

# **2019-2020**

# **PhD in Epidemiology**

# **Handbook**



Department of Epidemiology  
College of Public Health and Health Professions  
College of Medicine

<http://epidemiology.php.ufl.edu/>

August 2019

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# Welcome from the Acting Chair of the Department of Epidemiology

Welcome!

Welcome to the Department of Epidemiology. I am excited to have this opportunity to serve as your acting chair while we search for a new department chair. There is much to be excited about. The department originated as part of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in 2007. However, by 2010, both areas had established identities that supported independent departments, and the Department of Epidemiology was established in 2011. Since then, much has been accomplished. The department is already ranked ninth among epidemiology departments in public universities based on productivity measures used by Academic Analytics. More importantly, our dynamic and growing faculty and staff are dedicated to excellence across our missions in research, education, and service. We are dedicated to promoting and improving the health of the public through:



- Advancing scientific knowledge through application of innovative epidemiological research across a broad range of contemporary health issues and populations
- Offering high quality master's, PhD, and post-doctoral programs and contributing to undergraduate programs that prepare students for academic and applied health careers
- Actively supporting service and outreach activities to address community needs

In addition, because we are uniquely co-located within the Colleges of Public Health and Health Professions and Medicine and within an academic health center, we have tremendous opportunities for broad interdisciplinary collaborations, which creates a training environment in which our students thrive. We are proud to be educating the next generation of leaders in public health and health professions. We hope you will explore our web site and learn more about the wonderful work happening in our department and across the University. This is a great place to learn, work, and reside!

Stephanie Hanson, PhD, ABPP (Rp)

Acting Chair, Department of Epidemiology

<http://epidemiology.php.ufl.edu/people/faculty-staff/chair/>

# Welcome from the Epidemiology PhD Program Director

Dear Epidemiology PhD Students,

Welcome to the Department and the Epidemiology family! We are excited to have you as a member of this prestigious department. This handbook will guide you through all the steps required to complete this program successfully. Make sure to read and understand the various requirements mentioned in this handbook for the successful completion of your course. Feel free to ask questions to me or to the Academic Assistant whenever you are unsure of your next steps. You should also consult the University of Florida Graduate Catalog for programmatic matters.

We hope you will enjoy your time at University of Florida in the Department of Epidemiology. Learn, grow and enjoy your time in this department and at UF!



Deepthi S. Varma, PhD, MSW, MPhil

Research Assistant Professor and PhD Program Director Department of Epidemiology

<http://epidemiology.php.ufl.edu/people/faculty-staff/faculty/core-faculty/deepthi-varma/>

# Introduction

The Graduate School establishes and administers graduate student policies and procedures campus- wide for the University of Florida. Policies and requirements listed in this handbook are either clarifications of those described in the [Graduate Catalog](#) or additional requirements or policies of the [PhD Program in Epidemiology](#). The PhD Program in Epidemiology is administered through the Department of Epidemiology, which is housed in both the Colleges of Public Health and Health Professions and Medicine.

Throughout this handbook, you will find links to programs, institutes, colleges and centers in the University of Florida. These links allow us to keep up with the ever-changing complexion of the University.

# Part I: The University of Florida

## Overview of UF

The [University of Florida](#) in [Gainesville](#) is a major research university and one of only 34 public universities that belong to the [Association of American Universities](#). It is the state's Flagship University, the oldest and most comprehensive University and is among the nation's most academically diverse public higher education institutions. UF has a long history of established programs in education, research, health care and service. It is ranked #9 among all US public universities.

UF has a 2,000-acre [campus](#) and more than 900 buildings, including 170 with classrooms and laboratories. UF's extensive capital improvement program has resulted in facilities ideal for 21st century academics and research, including the Emerging Pathogens Institute; the Cancer and Genetics Research Center; the McKnight Brain Institute, the Institute on Aging and the Clinical and Translational Research Institute (shown below).

UF is 5<sup>th</sup> largest in terms of student population and is in the 4<sup>th</sup>-most populous State.



## The UF Health Science Center

The [UF Health Science Center](#) may be the country's only academic health center with six health-related colleges located on a single, contiguous campus with a nearby VA. They include the Colleges of 1) Dentistry, 2) Medicine, 3) Nursing, 4) Pharmacy, 5) Public Health and Health Professions, and 6) Veterinary Medicine. The Colleges teach the full continuum of students from undergraduates to professional students to advanced post-doctoral students.

