



Texas A&M University

SPH PhD

Student Handbook

2026-2027

School of Public Health

Contact: SPH Office of Student Services | SPH-Gradinfo@tamu.edu | 979.436.9356
147 Reynolds Medical Sciences Building (REYN)

The Texas A&M University School of Public Health reserves the right at any time to make changes to the Student Handbook and/or Academic Policies contained therein that may affect such matters as tuition and other fees, degrees and programs offered, academic requirements, and other rules and regulations applicable to students.

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About the PhD Program Student Handbook

The PhD Program Student Handbook is intended for students and advisors and provides comprehensive information on policies and requirements for students matriculating in the School of Public Health (SPH), graduate and undergraduate. Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of information in this publication. Nevertheless, the SPH reserves the right to amend or add to the academic policies and scholastic regulations at any time, provided that such changes or additions are intended to improve the quality of education and are introduced in a fair and deliberate manner with appropriate notice provided to all students affected by the changes. The SPH reserves the right to change without prior notice: admission and degree requirements, curricula, courses, teaching personnel, rules, regulations, tuition, fees, and any other matter described in this handbook. This Student Handbook does not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between any student or faculty member and the School of Public Health.

According to the Texas A&M University Graduate and Professional School, the School always retains the right to dismiss any student who does not attain, and maintain, adequate academic performance or who does not exhibit the personal and professional qualifications required for public health professionals. Policies contained within this Student Handbook related to student progress in a degree program or graduation may only be waived (and only if consistent with existing HSC or TAMUS policy) following review and written approval by the student's Faculty Advisor (for currently enrolled students), the relevant department head(s), the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and the Dean (or designee). It is the responsibility of each student enrolled in SPH to know current academic policies and scholastic regulations, general and specific requirements, and operational policies that apply to registration and instruction.

Important Online Resources

SPH website <https://public-health.tamu.edu>

Texas A&M University Graduate and Professional School website <http://grad.tamu.edu>

Students are responsible for adhering to the policies contained therein. They are not necessarily re-stated in this document.

- Resources for Degree Completion
- Forms and Submission Process
- Degree Plans and Petitions
- Calendars and Deadlines specific to graduate students
- Graduate and Professional Catalog
- Texas A&M University Howdy Portal Howdy Portal <https://howdy.tamu.edu/uPortal/normal/render.uP>
- Academic Calendars- Students will frequently need to consult the Academic Calendar to be aware of all pertinent academic deadlines, holidays, etc. <https://registrar.tamu.edu/academic-calendar>

TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Download the TELUS Health Student Support app for 24/7 access to professional counseling by phone or chat in multiple languages. Download via the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

<https://uhs.tamu.edu/mental-health/student-support.html>

CONFIDENTIAL, REAL-TIME VIRTUAL COUNSELING AVAILABLE 24/7 VIA CHAT AND PHONE

Talk with a professional counselor at your convenience through live chat or a simple phone call.

SCHEDULED, SHORT-TERM COUNSELING APPOINTMENTS VIA TELEHEALTH WITH A PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

Connect with the same counselor over multiple sessions via telephone or video appointments

STUDENT SUPPORT COMMUNITY

Access a community where you can connect and share your experiences with students around the world.

EXTENSIVE ON-DEMAND CONTENT LIBRARY

- Videos, articles, podcasts and infographics addressing a wide variety of mental health and wellbeing concerns.
- Anonymous mental health assessments for depression, general anxiety, alcohol and drug use.
- Free access to the LIFT app for virtual fitness sessions.

SUPPORT IN YOUR LANGUAGE

Student Support app content and support are available 24/7 in **Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, French** and **English**. Additional language options may be requested by appointment, depending on availability.



Your use of the Student Support app, including chats, calls, and conversations, is FREE and confidential — meaning your professors, family and friends, etc., will not know unless you tell them.

SPH Office of Student Services

At the SPH Office of Student Services, we're committed to your success—both inside and outside the classroom. We understand that the road to academic achievement is filled with challenges, and we're here to guide you every step of the way. Whether you need personalized academic advising, mental health resources, financial aid assistance, or career development support, our team provides you with the tools and encouragement you need to thrive.

We offer a wide range of services designed to help you navigate the student experience with confidence. From one-on-one consultations to workshops and online resources, we tailor our support to meet your unique needs and goals. Our friendly, knowledgeable staff are always ready to listen, offer guidance, and connect you with the right resources to ensure your success.

Support for graduate students includes the following services:

- Recruitment
- Admissions
- Academic Advising
- Career Services
- Student Engagement

Contact us:

SPH Office of Student Services
147 Reynolds Medical Sciences Building (REYN)
SPH-Gradinfo@tamu.edu
979.436.9356

Texas A&M University and the Aggie Core Values

About Texas A&M

Texas A&M University opened in 1876 as the state's first public institution of higher learning. Today, we are a research-intensive main university dedicated to sending leaders out into the world prepared to take on the challenges of tomorrow. Learn more about our university, including our goals, mission, values, locations, leadership and history.

Mission

Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication, and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields. Its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research and creativity. It prepares students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility and service to society. Texas A&M assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. It welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic and geographic groups as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy. In the 21st century, Texas A&M University seeks to assume a place of preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions.

Aggie Traditions

Texas A&M University's traditions unite our current and former students, build camaraderie and foster the Aggie Spirit. Some traditions started shortly after the university opened, while others began more recently. Our traditions are part of Aggie life, including how we greet each other, what words we use and what we do on gamedays.

Visit this website to learn more: <https://www.tamu.edu/campus-community/traditions/index.html>

Aggie Core Values

Our core values unify our current and former students, faculty and staff. They are guideposts we live by and show in our words and deeds. We are a community of problem-solvers, scholars and creators with a service mission.

Respect

We believe people matter. We value and treat ourselves and others with care, compassion, dignity, civility and fairness. We appreciate, learn from and create a welcoming and inclusive environment that values uniqueness, diversity and a sense of community.

Excellence

We are dedicated to excelling in what we do and say we will do, and we continually strive to improve. We are passionate about delivering results and achieving desired outcomes, impact and value that exceeds expectations – of our own and of others.

Leadership

We set the example. We embody our values. We are courageous and forward thinking, embracing change and propelling ourselves and the University. We unify, inspire and empower each other.

Loyalty

We are dedicated to a greater purpose. We trust, respect and support each other. We are stronger and better together because of our shared support of the University.

Integrity

We are trustworthy and honest with ourselves and others. We honor and follow through on commitments and expectations, holding ourselves and others accountable for our actions, behaviors and outcomes. We operate with the highest ethical standards in all we do.

Selfless Service

We are part of a global community and purpose that is bigger than ourselves. We work with and help others to have a positive impact; and we do so without expectation of recognition or reward.

Aggie Code of Honor

For many years Aggies have followed a Code of Honor, which is stated in this very simple verse:

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do.”

The Aggie Code of Honor is an effort to unify the aims of all Texas A&M men and women toward a high code of ethics and personal dignity. For most, living under this code will be no problem, as it asks nothing of a person that is beyond reason. It only calls for honesty and integrity, characteristics that Aggies have always exemplified.

The Aggie Code of Honor functions as a symbol to all Aggies, promoting understanding and loyalty to truth and confidence in each other.

Students should familiarize themselves with Texas A&M University's Student Rules Student Rules – Texas A&M University.

Academic Integrity

In the spirit of the Aggie Code of Honor, and to uphold the high scholastic standards of Texas A&M University, SPH students are expected to maintain and promote academic integrity in all work prepared for evaluation by faculty. Fostering such an environment facilitates the learning of new concepts, reinforces foundational material, and encourages creativity. Additionally, maintaining the University's high standard of academic integrity allows faculty and instructional staff to better evaluate the teaching of difficult concepts and material.

There will be occasions during which student cooperation will be permitted and encouraged by instructors; these interactions are essential for the exchange of ideas among a diverse student body and facilitate the learning process. Nevertheless, students must assume that collaboration of any kind in the completion of an assignment is strictly prohibited unless explicitly permitted by the course instructor. It is equally essential that the faculty and staff of SPH be able to effectively attribute credit and evaluate an individual student's grasp of knowledge conveyed. For all work intended to be performed and submitted independently, students should take great care to abide by the Aggie Code of Honor and distinguish their own ideas from those attributable to others. This includes the student's responsibility to properly identify, cite, and/or credit sources of information that are not the individual student.

Unless otherwise specified, examinations and other assignments intended to be completed outside of the classroom are given with the understanding that students may consult course specific notes and references, but not other individuals

Academic Policies

Graduate students are expected to be *knowledgeable of and follow* academic policies set by the School and University. As a student in a SPH graduate program, students should read and, thereby *are responsible for*, meeting School and University expectations listed below:

University Requirements- Texas A&M Graduate Catalog

The Texas A&M University [Graduate and Professional Catalog](#), published annually, provides information about the graduate and professional studies programs of Texas A&M University to students, prospective students, and faculty and staff of the university. Included is information concerning requirements for admission to graduate and professional studies at the university, services available to students, graduate and professional course offerings, and listings of the administrative officers and the graduate faculty.

Notable Academic Catalog Sections

- Academic Calendars
- Academic Expectations and Program Requirements
- Colleges: School of Public Health
- Ombuds Services for Graduate Education
- University Policies
- Standards and Procedures
- Course Descriptions

For more information, please visit <https://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate>.

Each student has a responsibility to:

1. Know specific degree requirements as established by the University and the student's department, interdisciplinary degree program, or college.
2. Enroll in the appropriate coursework to complete the degree plan.
3. Maintain the appropriate standards to continue in graduate studies.
4. Know the steps and deadlines related to graduation.
5. Be acquainted with the Texas A&M University Student Rules.

Student Rules

Each student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with and to comply with the Texas A&M University Student Rules. More specific rules, information, and procedures may be found in various publications pertaining to each service or department. Particular attention should be given to the Aggie Code of Honor, the

- Orientation
- Ombuds Services
- Graduate Assistantships
- English Language Proficiency Compliance
- Non-resident Tuition Waivers
- Faculty Committees that support academic success and student experience

Leadership and contact information for Graduate and Professional School:

Dr. Fuhui Tong
Associate Provost and Dean
Graduate and Professional School

Address: 204 Nagle Hall, College Station, TX 77843
Email: grad@tamu.edu
Phone: 979-845-3631
Fax: 979-862-1692
Mail Stop: TAMU 1113

Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSG)

The Graduate and Professional Student Government serves as the graduate and professional student government of Texas A&M University. <https://getinvolved.tamu.edu/org/gpsg>.

Student Government Association (SGA)

To serve Texas A&M University by representing student opinion, addressing campus needs through targeted programming and the maintenance of tradition, and providing opportunities for leadership development in order to enrich the quality of student life. <https://getinvolved.tamu.edu/org/sga>.

Ombuds Officer

The Ombuds Officer serves as an informal, neutral, and confidential resource for graduate students to discuss questions and concerns related to their graduate experience. The university is a large and complex institution and graduate students often play multiple roles (e.g., student, research collaborator, instructor, technician, peer). Misunderstandings and conflicts can arise in any one of these roles. Having a safe, off-the-record conversation with an Ombuds Officer can be a first step if a student does not know where to turn. The Ombuds Officer is here to help graduate students identify options for addressing concerns and will promote a fair and impartial process for all parties involved. Students can learn more about the Ombuds Services here: <https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/academic-success-resources/conflict-resolution/ombuds-services>.

