct or analysis of research at UNC that involves human subjects. In the first Fall semester, doctoral students must complete a web-based training program, the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI), and must be registered in the UNC Ethics Training Database. Information about the CITI on-line course and registration in the database may be found at UNC's Office of Human Research Ethics (OHRE) webpage (<http://ohre.unc.edu/educ.php>).

All research involving human subjects must be approved by the Public Health Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. Doctoral students must have separate IRB approval for the doctoral dissertation, regardless of whether the data are from a study that has current IRB approval and regardless of whether the student is employed by the study.

### **THE HONOR CODE**

Doctoral students are subject to the regulations of the Honor Code and are expected to study and understand the code. The complete Honor Code can be found in *The Graduate School Handbook*.