The Health Science Center is also a world leader in interdisciplinary research. Major Institutes and Centers include the [Clinical and Translational Science Institute](#), the [Emerging Pathogens Institute](#), the [Institute on Aging](#), the [UF Health Cancer Center](#), the [UF Genetics Institute](#), and the [McKnight Brain Institute](#). Information on other UF Health centers and institutes can be found at this [link](#).

The Health Science Center is closely affiliated with the [UF Health](#) System. Together with clinical programs and services across all HSC colleges, the UF Health partnership is helping to create Florida's future healthcare workforce.

The Health Science Center's strategic plan of core vision, values, and goals is called [the Power of Together](#).

## College of Public Health and Health Professions

The [mission](#) of the [UF College of Public Health and Health Professions](#) (PHHP) is to preserve, promote, and improve the health and wellbeing of populations, communities and individuals.

In 2014, the College was re-accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). PHHP is the first college to include both public health and health professions that has received accreditation as a School of Public Health. Quick Facts about PHHP can be found on the [college fact sheet](#). In 2018, the College celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### Teaching

The College is composed of eight departments: 1) Biostatistics; 2) Clinical and Health Psychology; 3) Environmental and Global Health; 4) Epidemiology; 5) Health Services Research, Management and Policy; 6) Occupational Therapy; 7) Physical Therapy; and 8) Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences.

### Research

The College of Public Health and Health Professions was granted nearly \$38 million in external funding this past year.

The Department of Epidemiology is home to [the Southern HIV and Alcohol Research Consortium \(SHARC\) Center for Translational HIV Research](#). The College of Public Health and Health Professions is home to additional centers, which can be found on the [PHHP website](#).

### Research Training

The College has [six NIH training grants](#), including two in the Department of Epidemiology. These focus on [substance abuse](#) and [alcohol and HIV infection](#). Other training grants in the College include those in the areas of rehabilitation and neuromuscular plasticity; movement disorders and neurorestoration; physical, cognitive, and mental health in older adults; and breathing research and therapeutics.

### Patient Care

The College of Public Health and Health Professions is home to the Clinical and Health Psychology clinic, which offers both general and specialty psychological services to children, adolescents, and adults.

### Service

One major service site is provided through the Department of Epidemiology's [HealthStreet](#), which is a community-based effort that works every day to reduce disparities in healthcare and research participation by linking the medically underserved to medical and social services and opportunities to participate in research. HealthStreet offers an innovative hub for students and faculty to learn community based research methods. With its cohort of 11,500 community members, it offers unlimited opportunities for dissertations and service learning.



**Global Health Research**

On an international level, students and faculty in the Departments of Physical Therapy and Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences travel annually to countries in Latin America to provide training, health care services and public health needs assessments. The College has also opened a UF Public Health Field Laboratory in Haiti. The Department of Epidemiology has launched a population study to assess non-communicable disorders in rural and urban Haiti called the Haiti Health Study. The department has been home to a Fogarty International Center training program for 8 years. The department has a Memorandum of Understanding with the esteemed National Institutes of Mental Health and Neuroscience and a second MOU with Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. Faculty members also work in collaboration with various universities in the United Kingdom and China.

## College of Medicine

The [UF College of Medicine](#) is acknowledged as having one of the strongest medical education programs in North America. Its mission is to improve health care in Florida, our nation and the world through excellence and leadership in education, clinical care, discovery and service. 2016 was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the College of Medicine.

### Teaching

The College offers a variety of educational opportunities in addition to the medical degree, including the Interdisciplinary Program in Biomedical Sciences, which leads to a PhD or MS degree, and joint programs for both MD and PhD degrees. Also part of the College of Medicine is the School of Physician Assistant Studies. The College plays an important role in the continuing education of resident physicians and fellows through its collaboration with [UF Health](#). The College offers residencies in nearly 60 medical specialties and subspecialties as well as clinical and research fellowships.