Mental Health Services for Graduate Students

Graduate and Professional Student Counselor

Dr. Esther W. Wright, a licensed psychologist, is available to work with graduate students in the Graduate and Professional School offices in Nagle Hall. In addition to services like personal counseling and mental health education, Dr. Wright specializes in addressing mental health and wellness concerns unique to graduate students.

Dr. Wright will also hold workshops to provide graduate students with the tools to manage and develop wellness habits and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Students can schedule an appointment or sign up for a workshop through the Counseling and Mental Health Care Appointment Portal. The University Health Services online registration process verifies a student's current enrollment, explains confidentiality and its limits, and gathers information about a student's concerns. The

information obtained is encrypted and secure. The last section of the online enrollment allows a student to select an initial appointment time.

Please note that initial, first-time appointments will be provided through telehealth consultations. A student may choose to meet with Dr. Wright or a provider at the Student Services Building next door if their availability works better for the student.

For more information about Graduate School visit : <https://grad.tamu.edu/knowledge-center/grad-student-resources/counseling-and-mental-health-care-workshops>

For more information about University Health Services visit: <https://uhs.tamu.edu/mental-health/index.html>

Disability Resources

Academic Accommodations

Services in Disability Resources (DR) are coordinated through various functional and organizational areas such as:

- **[Accommodations Coordination](#)**
Each student that submits documentation to Disability Resources (DR) is assigned to an Access Coordinator who will meet with the student to determine appropriate accommodations. Appropriate accommodations are determined by the Access Coordinator and student based on the documented needs, previous accommodations, and functional limitations of the student.
- **[Testing Center \(TC\)](#)**
The Disability Resources Testing Center works to ensure that appropriate exam accommodations are provided for students who are eligible for services.
- **[Assistive Technology Services \(ATS\)](#)**
Offers students with disabilities the opportunity to use computers and technology to allow for completion of tasks that are impacted by their disability. ATS Services include assistive technology assessments, accessible computer workstations, adaptive software & equipment, alternative format materials, audio books, and equipment loan.
- **[Communication Access Services](#)**
Disability Resources offers sign language interpreters and transcription services for qualified students registered for services for academic purposes.

Physical Accessibility

DR partners with Facilities Services, Residence Life and Transportation Services to facilitate access to buildings, residence halls, parking lots and other locations on campus. Students with disabilities who experience physical barriers should contact DR for assistance.

- Locations of accessible building entrances; accessible paths and unisex restrooms can be found on the [online campus map](#).
 - Turn on the “Accessible Entrances” layer in the menu.
 - Turn on the “Unisex Restrooms” layer in the menu.
 - Select “Accessible Friendly Directions” on the directional menu.

For more information from Disability Resources: <https://disability.tamu.edu>

Libraries

Texas A&M Libraries offers a variety of services for students to assist them in succeeding each semester. Below are only a few of their many services students can utilize to enhance their academics:

Expert Help: Reference, Consults, and More

- AskUs Chat
- Request a Consultation
- University Writing Center
- Library Workshops

Research Tools

- Guides
- Get It For Me
- Suggest a Purchase

Citing Sources & Managing Citations

- RefWorks
- Endnote
- Citing Sources

Visit their webpage to see a full list of locations and all services provided by the TAMU

Libraries: <https://library.tamu.edu>

University Writing Center

Texas A&M University Writing Center offers a variety of services for students to assist them in succeeding each semester. Below are only a few of their many services students can utilize in order to enhance their academics:

- **[Writing Retreats](#)** - The goal of a Dissertation & Thesis Writing Retreat is to provide a productive environment for completing a dissertation or thesis. Retreats are four-day events held three times a year, usually in mid-May, late August, and mid-January, although dates may vary. Registration is limited to graduate students who are currently working actively on dissertations or theses.
- **[DATA](#)** (Dissertation, Article, and Thesis Advising) - this program is a semester-long program designed to support graduate students working on a thesis, dissertation, or article for publication.
- **[Graduate Student Workshops](#)** - help graduate students enhance their communication skills as part of the [G.R.A.D. Aggies Professional Development Certificate](#), offered by the Graduate School. Students participating in the certificate program will be able to earn one Professional Development Unit (PDU) toward their certificate when they attend one of the workshops.
- **[Write Line](#)** - a virtual graduate student writing group conducted via Zoom. Graduate students in any area of study are welcome to apply. Write Line provides a productive virtual writing space so that participants can stay accountable to their writing goals.
- **[Writing & Speaking Guides](#)** - besides handouts, student can see podcasts and videos as well as [interactive lessons](#) that allow them to self-assess their learning.
- **[Make An Appointment](#)** (in-person, online document upload, web conferencing)

Visit their webpage to see a full list of all locations and all services provided by the University Writing

Center: <https://writingcenter.tamu.edu>.

Student Business Services and Aggie One Stop

Students can contact Texas A&M Student Business Services if they have any questions regarding any of the below items. Students can also find Billing Explanations, information on setting up Direct Deposit, a Payment To-Do List, and how to obtain their Aggie Card (if a student hasn't already). Students can see and read about all their services on their webpage (<https://sbs.tamu.edu/index.html>).

Common Topics

- Tuition due dates

- Tuition cost and tuition rates
- Billing
- Payment plan availability
- Adding authorized users
- Refunds

Educational Expenses Information

Educational expenses for the months of enrollment will vary according to course of study. For details on the basic budget for a particular graduate or professional program, please visit <https://financialaid.tamu.edu> Scholarships and Financial Aid considers tuition and fees, books and supplies, transportation, room and board, incidental and living expenses in the cost of attendance for programs. All tuition and fee amounts provided herein represent the most accurate figures available at the time of publication and are subject to change without notice. University Rules in place at the time of publishing are reflected here. All are subject to change.

The most current information available will be maintained on the Student Business Services website <https://sbs.tamu.edu>.

Cost of Attendance

For a better understanding of the total cost of attendance (COA), please visit our cost and tuition rates webpage (<https://aggie.tamu.edu/billing-and-payments/cost-and-tuition-rates>). This webpage will provide a student with an opportunity to review estimated COA information for undergraduate, graduate and professional students, as well as other resources such as the tuition calculator and billing and fee explanations.

Pregnant and Parenting Student Resources

Texas A&M is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students.

Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex, including pregnancy and sex-based harassment, in employment, educational programs, and activities. This includes harassment and discrimination against a student based on pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, or lactation, as well as any related medical conditions or recovery therefrom.

Texas A&M will provide reasonable accommodations due to pregnancy and/or related conditions. The University will allow access, on a voluntary basis, to any separate and comparable portion of a program or activity. Texas A&M will also allow a voluntary leave of absence, ensure the availability of lactation space, and maintain grievance procedures to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination.

Title IX mandates that schools (1) offer supportive measures to students who are pregnant or have related conditions and (2) allow students who are pregnant to return to their same academic and extracurricular status as before their pregnancy.

Request an Accommodation

For information regarding pregnancy or related conditions leave or to request an accommodation related to pregnancy, please contact:

<p style="text-align: center;">Julie Kuder Email: TIX.Pregnancy@tamu.edu 979-845-8116</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Title IX Office at 979-485-8407</p>
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Accommodations

The following is a non-exhaustive list of reasonable accommodations provided under Title IX:

- Excused absences and medical leave that are deemed medically necessary for pregnancy or related conditions. The Title IX Office will work with both the student and the student's faculty member to create a plan for completion of coursework and continuation of the student's education. Individual plans may be adjusted as circumstances change.
- Opportunity to make up any work missed, such as extensions of due dates or rescheduling of tests.
- Breaks during class to attend to health needs or express breastmilk
- Access to online resources
- Changes in schedule or course sequence
- Counseling
- Reasonable adjustments to an education program or activity which include, but are not limited to:
 - Accessible seating (i.e., a larger desk)
- Appropriate restroom breaks.
- Leave of Absence
 - Pregnant and parenting students can take a leave of absence, and if in good standing when leave is taken, the ability to return to the degree or certification program in good academic standing without being required to reapply for admission.
- Documentation
 - A student seeking accommodations, adjustments, or requesting excused absences related to pregnancy will need to provide official documentation from the student's physician/medical provider. This letter must include dates for excused absences and a statement that absences are deemed medically necessary and/or other information to support the need for adjustment or accommodations.

Documentation can be submitted:

- **Via email:** to TIX.Pregnancy@tamu.edu and reference "Documentation for Pregnancy" in the subject line. Students need to include their name and UIN in the body of the email.

- **In-person:** Bring their documentation materials to:

The Title IX Office at the YMCA Building, Ste. 108
365 Houston St.
College Station, TX 77843.

Lactation

TAMU will allow reasonable breaks to students and employees for lactation. TAMU will ensure the availability of a clean, private, non-bathroom, space for lactation that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from others. Discrimination based on lactation or related medical conditions is prohibited.

Lactation Rooms On-campus: <https://titleix.tamu.edu/title-ix-and-pregnancy-students/lactation-spaces>

Student Rule 10.6 Incomplete Temporary Grade

In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Texas A&M University shall treat pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery therefrom) and related conditions as a justification for an excused absence for so long a period as is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician. Requests for leave of absence related to pregnancy should be directed to the instructor; questions about Title IX should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator.

Leave of Absence

If a student is pregnant or a parenting student who would like to request a leave of absence, they should not submit their request through DPSS. Instead, please contact the Title IX office at TIX.Pregnancy@tamu.edu, (979) 845-8116, or the main Title IX phone number at (979) 485-8407. For more information related to pregnancy and parenting accommodations, please see the [Title IX webpage](#).

Information

New OCR Resources "Discrimination Based on Pregnancy and Related Conditions, A Resources for Students and Schools" under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Students who have questions or believe they have experienced discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment/sex-based misconduct, and/or related retaliation are encouraged to contact:

Jennifer Smith, Associate Vice President and Title IX Coordinator
YMCA Building Ste. 108
365 Houston St., College Station, TX 77843
Phone: (979) 458-8167
Email: civilrights@tamu.edu

The Title IX website can be found at <https://titleix.tamu.edu>.

Students can also file a complaint with:

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Bldg.
400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-1100

or fax a complaint to (202) 453-6012.

Parenting Resources

- Parent & Parenting Initiatives- <https://studentlife.tamu.edu/support/rightsandresources>
- Childcare affiliated with Texas A&M University and student discounts.

Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities at federally funded institutions. Title IX protects students, faculty, staff, and visitors to our campus from all forms of sex discrimination.

Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited under Title IX. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, and nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or educational performance, or creates an intimidating or hostile work or educational environment.

Office of Civil Rights and Equity Investigations

The Department of Civil Rights and Equity Investigations (CREI) is charged with the investigation and resolution of alleged violations of Texas A&M University civil rights policies, including Title IX.

This includes instances of sex-based discrimination, harassment (including sexual violence) and related retaliation when this conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or educational performance, or creates an intimidating or hostile work or educational environment.