The College of Medicine is ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> among the nation's top research medical schools, according to U.S. News & World Report. The College includes 28 research-oriented basic and clinical academic departments, almost 900 students, over 700 residents and fellows, and more than 1,200 faculty members. The Jacksonville campus, located 75 miles to the northeast, is home to more than 350 physicians and scientists delivering medical care in an urban setting, performing research and educating medical students and residents.

### Research

College of Medicine faculty are national leaders in fundamental, translational and clinical research in areas pertaining to diseases of the nervous system, human aging, cancer, diabetes, infectious disease, immunology and inflammation, genetics and gene therapy. College of Medicine faculty and collaborative research teams continue to receive awards and honors that reflect their exceptional distinctions and contributions. College of Medicine researchers have achieved an increase in National Institutes of Health funding reflected in the impressive rise in national rankings from 62<sup>nd</sup> to 42<sup>nd</sup> (joining the upper third of United States medical schools), according to U.S. News & World Report. The College of Medicine houses [8 affiliated research institutes](#) and [27 affiliated research facilities/centers](#).

Two of the most widely recognized products to come out of research at the College of Medicine are Gatorade®, a popular sports beverage, and Trusopt®, an eye drop developed to treat certain forms of glaucoma.

### Patient Care

Patient care is provided by the UF Physicians Group Practice, a close collaboration with UF Health, the [Malcolm Randall Veterans Affairs Medical Center](#), and several community health-care sites and other affiliated hospitals in Florida. Patient care occurs at two principal locations — Gainesville and Jacksonville — and at nearly 50 clinical practices. Clinical strengths are in cancer, neurosciences, aging, gene therapy,

psychiatry and addiction medicine, transplantation and children's services. UF faculty members account for approximately 700,000 physician visits and 48,000 discharges annually. The UF Health Shands Cancer Hospital, a 192-bed hospital designed to meet the area's growing need for cancer services, opened its doors to patients in November 2009. It also houses the Critical Care Center for Emergency and Trauma services. The Florida Recovery Center is available for those who seek recovery from addiction and eating disorders. In January 2018, two new towers were completed: the UF Health Heart and Vascular Hospital and the UF Health Neuromedicine Hospital.

## Department of Epidemiology

The [Department of Epidemiology](#) is housed in both the Colleges of Public Health and Health Professions and Medicine at the University of Florida. Faculty members are appointed in both Colleges. This forward governance structure was designed to create synergies resulting in a strong, competitive research profile and in highly trained students.

The mission of the Department of Epidemiology is to improve health globally through education, training, research and service.

As a leader in the field, the Department aims to:

- Advance the field's theoretical and empirical base through rigorous multidisciplinary epidemiological research that monitors health globally.
- Prepare the next generation of scientific leaders to design and conduct ethical, relevant and innovative epidemiological studies.
- Train a public health workforce committed to working with diverse communities to bring about outcomes that matter.
- Develop and refine epidemiological measures and methods that address the dynamic and complex factors impacting public health globally.
- Provide leadership and service in epidemiology and public health through international, national, state, and local collaboration and community engagement.

The department offers the [PhD in Epidemiology](#), an [Epidemiology concentration in the MPH program](#), an [MS in Epidemiology](#), and an online [Graduate Certificate in Psychiatric Epidemiology](#). Currently, there are [over 70 students](#) across these academic programs in the Department.

# Part II: PhD in Epidemiology

## Program Overview

The PhD in Epidemiology program was implemented in 2008. The PhD is a research degree, granted on evidence of overall proficiency in epidemiology, and particularly on the ability to apply the skills in an independent investigation as demonstrated in a dissertation presenting original research with a high degree of literary skill.

The core coursework of the PhD program was designed to incorporate competencies recommended by the [American College of Epidemiology](#) and the [Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health](#), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists' [Applied Epidemiology Competencies: Competencies for Applied Epidemiologists in Governmental Public Health Agencies](#).

Graduates of the Epidemiology PhD program will be able to:

- Apply epidemiological methods to address critical and/or emerging public health and clinical research issues through the use of:
  - Appropriate epidemiological research designs
  - Advanced statistical analysis methods for health studies
  - Data structures and measurement methods for health research
  - Biological, behavioral and social theory applied to the understanding and prevention of contemporary threats to health and well-being
  - Depth of knowledge in an area of specialization
- Assimilate the history, philosophy, and ethical principles of epidemiology into current research
- Develop grant proposals and manage research projects
- Write scientific papers for publication in high-impact peer-reviewed journals and communicate research results to scientists, policy makers, and the public
- Compete successfully for research and teaching positions in academic institutions, and federal or state agencies

The program consists of the following requirements:

- 90 credits of coursework
  - 36 credits of core coursework
  - 39 credits of elective coursework
  - 15 credits of dissertation research
- Formation a Supervisory Committee of at least four members in the first year of the program
- A 3.0 GPA overall and a 3.0 GPA in the epidemiology core courses
- A 3.0 GPA in the minor, if a minor is declared
- Maintenance of appropriate professional conduct throughout the program

- Successful completion of a preliminary and qualifying comprehensive examination
- Preparation and successfully defense of a dissertation proposal and admission to candidacy
- Preparation and successful oral defense of a dissertation

These elements and the associated activities are described in the sections below.

## Student Learning Outcomes

The following student learning outcomes are necessary for progression to candidacy:

1. Design epidemiologic research studies and analyze data to answer health-related research questions that are currently relevant to the population.
2. Prepare to become an independent researcher in the field of Epidemiology
3. Illustrate a thorough understanding of epidemiology concepts.
4. Display ethical behaviors, cultural sensitivity, teamwork, professional conduct and communication, and build academic skills such as grant writing.

## Concentrations

Students in the PhD program in Epidemiology may apply to graduate with a concentration in up to two of the following areas.

- [Cancer Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Lusine Yaghjian](#))
- [Genetic Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Jinying Zhao](#))
- [Gero-Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Catherine Striley](#))
- [Infectious Disease Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Cindy Prins](#))
- [Psychiatric Epidemiology](#) (concentration coordinator: [Dr. Catherine Striley](#))

Concentrations allow PhD students to focus their elective coursework toward a single content area that interests them. All concentrations offered by the Department of Epidemiology are completely optional, and students may enroll in up to two concentrations. Enrollment in a concentration requires the approval of the student's Research Mentor and the PhD Program Director.

All concentrations require that, before graduation, students submit either (a) dissertation aims or (b) a first-authored publication that documents research in the area of the concentration in addition to the required courses.

The overarching goal of each concentration is to provide learners with advanced training in each respective field. This training will help prepare researchers for the frontlines of interdisciplinary team science targeted toward improving the quality of life, health, and society using epidemiologic tools and methods.

The Department of Epidemiology also participates in the Clinical and Translational Science Interdisciplinary Concentration offered by the Clinical and Translational Science Institute. For more information about this concentration, please visit <https://www.ctsi.ufl.edu/education/ph-d-students/cts-interdisciplinary-concentration/>.

## Faculty and Administration

The graduate faculty members of the PhD Program in Epidemiology are:

- a) Core faculty in the Department of Epidemiology,
- b) Affiliated graduate faculty from other Departments and Colleges around the university,
- c) Part time faculty (Adjunct Faculty): Individuals with satisfactory professional qualifications who teach, conduct research, and sometimes extended functions in connection to established programs, or
- d) Courtesy faculty appointees: Individuals currently not employed or paid by the university

A current listing of [core faculty](#) is shown below and on the Department of Epidemiology website. The Director of the PhD Program, appointed by the Chair of the Department, works with the Chair to oversee the PhD program, assuring student progress and monitoring program accomplishments. The Director works closely with core faculty members in the Department of Epidemiology and collaborates with the PhD Curriculum Committee and the Admissions Committee.

The PhD Academic Program Assistant, also known as the Academic Assistant or Program Assistant, is responsible for maintaining student records and assisting the Program Director.

A current list of all [graduate faculty](#) members in Epidemiology is included on the Department of Epidemiology website.