Conduct which is not severe, persistent or pervasive may still be a violation of other University policies, and when appropriate, CREI will partner with other University entities to address such conduct.

Applicable Rules and Standard Administrative Procedures (SAPs)

- General Rules and Policies
 - 08.01, Civil Rights Protections and Compliance
 - 08.01.01, Civil Rights Compliance
 - 08.01.01.M1, Civil Rights Compliance
 - 08.01.01.M1.01, Investigation and Resolution of Complaints of Prohibited Conduct Against Students, Employees, and Third Parties
 - 08.01.02 Civil Rights Protections for Individuals with Disabilities
 - 08.01.02.M0.02, Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals, and Other Animals on Campus
- Student Rules and Policies
 - Student Conduct Code 47, Investigation and Resolution of Complaints Against Texas A&M Students for Inappropriate Conduct Related to Sex or Gender
 - Student Conduct Code 51, Student Conduct Separation and Appeal
 - Student Conduct Code 56, Discrimination Appeals Panel
 - Student Conduct Code 58, University Disciplinary Appeals Panel
 - Student Rule 7.1.10, Absences Related to Pregnancy
 - Student Rule 10.6, Grading Related to Pregnancy
- Employee Rules and Policies
 - System Policy 32.02, Discipline and Dismissal of Employees
 - System Regulation 32.02.02, Discipline and Dismissal of Nonfaculty Employees
 - System Policy 12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure

The Title IX Coordinator for Texas A&M University, including SPH

Jennifer Smith, JD
(979) 458-8407
civilrights@tamu.edu
YMCA Building, Suite 108
365 Houston St., #108
College Station, TX 77843-1268

About Texas A&M School of Public Health

History

The School of Public Health is the first of its kind in the nation. The Texas Legislature established the school in 1995 as part of a rural health initiative to better address rural health needs in the state. After receiving degree-granting authority for the Master of Public Health degree in April 1998 from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the School of Rural Public Health welcomed its inaugural class in September 1998. A few short years later, in 2002, the first PhD in Public Health was created.

In 2014, the Texas A&M Health Science Center announced a transition in the name of the School of Rural Public Health to the School of Public Health, eliminating the reference to “rural” in the official name. Although the school will continue its focus on rural public health, this change recognizes its increasingly broad role in promoting state and national public health concerns.

Founding Dean

Ciro V. Sumaya, MD, MPHTM, was the founding dean of the Texas A&M School of Public Health (then named the Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health). Sumaya built the school from the ground up and served not only as dean from 1997 to 2008 but also as a professor and holder of the Cox Endowed Chair in Medicine. A medical doctor by training, he later received his Master of Public Health in Tropical Medicine from the Tulane School of Public Health. As he continued to serve in both academia and federal agencies, his personal motto and charge to all graduating students became, "The health of one is admirable; the health of all, supreme."

Previously, Sumaya was a presidential appointee at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He was the first Hispanic appointed to head a major federal public health service agency as administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, a federal focal point for innovation in health care delivery and health professions education. Subsequently, Sumaya served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, spearheading the federal initiative on the Future of Academic Health Centers. In 2006, Sumaya was appointed to the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the principal recommending governmental body for vaccines administered to the American public. In 2008, Sumaya was appointed chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Hispanic Medical Association, which represents 36,000 licensed Hispanic physicians, and he was also selected by Hispanic Business as one of the top 100 influential Hispanics nationwide.

As a college within Texas A&M University, SPH also belongs to Texas A&M Health (health science center). Texas A&M Health offers programs in dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, public health and medical sciences, and is one of the most comprehensive academic health centers in the nation. The Health Science Center's geographic makeup is just as wide-ranging. Campus locations and community outreach programs span the state, providing connectivity to and potential impact in nearly every county in Texas.

About the School

The Texas A&M School of Public Health (SPH) is committed to transforming health through interdisciplinary inquiry, innovative solutions and development of leaders through the Aggie tradition of service to engage diverse communities worldwide. Our professors care about impacting the community, as well as their students, by being a faculty advisor, or with their research. Professors have research projects ranging from emergency preparedness to community health development. Yet, each of them shares a passion for learning. Students have conducted epidemiologic studies, assisted in programs/centers of faculty, and many others have served as interns in Texas and abroad.

Vision

- Stronger Communities
- Healthy people
- Aggie tradition

Mission

The Texas A&M School of Public Health is committed to transforming health through interdisciplinary inquiry, innovative solutions, and development of leaders through the Aggie tradition of service to engage diverse communities worldwide.

Values

- A** – Accountability: Meaningful impact
- G** – Global and diverse: Our research crosses borders
- G** – Generosity: Through selfless service
- I** – Integrity: In everything we do
- E** – Excellence: In teaching, research, service, and practice
- S** – Social Justice

P – Professionalism: Leaders paving the way
H – Honor: Respect for all

Leadership & Governance

Unit	Name
Dean	Dr. Shawn Gibbs Assistant: Megan Wilkinson, MS megan.n.wilkinson@tamu.edu
Senior Associate Dean, Research	Dr. Tiffany Radcliff Director: Nicole Filger, MS filger@tamu.edu
Associate Dean, Academic Affairs	Dr. Rhonda Rahn Director: Casey Schumacher, MS cschumacher@tamu.edu
Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs	Dr. Tamika Gilreath Director: Crystal Vinal, MS vinal@tamu.edu
Associate Dean, Student Services	Dr. Don Curtis Director: Dana Hernandez danahernandez@tamu.edu
Department Head, Health Behavior	Dr. Adam Barry Admin. Coordinator: Britta Gaden-Wright brittawright@tamu.edu
Department Head, Epidemiology & Biostatistics	Dr. Patrick Tarwater Administrative Coordinator: Samantha Payton samantha-payton@tamu.edu
Department Head, Environmental & Occupational Health	Dr. Mark Benden Administrator: Fawne Toler, MS toler@tamu.edu
Department Head, Health Policy & Management	Dr. Alva Ferdinand Admin. Coordinator: Payton Garcia Payton.ramirez@tamu.edu
Interim Program Director, MHA Program	Mr. Jack Buckley Program Coordinator: Megan Westerman westerman@tamu.edu
Program Director, PhD-Health Services Research	Dr. Murray Côté Administrative Coordinator: Payton Garcia Payton.ramirez@tamu.edu
Program Director, Epidemiology & Biostatistics	Dr. Taehyun Roh taehyunroh@tamu.edu
Director, Office of Public Health Practice	Dr. Heather Clark Program Coordinator: Carly Gafford cbgafford@tamu.edu

School, Department, & Division Leadership for Students

For a complete list of SPH leadership and to view the organizational chart, visit:
<https://public-health.tamu.edu/admin/index.html>

Accreditation

SPH is accredited by 3 entities: The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), and Commission on Accreditation Healthcare Management Education (CAHME; MHA program only).

Accreditation is crucial for higher education institutions because it ensures that the institution meets established quality standards in areas such as academic programs, faculty qualifications, and student services. It provides external validation of the institution's commitment to delivering a high-quality education, which enhances its reputation and credibility. Accreditation also enables students to access federal financial aid, ensures that credits and degrees are recognized by other institutions and employers, and promotes continuous improvement within the institution through regular evaluations and assessments.

SPH Conferred Degrees and Certificates

The School of Public Health offers degree and certificate programs in the following areas:

Master's Degrees:

- Master of Public Health, 6 concentrations
 - Biostatistics (residential only)
 - Environmental Health (residential and distance education)
 - Epidemiology (residential and distance education)
 - Health Policy & Management (residential only)
 - Health Behavior (residential only)
 - Occupational Safety & Health (residential only)
- Master of Health Administration (residential and Executive-distance education)

Doctoral Degrees:

- DrPH in Public Health Sciences
- PhD in Health Education
- PhD in Health Services Research

Graduate Certificates:

- Global Health
- Maternal & Child Health

SPH Office of Student Services Overview

Academic Advising

The academic advising model at the School of Public Health (SPH) for graduate programs follows the best practices provided by National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). Specific responsibilities and duties are established by SPH, TAMU Graduate and Professional School, and CEPH.

Advising Structure



Roles

To implement an effective advising model at SPH, the following roles have been identified:

- Graduate Academic Advisors (formerly "GSS Advisors") - housed in the SPH Office of Student Services (OSS), these staff members are responsible for implementing the competency areas listed above, and ensuring students stay on track to meet their academic goals and complete their program on time (TAMU Graduate and Professional School). Responsibilities are listed below. Additional support may include: orientation, onboarding, graduation, and assisting with scheduling.
- Administrative Coordinators/Department Support Staff - housed in each department, these staff members are responsible for department head or faculty liaison's signatures/approvals.
- Faculty Department Liaisons (e.g., program directors, program chairs) - housed in each department, these faculty members serve as the liaison between OSS and the department. Assist with communications/events for undecided students; assist with orientation, department onboarding events; host department welcome/meeting; assist with graduation events; provide guidance to academic advisors regarding elective options; may participate in application review for admission.
- Faculty Mentors - provide mentorship through various means including one-on-one mentoring, group mentoring, panels, informational documents, identifying research opportunities. Topics include navigating graduate school, recommendations for electives, career options and networking in the profession, conferences.
- Faculty Chair/Faculty Dissertation Chair - for guiding and approving students through the thesis/dissertation process to fulfill degree requirements for MS and doctoral programs.
- Faculty Supervisor - oversees a student's hire and performance in a graduate assistant position (GAT, GAR, GANT) including evaluations.
- Department Head - signature authority for DPSS and SPH approvals; selecting and providing support for faculty liaisons; provide feedback to academic advising team and assistant dean.

Student Representatives

The School and University provide opportunities for students to have representation on various committees.

SPH Curriculum Committee

Reviews, evaluates, and reports on the curriculum leading to the degrees offered by the School of Public Health. The committee reviews all curricular requests, including the creation of new courses and modification or deletion of existing courses, and reviews new degree programs and modifications proposed by the departments.

Master's and Doctoral student representative positions available. For the name and contact information for the current representative, look in the module titled "Student Governance" in the "Student Advancement" community course in Canvas.

SPH Research Committee

The committee makes recommendations to the dean and Executive Committee, as well as oversight concerning the following responsibilities: research and commercialization strategic planning activities; communication of relevant research policies, procedures, and developments to departments; recommendation, development, and review of school research-related guidelines and expenditures; review of center and programs proposals and progress; annual faculty and student research awards; recommendations for relevant research development opportunities (e.g., Lunch and Learns); promotion of research activities and outputs; and other duties as assigned by the dean or the school's Office of Research. The Research Committee coordinates those responsibilities with the Office of Research.

Doctoral student representative position is available. For the name and contact information for the current representative, look in the module titled "Student Governance" in the "Student Advancement" community course in Canvas.

Canvas (LMS) Community Course – SPH Student Advancement

Overview

The SPH Student Advancement community course in Canvas was created as a supplemental tool for students to have access to 24/7. Throughout this online Canvas community course students have access to academic, extracurricular, and student success resources. The SPH Student Advancement does not take the place of formal academic advising and should not be taken as such. Students must maintain regular communication with their graduate academic advisor, while also engaging with their department regarding upper-level elective options and career guidance for their field.