<b>Core Faculty in the Department of Epidemiology</b>		
<b>Role in Program (Year Joined UF)</b>	<b>Faculty/Degree(s)</b>	<b>Legacy Mentor</b>
Acting Chair, Department of Epidemiology (1996)	<b>Stephanie L. Hanson, PhD, ABPP (Rp)</b> PhD – 1986: Vanderbilt University (Developmental Psychology and Clinical Psychology) MS – 1983: Vanderbilt University (Developmental Psychology and Clinical Psychology) BA – 1980: University of Minnesota (Psychology)	Tedra Walden, PhD James Pichert, PhD
Professor of Epidemiology (2014)	<b>Xinguang (Jim) Chen, MD, PhD, FACE</b> PHD – 1993: University of Hawaii (Biostatistics and Epidemiology) MPH – 1992: East West University, University of Hawaii (Population Studies) MPH – 1987: Tongji Medical University (Biostatistics) MD – 1982: Wuhan Medical College	Bonita Stanton, MD
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2016)	<b>David Cheng, PhD</b> MHS, MD – 2007: Johns Hopkins School of Public Health (Epidemiology) PhD – 2013: University of Washington (Epidemiology)	Thomas A. Pearson, MD, MPH
Professor of Epidemiology and Medicine (2007)	<b>Robert Cook, MD, MPH</b> MD – 1991: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill MPH – 1991: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Epidemiology) BSPH – 1986: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Biostatistics)	Roberta Ness, MD, MPH Wishwa Kapoor, MD, MPH Duncan Clark, PhD, MD
Dean's Professor of Epidemiology (2011) Founding Chair (2011-2018)	<b>Linda B. Cottler, PhD, MPH, FACE</b> PhD – 1987: Washington University in St. Louis (Sociology/Psychiatric Epidemiology) MPH – 1980: Boston University School of Public Health (Epidemiology) BA – 1977: Emmanuel College (Biology) RN – 1972: Jewish Hospital School of Nursing	Lee N. Robins, PhD John E. Helzer, MD
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2015)	<b>Kelly K. Gurka, PhD, MPH</b> PhD – 2007: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Epidemiology) MPH – 1999: University of Alabama at Birmingham (Epidemiology) BS – 1998: Spring Hill College (Biology)	Stephen W. Marshall, PhD Stephen Lankenau, PhD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2015)	<b>Mark Hart, EdD</b> EdD – 2013: University of Florida (Curriculum and Instruction – Educational Technology) MA – 2006: Loyola College of Maryland (Liberal Studies) BA – 1997: Indiana University (History/Education)	Kara Dawson, PhD, MEd Swapna Kumar, EdD, EdM Jay Bernhardt, PhD, MPH
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2017)	<b>Hui Hu, PhD</b> PhD – 2016: University of Florida (Epidemiology) BS – 2012: Fudan University (Nursing)	Xiaohui Xu, PhD Linda B. Cottler, PhD, MPH, FACE

<b>Core Faculty in the Department of Epidemiology</b>		
<b>Role in Program (Year Joined UF)</b>	<b>Faculty/Degree(s)</b>	<b>Legacy Mentor</b>
Clinical Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2018)	<b>Catalina Lopez-Quintero, MD, PhD</b> PhD – 2012: Hebrew University (Public Health) MPH – 2003: Hebrew University MD – 1998: Universidad Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario	Yehuda Neumark, PhD, MPH James C. Anthony, PhD Mario De La Rosa, PhD Raul Gonzalez, PhD
Associate Professor of Epidemiology (2012)	<b>Volker Mai, PhD, MPH</b> MPH – 2000: Harvard School of Public Health (Quantitative Methods) PhD – 1999: University of Georgia (Microbiology) BS – 1992: University of Georgia (Biochemistry)	Arthur Schatzkin, MD Steve Hursting, PhD, MPH, RD
Professor of Epidemiology (2013)	<b>Thomas A. Pearson, MD, MPH, PhD</b> PhD – 1983: Johns Hopkins University, School of Hygiene and Public Health (Epidemiology) MPH – 1976: Johns Hopkins University, School of Hygiene and Public Health MD – 1976: Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine BA – 1973: Johns Hopkins University	Leon Gordis, MD DA Henderson, MD, MPH
Clinical Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2010)	<b>Cindy Prins, PhD, MPH, CIC, CPH</b> MPH – 2006: University of Florida (Epidemiology) PhD – 2000: Pennsylvania State University (Biochemistry, Microbiology, and Molecular Biology) BS – 1993: University of Central Florida (Biology)	Richard J. Frisque, PhD Robert Cook, MD, MPH
Associate Professor of Epidemiology (2015)	<b>Mattia Prosperi, MEng, PhD</b> PhD – 2008: Roma Tre University (Computer Science and Automation) MEng – 2003: Roma Tre University (Computer Science Engineering)	William Hogan, MD, MS Linda B. Cottler, PhD, MPH, FACE Iain E. Buchan, MD, FHHP, FACMI Giovanni Ulivi, MEng, PhD
Research Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2018)	<b>Huaizhen Qin, PhD</b> PhD – 2008: Michigan Technological University (Statistical Genetics) PhD – 2001: Chinese Academy of Sciences (Survey Sampling) MS – 1998: Beijing Normal University (Theoretical Statistics) BS – 1993: Beijing Normal University (Mathematical Education)	Xiaofeng Zhu, PhD Shuanglin Zhang, PhD Yong Li, PhD Alan T. K. Wan, PhD Shiyong Feng

<b>Core Faculty in the Department of Epidemiology</b>		
<b>Role in Program (Year Joined UF)</b>	<b>Faculty/Degree(s)</b>	<b>Legacy Mentor</b>
Lecturer (2006)	<b>Jerne Shapiro, MPH</b> MPH – 2001: University of South Florida (Tropical Public Health and Communicable Diseases) BS – 1998: University of Florida (Microbiology and Cell Science; Plant Pathology)	Steven Weismer, MD] Thomas Belcuore, MS
Professor of Epidemiology, Part- time (2012)	<b>Ronald I. Shorr, MD, MS</b> MS – 1990: Case Western Reserve University (Epidemiology) MD – 1982: Ohio State University (Medicine) BA – 1978: Duke University (Chemistry)	Wayne A. Ray, PhD
Research Associate Professor of Epidemiology (2011) Epidemiology Director of MS in Epidemiology	<b>Catherine W. Striley, PhD, MSW,ACSW, MPE</b> MPE – 2004: Washington University in St. Louis (Psychiatric Epidemiology) PhD – 2002: Washington University in St. Louis (Social Work) MSW – 1989: George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University (Social Work) BA – 1980: University of Missouri at Kansas City (Political Science)	Linda B. Cottler, PhD, MPH, FACE Arlene Rubin Stiffman, PhD
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2013) Epidemiology MPH Concentration Coordinator	<b>Krishna Vaddiparti, PhD, MPE, MSW</b> MPE – 2005: Washington University in St. Louis (Psychiatric Epidemiology) PhD – 2002: National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences Deemed University (Psychiatric Social Work) MPhil – 1996: National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences Deemed University (Psychiatric Social Work) MSW – 1994: Osmania University (Social Work) BA – 1992: Osmania University (Sociology)	Linda B. Cottler, PhD, MPH, FACE Prabha S. Chandra, MD, MRCPsych
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2014) PhD Program Director	<b>Deepthi Satheesa Varma, PhD, MPhil, MSW</b> PhD – 2005: National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences Deemed University (Psychiatric Social Work) MPhil – 1998: National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences Deemed University (Psychiatric Social Work) MSW – 1994: Mahatma Gandhi University (Medical and Psychiatric Social Work) BSc – 1992: Mahatma Gandhi University (Chemistry)	Linda B. Cottler, PhD, MPH, FACE Prabha S. Chandra, MD, MRCPsych
Assistant Research Scientist in the Department of Epidemiology (2016)	<b>Yan Wang, PhD</b> PhD – 2013: Syracuse University (Child and Family Studies) MS – 2008: Syracuse University (Child and Family Studies)	Robert Cook, MD, MPH

<b>Core Faculty in the Department of Epidemiology</b>		
<b>Role in Program (Year Joined UF)</b>	<b>Faculty/Degree(s)</b>	<b>Legacy Mentor</b>
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology (2013)	<b>Lusine Yaghjyan, MD, MPH, PhD</b> PhD – 2009: University of Cincinnati College of Medicine (Epidemiology) MPH – 2003: College of Health Sciences, American University of Armenia MD – 1997: Yerevan State Medical University	Rulla M. Tamimi, ScD
Professor of Epidemiology (2016)	<b>Jinying Zhao, MD, PhD</b> PhD – 2005: University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (Statistical Genetics & Genetic Epidemiology) PhD – 1999: Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences (Molecular Genetics) MD- 1989: Zhengzhou University School of Medicine	Viola Vaccarino, MD, PhD