Students will be enrolled in the SPH Student Advancement community course within the first few weeks after the start of their first semester. Look for degree plan worksheets, elective course lists, announcements, a bulletin, and links to the most utilized resources to assist students throughout their graduate program journey.

University Information & Rules

Texas A&M University (TAMU) Document Processing Submission System (DPSS) Texas A&M University (TAMU) Document Processing Submission System (DPSS) Official Degree Plan - this is the official, university-required degree plan to be submitted via DPSS (ogsdpss.tamu.edu). The DPSS Degree Plan is **required to be submitted after completing 9 credit hours**. In a student's last semester, the University will use their DPSS Degree Plan along with their transcript to determine their eligibility to graduate.

Only the student can complete the DPSS Degree Plan.

For a student to create their official DPSS Degree Plan a student will need:

- Access to their Howdy portal
- Degree Plan Worksheet (below)
- [DPSS Degree Plan FAQ](#)
- Log in to the DPSS website (ogsdpss.tamu.edu)

If at any point a student needs assistance with completing this requirement, they should reach out to [their academic advisor](#).

For specific instructions on how to submit the official, university-required Degree Plan via DPSS, read the instructions posted in the Student Advancement community course in Canvas.

Approvers for Degree Plans in DPSS		
Degree Program	Committee Chair	Department Head
MPH - Health Policy & Management	Dr. Cason Schmit	Dr. Alva Ferdinand
MPH - Health Behavior	Dr. Adam Barry	Dr. Adam Barry
MPH - Epidemiology	Dr. Taehyun Roh	Dr. Patrick Tarwater
MPH - Biostatistics	Dr. Patrick Tarwater	Dr. Patrick Tarwater
MPH - Environmental Health	Dr. Mark Benden	Dr. Mark Benden
MPH - Occupational Health & Safety	Dr. Mark Benden	Dr. Mark Benden
DrPH - Public Health Sciences	Student's faculty chair	Department Head of the Student's faculty chair
PhD - Health Education	Student's faculty chair	Dr. Adam Barry
PhD - Health Services Research	Student's faculty chair	Dr. Alva Ferdinand

Enrollment Status: *Full-time/Part-time*

A graduate student (domestic or international) is considered full-time if he or she is registered for a minimum of:

- 9 semester credit hours during a Fall or Spring Semester
- 6 semester credit hours in a Summer

A graduate student (domestic or international) is considered half-time and eligible for financial aid if he or she is registered for a minimum of:

- 6 semester credit hours during a fall or spring semester
- 3 semester credit hours in a summer

A “Q” grade before the 12th class day does not count toward the certification of enrollment status.

A student who has financial assistance should consult the:
 Scholarships and Financial Aid, Aggie One Stop or the HSC liaison:
 979.458.5348 | hscfinancialaid@tamu.edu

Scholastic Requirements/Grading

Students should refer to the Student Rules and Graduate Catalog to read the entirety of each rule and policy. Excerpts are listed below for further emphasis.

Grading

Student Rules 10.1 - The course instructor must make available the following information to the class by the first-class period:

- A statement of the nature, scope and content of the subject matter to be covered in the course.

- All course prerequisites as listed in the catalog.
- All required course text(s) and material.
- The grading rule, including weights as applicable for exams, laboratory assignments, field student work, projects, papers, homework, class attendance and participation and other graded activities in the calculation of the course grade. If more than 10% of any grading scheme is based on participation, the course instructor should explicitly define and outline how this grade is determined. No such rule should be in contradiction to other provisions of the University Student Rules.

This requirement can be met by posting on the Howdy Portal
<https://howdy.tamu.edu/uPortal/normal/render.uP> .

Student Rule 10.3 - There are twelve grades. The five passing grades at the undergraduate level are A, B, C, D and S, representing varying degrees of achievement; these letters carry grade points and significance as follows:

Assigned by the instructor:

- A: Excellent, 4 grade points per semester hour
- B: Good, 3 grade points per semester hour
- C: Satisfactory, 2 grade points per semester hour
- D: Passing, 1 grade point per semester hour
- F: Failing, no grade points, hours included in GPA
- I: Incomplete, no grade points (hours not included in GPA)

Grades assigned if student is taking an undergraduate course S/U:

- S: Satisfactory (C or above), hours not included in GPA
- U: Unsatisfactory (D or F), no grade points, hours included in GPA)

Other:

- X: No grade submitted, see 10.7
- Q: Dropped course with no penalty, requires Dean or designee's permission, see 1.17
- W: Dropped course(s) with no penalty during the semester enrolled, hours not included in GPA, requires Dean or designee's permission, see (1.7, 1.18, 7.8, and 17)
- NG: No Grade. Administrative removal of posted grades requires approval by the Dean or designee of the college in which the student was enrolled during the semester in which the courses were taken. A NG requires extensive documentation of the extraordinary circumstances justifying the No Grade. The instructor of record, or the instructor's department head if the instructor is unavailable, will be consulted during the process. The registrar will, if possible, notify the instructor of record, and in any event will notify the instructor's department head, whenever a NG is issued.

10.4 Passing grades for graduate students are A, B, C and S.

Per the University Catalog, graduate students must maintain a 3.000 cumulative GPA (computed as specified in Student Rule 10.4.3). Degree-seeking students also must maintain a GPA of at least 3.000 on all courses listed on a degree plan.

A graduate student will not receive graduate degree credit for undergraduate courses taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. At SPH, graduate student may not receive grades other than S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) in graduate courses bearing the numbers 681, 684, 690, 691, 692, 693, 695, 697, and 791 (except for ALEC 695, BUAD 693, AGECE 695, GEOG 695, and IBUS 692). These officially designated S/U courses may be listed on a degree plan, along with other courses approved and noted as S/U in the graduate catalog.

Graduate courses not listed on a degree plan may be taken on an S/U basis. Only grades of A, B, C, and S are acceptable for graduate credit.

For graduate students, grades of D, F or U (unsatisfactory) for courses on the degree plan must be absolved by repeating the courses and achieving grades of C or above or S (satisfactory). If a course has been taken more than once, and a grade of D or F was earned and then repeated for a grade of C or higher, the original grades of D or F will be excluded from the GPA calculation for the degree plan (if applicable) and cumulative GPA but remain on the student's permanent record.

A course in which the final grade is C may be repeated for a higher grade. If the second grade is higher, the original grade will be excluded from the GPA calculation for the degree plan (if applicable) and cumulative GPA but remain on the student's permanent record.

Repeat grades and cumulative GPA for financial aid programs may differ from those listed above, based on the type of aid.

Rules related to F* grades and repeat courses may be found under Student Rule 20 and on the Aggie Honor System Office website under Sanctions. If a minimum GPA is not attained in a reasonable length of time, a student may be dismissed from graduate studies. A degree-seeking graduate student may also be considered scholastically deficient if they fail to show acceptable proficiency in such other requisites for their degree as may be assigned by the graduate committee, Department, or the Graduate and Professional School (e.g., qualifying and preliminary examinations, research, writing, or a thesis, record of study, or dissertation, etc.).

Incomplete Grades

10.6 A temporary grade of I (incomplete) at the end of a semester or summer term indicates that the student has completed the course except for a major quiz, final examination, or single major assignment. The instructor shall give this grade only when the deficiency is due to an approved university excused absence (see Rule 7 of TAMU Student Rules), when a case of potential academic misconduct involving the student is pending with the Aggie Honor System Office... The student's academic dean or designee may authorize the use of an I (incomplete) grade when more than one assignment is missing due to an emergency. Each instructor awarding an incomplete grade must complete an "Incomplete Grade Report," which will be filed with the department head or designee of the department offering the course. Copies will also be sent to the student and to the student's academic dean or designee. An incomplete must be removed before the last day of scheduled classes of the next long semester in which the student enrolls in the university unless the student's academic dean or designee, with the consent of the instructor, grants a time extension. In the absence of the instructor, the department head may grant a time extension. Failure to complete the required work in the appropriate period, or registering for the course again, will result in the "I" grade changed to an "F" by the Registrar. Grades of I assigned to 684 (Professional Internships), 691 (Research), 692 (Professional Study), or 693 (Professional Study) are excluded from this rule.

Class Registration

Texas AM University has two terms of registration- "pre-registration" and "open registration". These two registration terms do not apply to Graduate students. Once registration is open for graduate students, it is open through the 5th class day of the next semester, except for specific dates around graduation time periods (the Registrar's office sets those dates).

Registration begins in November for the Spring semester and in April for the Summer and Fall semesters. The specific dates will be noted on the Official University Calendar and on the main portal: <https://howdy.tamu.edu>. This is also the website where students can view the [course schedule](#) and register. Students can check in Howdy (approximately mid-October for Spring and mid- March for Summer/Fall) to view their assigned registration times. Tutorials for how to register are available on the "My Record" tab of the Howdy portal.

Prior to the start of pre-registration, prior to each new registration cycle, students should expect to do the following:

- View Registration Times
- Submit Terms of Use Agreements
- Complete Location Updates
- Submit Lab Safety Acknowledgments (if a student intends to register in lab courses)
- A student should check their account for Registration Holds

Students must start their registration checklist by completing the above points first. It is good practice for each student to go ahead and update their location just in case it is needed for registration. Sections that are In-Absentia, where a student will be 50+ miles away from College Station, require that a student update their location before registering or being registered for the section.

Students must clear all holds through outside departments/offices, such as the Registrar's Office, Admissions, Student Affairs, Student Business Services, and/or Financial Aid, prior to registration. Students must contact these offices in order for the holds to be removed. The advising office is unable to remove any holds except those placed by SPH.

Note: All students who fail to pay tuition and fees by the payment date listed on the registration website will be dropped from all courses. Students who register late (after the first day of classes) will be assessed with a financial penalty.

Add/Drop

Students may change their schedules without penalty during the add/drop period (see [Academic Calendar](#) for dates). Add/drop can be done online during certain times. It is the student's responsibility to check the Academic Calendar for any changes or revisions.

Q-Drop

Students may drop a course with no penalty (Q-Drop) during the official Q-Drop period (see academic calendar for dates). Students should submit Q-Drop requests online in Howdy from the "My Dashboard" tab under the "My Requests" dropdown. If approved, a grade of Q will be recorded on the student's transcript. It is the student's responsibility to check that the Q-drop doesn't impact their funding, employment or visa eligibility. Students should check their transcript to make certain the course is officially dropped. Failure to do so may result in the record of a failing grade.

Withdrawal

A student who drops all in-progress courses or courses not yet started in a particular term will be required to withdraw from the university. An official withdrawal is initiated by the student, online in Howdy, and routed to the student's Dean or designee for approval. A student may not initiate a withdrawal after the Q-drop period ends (see Q-drop periods). However, the student's Dean or designee may, in certain circumstances, initiate a request to the registrar to withdraw a student after the deadline.

For additional information about withdrawing from the University, see Part I, Section 17 of the Texas A&M University Student Rules.