<b>Joint Faculty</b>		
<b>Role in Program (Year Joined UF)</b>	<b>Faculty/Degree(s)</b>	<b>Mentor</b>
Professor of Pediatrics and Epidemiology (2018)	<b>Sonja A. Rasmussen, MD, MS</b> MD – 1990: University of Florida MS – 1983: University of Wisconsin, Madison (Medical Genetics) BS – 1981: University of Minnesota Duluth (Biology and Mathematics)	Ada Hamosh, MD, MPH Margaret (Peggy) Wallace, PhD

## Student Guidance and Mentoring

Students accepted into the PhD program will have a Research Mentor and an Academic Advisor.

### Research Mentor

The Research Mentor will:

1. Serve as chair of the student's Dissertation Supervisory Committee if they are a core faculty member within the Department of Epidemiology. If a faculty member is not a core faculty member, they will serve as the Co-Chair.
2. Complete an annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Monitoring Plan with the student.
3. Review coursework and progression towards graduation at least once per semester.
4. Work with the student to form a supervisory committee during the first year.
5. Provide extensive mentoring and guidance as the student develops a research proposal.

Additionally, the Research Mentor should:

1. Meet with the student to review progress at least once per month, although more frequently is recommended.
2. Provide detailed guidance regarding how to organize and write the PhD dissertation.
3. Provide opportunities for interactions with visiting scholars and presentation of data at local and/or national meetings.
4. Provide career guidance and advice as the student moves through the program.

### Academic Advisor

Students are assigned an Academic Advisor by the PhD Program Director prior to the start of their program.

The Academic Advisor will:

1. Be a core faculty member within the Department of Epidemiology
2. Work with the Research Mentor and the student to ensure that the student is completing the specific requirements needed to obtain the PhD in Epidemiology.
3. Meet with the student in advance of the course registration period each semester to discuss academic progress.
4. Be available throughout the year to consult with students about academic issues.

Additionally, the Academic Advisor:

1. Provides other general advice.
2. Can serve as a member of the Supervisory Committee, although this is not required.
3. Facilitates communication between the student and others.

### Guidance

Every semester, the Research Mentor and the Academic Advisor will sign off on the **Course Registration Form**. For each registration period, the Mentor and student will help plan courses to be taken; however, it

is the responsibility of the Academic Advisor to know the curriculum requirements and to review the form. To keep track, the Academic Assistant will document the completion of specific curricular requirements. This form will be provided to the student, the Research Mentor, and the Academic Advisor each semester.

### **Change in Research Mentor**

Switching Research Mentors (the Supervisory Committee Chair or Co-Chair) is discouraged unless there is a compelling rationale because time, effort and money are invested in the student by the Research Mentor. Students with a compelling rationale may speak with the Program Director to request a switch. Such changes will be considered if the student is in good academic standing, both the original and proposed new Research Mentors agree to the change, and the request is provided in writing to the Program Director. If the student is not in good academic standing or if the Research Mentor or proposed Research Mentor does not agree to the change, the student will seek the advice of the Program Director.

### **Ombudsperson**

Any concerns about the program should be discussed with the Program Director. The Program Director will consult with the Chair of the Department as appropriate. If a student does not feel that their concern has been addressed by the Program Director, they may seek the advice of the Department Chair. In addition, students should be aware that UF has an [Office of the Ombuds](#) (currently Ron Anderson) to discuss student concerns.

### **Handbook Applications**

Changes in the handbook are only made with the students' best interests in mind. In general, students will be held to the terms and rules outlined in the handbook published in the year they begin the program. However, students may be held to new requirements with sufficient notice from the Program Director if allowed by UF policy.

### **Good Academic Standing**

Good academic standing regarding progression toward the degree means that a student:

- Has at least a 3.0 GPA with no grades lower than a C
- Cannot have more than one incomplete grade on their transcript and has a contract to remediate the incomplete grade within the next academic semester
- Has established their supervisory committee on time (within the first 12 months of their program)
- Is on track to defend their proposal at least two semesters prior to their planned semester of graduation
- Will graduate on target – within 4 years

A student not in good academic standing will be placed on academic probation.