Students are reminded that withdrawing from the University does not dismiss the repayment of student loans borrowed and may impact payment and grace periods. For students to learn more about repaying their student loans, please visit <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/repayment> and to find their current loan history, see <http://nslds.ed.gov>. For questions, contact Scholarships & Financial Aid at (979) 845- 3236.

Distance Rule

Per the Texas Administrative Code: 10. For non-distance degree programs, no more than 50 percent of the credit hours required for the program may be completed through distance education courses.

School of Public Health Requirements

Competencies

All degree programs are required to include the major competencies as defined by our accreditation agencies. Competencies refer to the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities that students are expected to develop and demonstrate by the end of their studies. These competencies guide curriculum design, assessments, and program outcomes to ensure that graduates are well-prepared for professional or academic pursuits in their field.

Syllabi

A syllabus serves as a foundational document for each course, outlining essential information about the course structure, expectations, and policies. It includes specific guidelines and elements required by Texas A&M to ensure clarity and consistency. Here's a breakdown of typical contents and their purpose:

1. Course Information –
 - a. Course title, number, section, and semester; Meeting days, times, and location (or online course details).
 - b. Instructor and TA Contact Information - Instructor's name, office location, office hours, and contact details (e.g., email, phone); Teaching Assistant (TA) details if applicable.
2. Course Description – A brief overview of the course, including topics covered and the course's purpose.
3. Prerequisites – required courses that must be successfully completed prior to enrollment (see the graduate catalog)
4. Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives – Specific competencies (CEPH or CAHME) and learning objectives that detail what students are expected to learn.
5. Textbook and/or Resource Materials – Textbooks, readings, software, or other materials required for the course; Any technology or resources students need to access course content.
6. Course Topics, Calendar of Activities, Major Assignment Date – A schedule of topics, readings, assignments, and exams, often organized by week or class meeting.
7. Grading Policies – Breakdown of assignments, exams, projects, and how they contribute to the final grade, Explanation of the grading scale and any policies on late submissions, makeup work, or extra credit.
8. Late Work Policy – Indication if the faculty will accept late work, if so, this includes the penalty and what constitutes late work.
9. Attendance Policy – Requirements for attending classes or completing online components- Refer to Student Rule 7
10. Make-Up Policy – Refer to Student Rule 7
11. Canvas Learning Management System – overview and computer requirements
12. Academic Integrity – Texas A&M's Honor Code and the expectations regarding plagiarism and cheating
13. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy – Information about accommodations for students with disabilities
14. Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality
15. Statement on Mental Health and Wellness
16. Federal Educational Rights and Responsibilities Act (FERPA)
17. Equal Opportunity Statement
18. School of Public Health Mission
19. Course Evaluation
20. Copyright Statement
21. Disclaimer

22. Competencies

The syllabus at Texas A&M University not only serves as a contract between the instructor and students but also reflects the university's commitment to academic integrity, respect, and support for student success.

Probation

All student grades will be verified within one week after final grades are posted each semester. Students whose GPR (degree plan and TAMU official GPR) falls below a 3.0 will receive correspondence via their official Texas A&M University email, this specifically includes a letter notifying the student of their scholastic probation along with the conditions of the probation. Students must sign and agree to the terms of probation to continue to enroll in the SPH degree program. Copies of the letter will be sent to the student's committee chair, faculty advisor, the department head, and the Associate Dean for Student Services.

First Semester on Scholastic Probation

1. The student has one long semester of probation (excluding summer terms) to raise the GPR to 3.0 or above, or to demonstrate acceptable academic proficiency.
2. If the student fails to make progress toward raising the GPR or otherwise meeting the conditions of his/her probation, the student may be dismissed from the graduate program at the end of the probationary period.

Second Semester on Scholastic Probation

1. A second semester extension may be granted by the Associate Dean of Student Services given one of the following circumstances apply:
 - a. The student has made reasonable progress during the first semester on probation toward raising the GPR; and/or
 - b. There are medical reasons for not meeting the terms of the original probation, verified by the committee chair/faculty advisor or graduate academic advisor; and
 - c. A plan is in place to enable the student to raise GPR to acceptable level and meet other designated conditions of his or her probation by the end of the next long semester (excluding summer terms).
2. If the above conditions are met and the Associate Dean of Student Services concurs, a second letter stating the conditions of the final probationary period will be sent to the student, committee chair/faculty advisor, graduate academic advisor, and department head.
3. If the student fails to meet the conditions of the final probation, it will be recommended to the Office of Graduate Studies that he or she be dismissed from the graduate program. The recommendation to dismiss will be made by the Associate Dean of Student Services, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the department head, and committee chair (when applicable).

To be readmitted after dismissal, the student must comply with the Policy for Readmission of Dismissed Graduate Students.

Dismissal

Graduate students should refer to Student Rule 12.5 regarding dismissal.

In addition, SPH students who fail to meet the terms of probation may be dismissed from the degree program. These students will receive correspondence via their official Texas A&M University email. Copies of the letter will be sent to the student's committee chair/faculty advisor, the department head, the Associate Dean for Student Services, and the Graduate School. The Office of International Student & Scholar Services will be notified as well, when applicable.

Appeals

The Graduate Academic Appeals Panel (GAAP) will hear appeals involving actions against students stemming from the following grievances:

- Unauthorized absence or final grade.

- Evaluation of performance on examinations required by the department, intercollegiate faculty, or graduate advisory committee.
- Probation, suspension, dismissal or termination from a department, interdisciplinary degree program and/or college for scholastic deficiency.

Part III, Section 59 of Texas A&M University's Student Rules describes the Graduate Academic Appeals Panel Process in detail. Please carefully review Section 59 before pursuing a grievance.

Students are also strongly encouraged to seek clarification and advice regarding appropriate grievance procedures. The Ombuds Officer for Graduate Education represents a valuable resource for questions regarding grievances and appeals. The ombudsperson advocates for the processes of graduate education and provides equal, open access to all parties—students, faculty, staff and administrators. To secure a hearing with the Graduate Academic Appeals Panel, please complete the Form to Request a Hearing. This form must be completed and returned to the Graduate & Professional School within 10 university business days of receiving notice of final actions/decisions a student wishes to appeal. Please direct any questions regarding graduate appeals to the Graduate & Professional School at grad@tamu.edu.

Leave of Absence

A student can initiate a leave of absence request by submitting a Waivers and Exceptions petition through the [Document Processing Submission System \(DPSS\)](#). A leave of absence will be granted for one year, and only under conditions that require the suspension of all activities associated with pursuing the degree. For certain types of approved leave, such as medical, the period for completing the degree will stop with the leave and begin when the student returns to the program. Other types of leave may not stop the time limit for the degree. A student should consult their program's graduate academic advisor for details.

For more information on program requirements [please visit the graduate catalog](#).

Conduct

The School of Public Health is committed to promoting and ensuring a safe and respectful educational and working environment for its faculty, administrators, staff, students, and the lay and professional communities with whom we work. It should be one free of harassment, bullying, or intimidation. The purpose of this code is to set forth the school's expectations for professional conduct. In no way does it place limits on academic freedom or, in the language of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), represent an obstacle to the fundamental academic "right to dissent from the judgements of colleagues and administrators." The AAUP stresses, "Criticism and opposition do not necessarily conflict with collegiality." This code is intended to foster an environment that is characterized by civility and respect for all the members of the community, that supports the mission of the School and University, and that is free of behaviors that have the purpose or effect of undermining the School's or the University's climate, mission, or morale through unreasonable interference with the employment, work, or educational performance.

Code of Professional Conduct

1. Treat everyone (including, but not limited to, faculty, administrators, staff, building personnel, and students) with respect, civility, and fairness.
2. Treat everyone without bias or discrimination based on dimensions of diversity including age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, health condition, marital status, parental status, genetic information, professional status, or personal connections.
3. Teach, conduct research, conduct administrative business, and engage with the professional and lay community with competence, honesty, and the highest ethical and professional standards.
4. Resolve conflicts and counsel colleagues and subordinates in a non-threatening, constructive, and private manner whenever possible and when not in conflict with other TAMU policies.
5. When in a supervisory role, provide clear direction, timely feedback, and constructive suggestions and opportunities for improvement or remediation when it comes to professional comportment.

6. Follow TAMU policies and procedures pertaining to faculty, students, and staff (including but not limited to student rules, committee expectations and responsibilities, reporting guidelines, etc.) and promptly address violations of institutional policies by reporting or cooperating with investigations and audits as called upon.

Examples of behavior that faculty, administrators, staff, and students must refrain from include but are not limited to:

- Disrespectful behavior towards all members and guests of the SPH and the broader University community, including but not limited to faculty, administrators, staff, building personnel, and students.
- Loss of civility that interferes with the working and learning environment (examples commonly cited in model guidelines include shouting, personal attacks or insults delivered either face-to-face or through others, throwing objects, slamming doors, or other physical displays of temper).
- Unprofessional interpersonal interactions, including requesting that professional colleagues, staff or students perform personal favors or do things that either violate policy or compliance standards (see examples in Professors Behaving Badly).
- Unwanted physical contact with others or threats of such contact.
- Sexual harassment, as outlined by TAMU, or any harassment including harassment based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other dimensions of diversity. (As noted below, such behavior is reportable to the University.)
- Mistreatment of faculty, administrators, staff, building personnel, students, or professional or lay community members, including, but not limited to, making remarks (in face-to-face or online venues like social media) with the intent to cause offense, public embarrassment or humiliation, denying reasonable opportunities for training or advancement, or giving lower evaluations than earned.

Retaliation based on formal or informal measures to address concerns about professional conduct or retaliation based on professional disagreements.

Funding

There are many avenues for graduate students to fund graduate tuition, travel, and research. These are available at the University, department and college (SPH) levels. The following section reviews and provides some guidance on multiple sources of funding for scholarships, research, and travel. This is not an exhaustive list but will provide a starting point for SPH students in seeking funding assistance for their graduate education.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is money that helps a student pay for college, and can be allocated by the university, government, or private institutions. The type and amount of financial aid offered is based on the data provided on a student's financial aid application.

Types of Aid

Financial aid for graduate and professional students can be a combination of scholarships, grants, and loans. Financial aid is either need-based or non-need based.

- Scholarships are lump sum payments that do not need to be repaid.
- Texas A&M offers several need-based grants to help supplement costs of education.
- Loans need to be paid back when a student enrolls less than half-time or they graduate.
- Emergency aid is available to students experiencing unexpected financial hardship.

Once a student submits their application, they are automatically reviewed for all the types of financial aid that they are eligible for.

Visit these two websites for more information:

- <https://grad.tamu.edu/funding-opportunities-for-graduate-students/funding-opportunities-for-prospective-students>
- <https://aggie.tamu.edu/financial-aid/types-of-aid>

Texas A&M University offers many financial aid options to help pay for college costs. Visit the Scholarships & Financial Aid website to learn about applying for financial assistance, costs, types of aid and more.

SPH students are encouraged to contact the **HSC Financial Aid liaison at 979.458.5348** or hscfinancialaid@tamu.edu . If a student is eligible to apply for federal, state and institutional financial aid, they will need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Be sure to include the Texas A&M University School code of 003632. Visit the Financial Aid website for more information.

SPH Scholarships

Current SPH graduate students are contacted via school email with information about available scholarships and application instructions. Depending on the specific scholarship program, scholarship funds may be used to pay for books, supplies, or other expenses. Information on the SPH scholarships available to graduate students can be found on this website: <https://public-health.tamu.edu/academics/scholarships.html>

SPH Fellowships

NIOSH Training Grant (for Occupational Safety & Health students)- The Occupational Safety and Health Training Program at Texas A&M University's School of Public Health delivers focused training in occupational safety and health, with available concentrations in safety, health, and ergonomics for master's level students. Students completing the program will possess knowledge and skills in the general concepts related to occupational safety and health, ergonomics, industrial hygiene, occupational disease, human anatomy, user-computer interaction, displays and controls, information processing, industrial process safety, epidemiology, vibration control, and statistics.

Externally Funded

Graduate students may also apply for a number of externally funded scholarships and fellowships. For external scholarships, students are encouraged to visit the following website:

ASPPH: <https://asp-ph.org/student-journey/financing-your-degree>

For more information about the available fellowships.

- Large National Graduate Fellowship Programs
- Liberal Arts, Humanities, and Social Science Fellowships
- National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowships
- Sigma Xi Grants-in-Aid Research Program
- LT Jordon Fellows Opportunities Other Fellowship Opportunities

Visit <https://grad.tamu.edu/funding-opportunities-for-graduate-students>

International Student Funding

International students may qualify for financial assistance such as loans, scholarships and assistantships. Visit the International Student Services website for information on financial resources:

<https://global.tamu.edu/isss/resources>

Sponsors

Some international students have all or part of their educational expenses paid from a source other than personal and/or family funds or from a Texas A&M assistantship. These students may have made agreements

with a sponsor regarding their educational objectives that is the result of an agreement between agencies, governments, organizations (both international and domestic) and/or companies (both public and private).

In most cases, these agreements require special coordination and certification by Texas A&M. Early in the admissions process, students participating in sponsored programs should review the ISS Sponsors website here: <https://global.tamu.edu/iss/resources>

Student Travel Support

Doctoral students are eligible to participate in the TAMU Graduate Student Travel Awards. This program is supported by the Graduate and Professional School, the Texas A&M Association of Former Students, and the George Bush Presidential Library Foundation. The purpose is to help support graduate student domestic and international travel related to conferences, academic presentations, research projects, and internships. For more information, visit: <https://grad.tamu.edu/funding-opportunities-for-graduate-students/graduate-student-travel-awards>.

SPH Graduate Student Travel Grants

Students should contact their department head regarding funds available for conference travel.

Note: SPH students are not eligible to receive the Graduate and Professional School's Graduate Student Travel Award currently.

AHRQ Dissertation Grants

Doctoral students who have passed their qualifying exams and developed a proposal for their dissertation research may apply for an [AHRQ Health Services Research Dissertation Grant](#). This highly competitive grant program provides funding for up to \$40,000 in direct costs over a period of 9 to 17 months. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident by the time of the award to apply. Visit the [AHRQ program website](#) for more details.

Graduate Assistantships

An assistantship also gives students the opportunity to develop their skills that are transferable to their professional career after graduation. And it helps fund their education!

While eligibility requirements, benefits and employment regulations vary between positions, non-resident doctoral and non-resident master's students employed in a graduate assistantship may also qualify to pay tuition at the in-state rate.

The Grad Student Health Plan, HMO with low out-of-pocket costs, is exclusively available to benefit-eligible title codes, including all Graduate Assistant positions and eligible dependents of students employed in the titles. Eligibility for the university's employee group insurance benefits depends on the job title, the length of employment period, and scheduled weekly hours.

There are four types of graduate assistantships available through the academic departments, colleges, TAMUS agencies, and administrative offices.

- Non-teaching activities (GANT)
- Research (GAR)
- Teaching (GAT)
- Lecturer (GAL)

Visit this website to view the GA Employment Comparison: <https://grad.tamu.edu/knowledge-center/faculty-staff-resources/graduate-assistant-employment-comparison>

Most of these positions require service of 20 hours per week (maximum). Although individual colleges may have higher requirements, graduate students holding assistantships must be registered for a minimum of nine semester hours during a fall or spring semester, or for six credit hours during the summer.

Assistantships terminate upon failure to maintain the minimum enrollment requirement. Students serving in these roles are eligible for insurance benefits and may pay tuition and fees at the in-state rate. The Graduate School Graduate Council enforces guidelines for employing graduate students at greater than a 50% effort.

For more detailed information on graduate student assistantship requirements, check the Graduate Catalog or a student can directly contact their department head, chair of the intercollegiate faculty, or their graduate academic advisor. Visit the Jobs for Aggies (jobsforaggies.tamu.edu) website to learn more about assistantships and general student employment opportunities.

Guidelines for Graduate Assistantships in the School of Public Health

The School of Public Health has a long tradition of supporting graduate students, with a particular emphasis on doctoral students during their studies. The department provides abundant opportunities for graduate students to advance skills in teaching, research, and service to fully prepare our students for a successful academic career in higher education and other educational research environments. SPH emphasizes mentorship and growth in teaching, grant writing, and research for all our graduate students, and GA positions are provided that enhance a well-rounded graduate experience. While many Graduate Assistantships and Scholarships are available for masters and doctoral program students, there are limits to funding that vary from year to year. While SPH cannot guarantee GA positions or all students every semester, the department will make every effort to equitably distribute access to the various funding sources for all students.

Training Requirements for Graduate Assistants

All Graduate Assistants (GA), both teaching and non-teaching will complete all online training required by Texas A&M University and/or SPH, abide by all rules and regulations of TAMU, and attend all orientation and training meetings. This includes the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) certification, SPH Departmental trainings, and any specific Divisional trainings. These must be complete before the student is employed in a GAT (Graduate Assistant Teaching) or GANT (Graduate Assisting Not Teaching but supporting faculty courses) or GAR (Graduate Assistant Research) role. All Graduate Assistants must comply with all CTE requirements, all university employment requirements, and all departmental policies and procedures. Graduate Assistant salary will not begin until the student has secured CTE certification and attended the departmental orientation of all Graduate Assistants (GAT, GANT, and GAR). This orientation is mandatory, and it is expected that all GA's attend and participate as part of their roles and responsibilities.

International students who wish to serve in teaching positions (GAT) must meet requisite standardized test scores prior to enrollment. If they do not meet this requirement, they can certify by taking the on-campus English Language Proficiency Exam (ELPE).

Assistantship Non-Resident Tuition Waivers- allows students employed as Graduate Assistants (GAT, GAR, GAL, or GANT) and their spouses/dependents to pay tuition at the in-state rate. Non-Resident Tuition Waiver requests must be submitted each semester.

- <https://grad.tamu.edu/knowledge-center/forms/non-resident-tuition-waiver>
- <https://grad.tamu.edu/funding-your-education>

Curriculum, Course, and Program Information

Degree Plans

A degree plan is a list of courses that students must take to complete their degree program requirements. Degree plans are important for helping students identify their interests and goals, and to make the most of their college experience. The specific degree plan assigned to the student is based on the academic year and catalog the student first enters the graduate degree program. Students should refer to the TAMU Graduate Catalog for this information.

Degree plans for SPH graduate students are in the Student Advancement Community Course in Canvas. These are organized by academic year. Any deviation from the required courses listed on the degree plan (e.g., grade of D or F, not enrolling in a required course) may result in a delay in graduation.

Degree Sequences

Course sequences identify degree-related courses that are taken in a specific order to fulfill a specific degree or program requirement. Courses are usually taken in a specific order, as earlier courses may be prerequisites for later courses or will include fundamental concepts required in following semesters. **While these sequences reflect prerequisites and an ideal progression, they are intended as a guide and may be adjusted to accommodate individual student needs, course availability, or departmental changes.** Degree sequences for SPH graduate students are in the Student Advancement Community Course in Canvas. These are organized by academic year. Any deviation from the sequence (e.g., grade of D or F, not enrolling in a required course) may result in a delay in graduation.

Elective Courses

Some degree programs may allow students to enroll in elective courses. Electives must be a graduate-level course (600) and students must receive prior approval from their graduate academic advisor and faculty advisor. A list of pre-approved electives may be found in the Student Advancement Community Course.

Capstone

All PhD students must complete an Interprofessional Practical Experience (IPE). The IPE is a cumulative, integrative, and scholarly or inquiry project that serves as a capstone to the education experience. IPE course sections are specific to the students and their faculty chair. Students can complete their IPE during any semester.

- **Course:** PHPM 791
- **Eligibility to enroll is the following:** The student must have passed the preliminary exam.
- **Other information:** The IPE is doctoral dissertation or equivalent projects(s). The PhD IPE can be spread across multiple terms or taken at once. The program concludes with nine (or more) credit hours for doctoral capstone (dissertation). Must be taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. May be repeated for credit. The student should check with their faculty advisor. Variable Credit Hours: 1-9.

Variable Credit Courses

Variable Credit Courses (VCCs) allow students to enroll in specific courses with credit hours ranging from 1 to 23. The range is specific to each course.

VCCs include Internship 684 (PhD-Health Education students only), Directed Studies (685), Directed Research (686), and Research (691, doctoral students only)

Students wanting to enroll in an internship (684), directed study (685), directed research (686), or research (691*) course should contact their graduate academic advisor for the form. The form requires students to document outcomes and competencies for the course and faculty approval.

- [685 Directed Studies](#)

Credits 1 to 12. 0 Lecture Hours. 1 to 12 Other Hours. Investigation of a topic not covered by other formal courses; conducted under the direction of a graduate faculty member. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisites: Graduate classification; School of Public Health major.

➤ **686 Directed Research**

Credits 1 to 3. 0 Lecture Hours. 1 to 3 Other Hours. Student research initiative not within the scope of a thesis or dissertation. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Approval of student's academic advisor.

Course Substitutions

Course substitutions are at the discretion of the student's department. Students can initiate this inquiry via their assigned academic advisor. Course substitutions are not guaranteed.

Transfer Coursework

There is a limit on the number of credit hours a student may request to transfer into the program. Per the [TAMU Graduate catalog](#): A student may request to transfer up to 9 hours of graduate credit to Master's degrees and up to 12 hours of graduate credit to the doctoral programs. Students must first consult with their academic advisor to receive guidance on the course substitution process. Formal approval must then be obtained from the student's Committee Chair, Department Head, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Once all approvals have been secured, the documentation should be returned to the academic advisor, who will copy the Associate Dean for Student Services.

Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater may be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Courses used toward another degree at another institution may not be applied for graduate credit.

Key items to consider:

- GPS transfer credit policy <https://grad.tamu.edu/knowledge-center/general-faqs/transfer-courses-faqs>
- Minimum grade earned must be a "B" or higher.
- Not included in TAMU GPA. Note: for students on probation, transfer credits may not be an option as the grade for the course will not change a student's GPA for graduation eligibility or probation.
- Applicability to degree program is at the discretion of the department.
- Concentration courses- these courses require additional approval as any course with required competencies should be taken at Texas A&M SPH. All competencies must be accounted for in any transfer course.

Students requesting to transfer courses into a SPH degree program at the time of admission.

- Students must provide syllabus and unofficial transcript showing the final letter grade in the course (B or higher).
- Course reviewed by instructor of record at SPH for approval.
- Course and approvals reviewed by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
- If approved, the official transcript is routed to Registrar (unless already included in SOPHAS/HAMPCAS application).
- Long Form Petition in DPSS to add course/s to official Degree Plan in DPSS.
- Initiate this process with assigned academic advisor.

Current students seeking courses elsewhere to apply to their degree plan.

- Must receive guidance of process by their graduate academic advisor in advance of registering for the course at another institution.
- Student must provide the most current syllabus to be reviewed by instructor of record at SPH for approval.

- If approved as an equivalent course by the TAMU instructor, the student must obtain approvals from their committee Chair, Department Head, and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.
- Student will return approval form(s) with syllabus to their academic advisor. Copy of form(s) with syllabus will be provided to the Associate Dean of Student Services.
- Once the course is completed, the official transcript needs to be routed to Registrar.
- Long Form Petition in DPSS to add course/s to official Degree Plan in DPSS.
- Initiate this process with assigned academic advisor.

Change in Program Requests

SPH graduate students requesting a change of curriculum (concentration or degree program) may be subject to all application requirements and enrollment restrictions of the department which the new program is offered. The Graduate Student Change of Program Request Form must be completed and approved by all parties before an MDD* petition is submitted in DPSS.

**MDD: Petition to file a change of Major, Department or Degree.*

Graduate students seeking to change their program (within SPH) must meet the following requirements:

- Eligibility: Review of completed courses and grades.
- Complete one full long semester (fall or spring; does not include summer) in the degree program they originally received admittance to at SPH.
- Requests/Forms should be submitted between fall and spring terms – requests need to be made at least 8 business days before open registration ends.
- Requests should be submitted no later than the end of summer in the student's first year.

School of Public Health (SPH) Degree Plan Worksheet

The School of Public Health (SPH) Degree Plan Worksheet is an internal tool for students to use to become familiar with their degree requirements and course sequencing. Students can download this worksheet from the SPH Student Advancement and bring it to their advising sessions.

Courses on the degree plan must match the student's course registration each semester for Financial Aid.

TAMU Graduate Certificate Programs

Graduate certificate programs offer focused study in a specific field or an interdisciplinary area spanning multiple disciplines. For more information or specific inquiries, please contact the college or school that administers the certificate.

To find a full list of all graduate certificates offered by Texas A&M University, visit this website:

<https://registrar.tamu.edu/curricular-services/programs/program-inventory/certificate-programs>

SPH students should meet with their graduate academic advisor and faculty advisor first before applying and enrolling in a certificate program.

Student Faculty Advisor

Each student will have a primary faculty advisor initially appointed by the Ph.D. program chair. Students may request a change in their faculty advisor from among the HPM primary faculty at any time, with the approval of the Ph.D. program chair.

Responsibilities of the faculty advisor include the following:

- Initial advising and direction of the student and the selection of coursework.
- Facilitating the completion of the student's initial plan of study by providing advice about elective course selections.
- After each academic year, reviewing student progress and forwarding this assessment of student progress to the Ph.D. Program Committee prior to each student's annual review.

Ph.D. Program Committee

The Ph.D. Program Committee is responsible for the following duties:

- Reviewing student applications and making admissions recommendations.
- Conducting an annual performance review of each doctoral student, with input from the student's academic advisor and GAT/GAR supervisor, to be scheduled by the PhD Program Chair.
- Proposing and approving program changes, such as changes in curriculum or other program requirements. Responsibilities for many operational aspects of the Ph.D. Program are delegated to the Chair of the Ph.D. Program Committee (Ph.D. program chair), including scheduling student annual reviews.

Change of Faculty Advisor/Committee Chair

Usually, doctoral graduate students work continuously with one committee chair (primary faculty advisor) during their graduate career in our department. It is the student's responsibility to communicate his/her professional goals and priorities to the committee chair. If, however, a currently enrolled student believes his/her interests would be better served with a different committee chair, the student should contact the Graduate Studies Chair and/or the Graduate Studies Coordinator to initiate this process. The Doctoral Chair for the department can often assist with finding a new faculty advisor. If the student is pursuing a PhD degree, he/she must pursue negotiations with other Research members of the PhD Graduate Faculty who are eligible to advise thesis/dissertation students. Before a change of committee chairs is finalized, the student must gain signatures from the former and the new committee chair, as well as the Graduate Studies Chair, on the PhD Graduate Studies Change of Advisor Form. If the student has already filed a degree plan, a petition form to change committee members should be submitted to the Graduate & Professional School.

Annual Review of Doctoral Students

All PhD Graduate Students must submit an annual student progress evaluation in Canvas by mid-May of each academic year. In this evaluation, they will be asked to report on their annual and to-date academic progress (formal courses taken and grades), their research activities, funding activities, publication productivity, and service to the university and profession.

Progress of doctoral students toward completion of their degree will then be initially evaluated by the Graduate Studies Coordinator according to expectations set forth in this handbook and the University Graduate Catalog. The primary purpose is to consider progress in the many proficiencies required of doctoral students beyond the minimum requirement to maintain good academic standing (both GPR's ≥ 3.0).

Upon review, students and faculty advisors will receive notification only if there are any areas of potential deficiencies. Upon review by the student's academic advisor, if any concerns remain, they will be brought to the Fall Graduate Faculty meeting for discussion and vote. All decisions regarding "satisfactory progress" or "scholastic deficiency" (defined as any deficiency other than $GPR < 3.00$) will be made by majority vote of the full members of the department Graduate Faculty. Students and advisors will be informed by letter in advance of the Annual Review of Doctoral Students meeting. (See Student Rule 12 <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule12>)

Program Completion

Most Ph.D. students can complete all degree requirements within 4 years of matriculation, except for those entering the program without a prior Master's or terminal professional degree. However, in most cases students will not receive assistantship support after 4 years. Further, all requirements for the Ph.D. degree in Health Services Research must be completed within a period of ten consecutive calendar years from the year of matriculation for the degree to be granted.

Doctoral Student Qualifying Examination

All doctoral students must pass a qualifying exam, to be administered after satisfactory completion of all core course requirements and cognate course requirements (health policy or health economics) for the Ph.D. program. The exam is administered no later than the first week of June after the end of the second spring semester of the program.

The purpose of the qualifying examination is to assess student knowledge, proficiency, and mastery in applying information and skills from core courses, methods courses, and cognate courses to various research tasks pertaining to health services research.

The qualifying exam is a two-day written exam, consisting of two parts. One part of the exam is devoted to research design and analytic methodology (the methods exam). The second part is devoted to questions relating to the content covered in the courses in the student's selected cognate area (the cognate exam). One full business day (8 hours) is allotted to complete each part of the exam, with at least one non-exam day between the two parts. Both parts of the qualifying exam are open-book/open-note, but students are NOT allowed to confer with each other or any other person when completing the qualifying exam. Any such collaboration will be referred to the Texas A&M University Aggie Honor System Office (Aggie Honor Council) for appropriate disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the University.

The qualifying exam questions are developed by qualifying exam committees: a methods exam committee and two cognate area exam committees (policy and economics). Each committee consists of no less than 3 members of the Departmental faculty, appointed by the Ph.D. program chair, and typically includes faculty teaching the content from methods courses or cognate courses. All members of the exam committees review students' written responses to exam questions, and meet as a group, usually within 2 weeks of the exam date, to develop a consensus grade for each student's exam: "Pass," "Fail," or "Pass with distinction." If the exam committee concludes a student's exam responses overall are near but below the "Pass" threshold ("marginal"), the committee will meet with the student to provide the student with an opportunity to respond to committee questions about the student's written answers. Such meetings usually occur within 2-3 weeks of the exam committee's consensus meeting. The exam committee will make a final grade determination after the conclusion of this meeting. At the exam committee's discretion, as a condition of receiving a grade of "pass," students may be assigned specific tasks (such as completing a specific course or training activity) that must be completed before scheduling their dissertation research proposal (see "Preliminary Exam").

Students who fail either the methods or cognate area part of the qualifying examination will be required to retake the part of the qualifying exam they failed. A student who fails any part of the qualifying exam will be provided with 1) a written report noting the rationale for the committee's consensus grade; and 2) a list of recommended remediation actions for the student to complete prior to retaking the qualifying exam. The Ph.D. program chair, or an exam committee designee, will meet with the student to review these documents and answer any questions the student has regarding the documents.

To allow adequate time for the student to follow recommended remediation tasks, retake exams will be scheduled after January 2nd but no later than the beginning of the following spring semester. Students who failed both parts of the qualifying exam will be allowed at least one non-exam day between each part. The format and process for the retake exam (or exams) is like the initial examination. Failure in the second qualifying exam will result in dismissal of the student from the program, effective no later than one year after the first qualifying exam date (typically the end of the third-year spring semester). Accordingly, students who failed their initial qualifying exam are strongly advised to make contingency plans for possible failure of the retake exam, as the notification of failure may not occur until late February or March of their final semester. One option for students who fail the qualifying exam is to apply to change their degree plan to an MSPH degree, which requires completion of a Master's thesis, typically within one year after failing the initial qualifying exam.

Dissertation Information & Requirements

Active Engagement in Research

It is expected that each doctoral student will be actively engaged in research throughout the duration of his/her graduate study. This should be evidenced by the doctoral student's participation in data collection, research planning and design, data analysis and interpretation, presentation, and publication. The culmination of this ongoing experience is the student's dissertation. It is recognized that a significant percentage of the student's training occurs because of one-on-one and small group interactions in the research environment. It is also recognized that the Ph.D. is the highest research degree and that it is important for the students to develop the research presentation and publication portion of his/her vita while in the doctoral program. It is also desirable that the student gain experience in the development and submission of grant proposals.

Dissertation Overview and Expectation for Publication

The dissertation represents original research conducted by the candidate. It is expected the dissertation will result in one or more publications in leading peer-reviewed journals in study. It should therefore conform to a style utilized by a journal or journals, in the student's major area of study and the Graduate and Professional School [Thesis and Dissertation Manual](#). The University and the Department allow a great deal of latitude in the organization of the dissertation. It should be noted that the scholarship of the work is the primary criterion for evaluation. Consistent with the emphasis on publishing doctoral level work, it is expected that the student will submit one or more manuscripts derived from the dissertation to a national or international referred journal(s).

Students should be first authors on these reports, although secondary authors may be included. If possible, these submissions should be completed before the student departs from Texas A&M upon graduation.

Dissertation Committee Membership & Charge

After passing the written qualifying exam, students are expected to start the process of selecting members of their Dissertation Research Committee. The members and the chair of the Dissertation Committee are selected by the student (with the consent of the faculty who are selected), subject to approval by the department head and the Ph.D. Program Chair. The student's Dissertation Committee must include a minimum of four voting members. The chair of the student's Dissertation Committee must be a tenure or tenure-track member of the department faculty, and must have written a doctoral thesis (i.e., faculty with terminal non-thesis professional degrees are not eligible to be the committee chair but may be a committee member). At least one additional member of the Dissertation Committee must be a departmental faculty member, and one member must not be a member of the department's faculty (an external member). Most often, the external member is a faculty member from another SPH department, but the external member could be from another academic unit at Texas A&M, or another academic institution (subject to approval).

The responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee include providing guidance to aid the development of the student's dissertation research proposal, administering the preliminary exam (the student's written dissertation research proposal and oral defense), and administering the final dissertation defense.

Preliminary Examination (Dissertation Research Proposal)

After the membership of the student's Dissertation Committee is determined, the student should begin to develop a dissertation research proposal, in consultation with the Dissertation Committee Chair and other members of the Dissertation Committee. There are no specific formatting requirements for the written proposal, but it should include the elements of a typical research grant proposal (study aims, significance, background, conceptual model, and methods/data). The dissertation proposal should specify whether the dissertation will be in the traditional 'book' format or in the form of three professional papers of publishable quality (see below). For the Ph.D. program in health services research, the preliminary examination is an evaluation of the student's dissertation research proposal, which is based on a detailed written research plan and an oral proposal defense. Students are referred to the Graduate and Professional School (GAPS) website for specific requirements for the preliminary examination, including a checklist of conditions that must be satisfied before the student is eligible for an oral dissertation research proposal defense.

The student's dissertation research proposal is developed in consultation with the student's Dissertation Committee, typically within 6 to 9 months after passing the qualifying exam and after satisfactory completion of all required doctoral program coursework. The Dissertation Committee's evaluation of the student's dissertation research proposal considers the scientific significance of the proposed research topic, adequacy of the proposed methodology, and the feasibility of timely completion of the proposed research.

At the conclusion of the student's proposal defense, the Dissertation Committee, by majority vote, will assign a grade for the preliminary exam: "Pass," "Pass with required revisions," or "Fail." For students earning a grade of "Pass with required revisions," the Dissertation Committee will specify the mechanism for determining if required revisions have been completed satisfactorily.

Ideally, during the development of the student's dissertation research proposal, the chair and other members of Dissertation Committee will alert the student to substantive concerns about the proposal and recommend revisions to address those concerns. For students who follow these recommendations, a grade of "Fail" on the preliminary exam should be rare. However, if a student fails an oral proposal defense, the student must repeat the oral proposal defense after revising the written dissertation research proposal to address deficiencies identified by the Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee also may require the student to complete additional coursework or complete other remediation actions prior to the student repeating the oral proposal defense. Failure of the preliminary exam a second time may result in the dismissal of the student from the program.

Admission to Candidacy

To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have: (1) completed all formal core and cognate coursework on the degree plan; (2) a 3.0 Graduate GPA and a Degree Plan GPA of at least 3.0 with no grade lower than a C in any course on the degree plan; and (3) passed the preliminary examination. The final examination (oral dissertation defense) will not be authorized for any doctoral student who has not been admitted to candidacy. In addition, candidates must meet all requirements specified by GAPS.

Dissertation

The candidate's ability to perform independent research must be demonstrated by the dissertation, which must be the original work of the candidate. Whereas acceptance of the dissertation is based primarily on its scholarly merit, it must also exhibit creditable literary workmanship.

All dissertation research conducted by students must comply with all relevant policies and procedures to assure safety and the protection of human subjects.

Specific requirements are provided on the web sites of the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety and the Human Research Protection Program. Specific formatting and style requirements for the final dissertation document are provided on the Graduate School website (GAPS Dissertation). Deviations from these requirements are not permitted.

Final Examination (Dissertation Defense)

The final examination for the Ph.D. program is the final dissertation research defense. No student may defend his or her dissertation unless his/her current official cumulative and degree plan GPA's are 3.0 or better and he/she has been admitted to candidacy. No un-absolved grades of D, F, or U for any course can be listed on the degree plan. To absolve a deficient grade, a student must repeat the course and achieve a grade of C or better. Any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the GAPS prior to approval of the final examination. A student must be registered for at least 1 credit hour of dissertation research during the semester or summer term in which the formal degree completion (graduation) occurs.

The student's Dissertation Committee will conduct the final examination. The final examination will not be administered if the student's written dissertation was not made available in substantially final form to all

members the student's Doctoral Committee with sufficient time to review the document prior to the scheduled defense date (typically at least 10 business days).

The preliminary examination results must have been submitted to GAPS 14 weeks prior to the date of the defense, and the request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted to GAPS a minimum of 10 business days in advance of the scheduled date. Additionally, all English language proficiency requirements must be satisfied prior to scheduling the examination.

Care should be exercised when scheduling an oral defense date to avoid cancellation. GAPS must be notified in writing of any such cancellations. Any oral defense that is not completed and reported as satisfactory to GAPS within 10 working days of the scheduled examination/defense date will be classified by GAPS as a FAIL.

The final dissertation defense consists of a public oral presentation by the student summarizing the content of the written dissertation. Anyone present during the public presentation may ask the student questions about his or her dissertation research. However, following the public presentation, the Dissertation Committee will conduct a private (closed) oral examination by asking the student to respond to committee questions about the student's dissertation without an audience present. After temporarily dismissing the student, the Dissertation Committee will, by majority vote, assign a grade for the final exam: "Pass," "Pass with required revisions," or "Fail." For students earning a grade of "Pass with required revisions," the Dissertation Committee will specify the mechanism for determining if required revisions have been completed satisfactorily. The doctoral committee will submit its grade to GAPS using the Approval of Written Dissertation form.

For candidates who were responsive to feedback from members of their Dissertation Committee during the process of revising early drafts of their written dissertation, a grade of "fail" for the final examination should be a rare event. If a candidate fails this examination, he/she will be provided with written recommendations by the Dissertation Committee for necessary preparations prior to scheduling a second oral dissertation defense. A failure of the second oral defense can result in dismissal from the program.

Submission of the Final Dissertation

After a successful oral defense and approval by the student's Dissertation Committee and the HPM department head, a student must submit his/her dissertation to GAPS no more than 10 business days after the defense date. Submission deadlines to be eligible for graduation in each semester including summer are available on the [GAPS Calendar](#). The student is referred to the [GAPS website](#) for specific dissertation submission requirements, including style and formatting standards.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A- Important Links and Information

Graduate and Professional School Links

GRAD Aggies – grad-aggies@tamu.edu
Graduate and Professional School – grad@tamu.edu
Thesis and Dissertation Services – thesis@tamu.edu
Graduate Records Processing Team – gradprocessing@tamu.edu
Data Team – graddata@tamu.edu
Graduate Ombuds Officer – ombuds@tamu.edu
Graduate Student Employment and Benefits – grad-employment@tamu.edu
Graduate and Professional School awards administrator – grad-award-admin@tamu.edu
Graduate and Professional School fellowship administrator – grad-fellowship-admin@tamu.edu
Graduate and Professional School travel award – grad-travel-award@tamu.edu
Graduate and Professional School Council Administrator – GPCAdmin@tamu.edu
Responsible Conduct of Research – rcr.grad@tamu.edu
Non-Resident Tuition Waivers – gradbusinessservices@tamu.edu
Graduate Commencement Inquiries - gradgraduation@tamu.edu
English Language Proficiency - ELPCompliance@tamu.edu
Graduate Recruitment - grad-recruit@tamu.edu
Academic Requirements Completions System - gradarcs@tamu.edu
Graduate Mentoring Academy - gradmentoring@tamu.edu
Teaching Assistant Training and Evaluation Program - grad-tatep@tamu.edu
Center for the Integration of Research - cirtl@tamu.edu

School of Public Health Links

PhD- [Health Services Research](#)
PhD- [Program Curriculum](#)
[Student Resources](#)

APPENDIX C- SPH Practicum Information

Practicum

Office of Public Health Practice (OPHP) oversees the practicum program for SPH students. Degree programs including MPH, MHA and DrPH, require an Applied Practicum Experience (APEX). The practice experience provides an opportunity to practice public health outside of the classroom. Practicum experiences occur in a variety of settings and have happened across the globe. The credit hours and work hours vary by degree program, students should contact their Practicum Coordinator (table below) for more information.

Graduate students must complete a Pre-APEX Orientation Training. The training modules are located in Canvas. All students are enrolled in the APEX Community (*note: not a class*) after the fall census date (about two weeks after fall classes start).

APEX Resources

- [TAMSPH Applied Practice Experience Manual for Graduate Students](#)
- [TAMSPH Applied Practice Experience Manual - Department Addendums](#)
- [Foundational and Concentration Competencies for MHA, MPH, and DrPH Students](#)
- [Email Template: Inquiry to Possible Preceptor Site](#)
- [Links to Online Student Resources](#)

APEX Portal

Students have access in the portal to upload fully approved work plans and access various documents related to practicum.

Access to the *Applied Practice Experience Work Plan Template (used to build work plans)* is granted by the Office of Public Health Practice once required trainings are completed. **Do not upload a work plan without a fully approved work plan draft that contains all required signatures.**

- [Access Practicum Portal](#)

Each degree program has an assigned practicum coordinator to help facilitate the work plan process. Students should consult with their department practicum coordinator on all matters related to their practicum experience.

Department	Degree Program	Practicum Coordinator
Epidemiology & Biostatistics	MPH, DrPH	Dr. Shaida Kalbasi shaida@tamu.edu
Health Policy & Management	MPH	Dr. Elena Andreyeva andreyeva@tamu.edu
	MHA-Residential Track only	Mr. Jack Buckley buckley@tamu.edu
Health Behavior	MPH, DrPH	Dr. Sara Mendez spmendez@tamu.edu
Environmental & Occupational Health	MPH, DrPH	Dr. Adam Pickens apickens@tamu.edu

Questions regarding APEX training, work plans, and other practicum topics can be directed to the respective practicum coordinator listed above.

Practicum Experience Forms

- [Writing Work Plan Objectives](#)
- [International Practicum Documents \(PDF\)](#)

In order to type on the forms click download first. Any handwritten forms, with the exception of signatures, will be rejected.

CPT Forms for Students on F1-Visas

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is work authorization for F-1 international students to receive further training that is designed to achieve an established academic objective directly related to degree level and major. CPT includes practicums and internships.

SPH students on F1 visas must:

- Complete the student request in Terra Dotta
- Have their practicum preceptor complete the employer form
Completed forms must be submitted to International Student Services and a copy of all completed forms must be provided to their department practicum coordinator.
- [Employer \(Practicum Preceptor\) CPT Form](#)

For more information or questions related to CPT, please visit the [International Student Services website](#). For any additional questions regarding the practicum experience or completion of these forms, contact their department practicum coordinator.

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) [Linkedin](#) [RSS](#) [Flickr](#)

Additional resources are found on the Practicum Information for Students website, including:

- Practicum Manual for MPH, MHA, and DrPH Degree Programs (PDF)
- School of Public Health Competencies (PDF)
- Practicum Checklist for Success (PDF)
- Developing a Strong Work Plan (PDF)
- Email Template to Possible Preceptor Site (Doc)
- Meeting Observation Template (Doc)
- Does my practicum require IRB Approval? (PDF)
- Practicum Experience ePortfolio Instructions (PDF)

For more information about the practicum requirements, contact:

<https://public-health.tamu.edu/practice/practicum.html>

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