## Supervisory Committee

### Composition

The Supervisory Committee oversees and mentors the PhD student through completion of the dissertation phase. Supervisory Committee membership is dictated by the UF Graduate School (see [Graduate Catalog](#)). The supervisory committee is composed of at least four members selected from the Graduate Faculty. At least two members, including the Chair, must be core or joint faculty members in the Department of Epidemiology. Of these two members, at least one must be tenured or tenure accruing. At least one member serves as the external member and must be from a different educational discipline, with no ties to the home academic unit. One regular member may be from the Department of Epidemiology or another academic unit.

Role on Committee	Graduate Faculty Status
Chair	Yes, in Epidemiology
Co-Chair (optional)	Yes, at UF
Member (internal)	Yes, in Epidemiology
Member (general)	Yes, at UF
External Member	Yes, at UF, but cannot be Graduate Faculty in Epidemiology
Special Member (optional and requires special approval from the Department Chair and the Graduate School)	Not required

The Co-Chair may substitute for either the internal member or the general member according to their qualifications.

### Chair and Co-Chair of the Supervisory Committee

A Chair is required on all Supervisory Committees. A Co-Chair is optional. Appointing a Co-Chair is appropriate if the student receives funding and is supervised in their assistantship duties by a Graduate Faculty member outside of the Department of Epidemiology. On committees with both a Chair and a Co-Chair, the following responsibilities apply:

The Chair:

- Ensures the student meets all milestones according to the standards of the Department of Epidemiology.

The Co-Chair:

- Completely or partially funds the student's stipend and tuition.
- Serves as the student's supervisor for their assistantship duties.
- Serves as the student's Research Mentor in consultation with the Committee Chair (see the Research Mentor's responsibilities on page 22).

### **Non-Tenure Track Faculty as Committee Chair**

A non-tenure track faculty member can be a Committee Chair with the approval of the Department Chair.

### **Formation of the Supervisory Committee**

The Supervisory Committee Chair and the student will work together to identify a proposed Supervisory Committee in the first 12 months in the program. The CV of the external committee member must be reviewed by the Committee Chair and the Program Director prior to accepting the faculty member. If the committee is not assembled within the first 12 months then the Committee Chair may appoint members. After the student and Committee Chair agree on the proposed Supervisory Committee, the student will submit the Supervisory Committee Selection Form to the Program Director, who will confirm that the proposed committee meets the Department guidelines as shown in the table below and discuss with the Department Chair if needed based on the guidelines provided earlier in this document.

Once students have permission from the Program Director to go ahead, the student will obtain members' agreements to serve. Once selected, the Committee Chair will alert the Program Director to the committee selection. Once approved, the student will obtain the signatures of all Supervisory Committee Members on the Supervisory Committee form. The last person to sign, the Department Chair, will return the form to the Academic Assistant, who will enter the committee into the UF Graduate School system for final approval at the Graduate School, and into the Epidemiology PhD database.

Final decision on who can be accepted also depends on faculty effort distribution as approved by the Department Chair.

### **Changes in Committee Membership**

If a student wants to change a Supervisory Committee member, they must first discuss this with the Supervisory Committee Chair (as noted on page 22, if a student is interested in changing their Supervisory Committee Chair, they must first speak with the Program Director). The Supervisory Committee Chair discusses the student's request with the relevant member and the Program Director and confirms with the proposed new member their willingness to serve on the student's committee. The Program Director will present the request to the Department Chair. Changes need to be approved at least 60 days prior to the date of the Final Oral Defense so that the request can be reviewed and so any new member will have ample time to become familiar with the student's work. If a change must be made after the deadline for a graduating student then the department will need to submit a petition to the Graduate School. The students are discouraged from changing committee members once they have completed their Qualifying Exams.

### **Special Members**

Special Members of the Supervisory Committee can be requested but are not guaranteed. See table above for qualifications. If requested, CV's will be reviewed, similar to the rules above. Once accepted, names will be entered onto the form at the time it is submitted.



**Supervisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities Regarding Dissertation:**

The Chair of the Supervisory Committee will:

- Evaluate the student officially with a yearly evaluation
- Communicate with other members of the committee and the student
- Provide support and guidance to help the student meet academic goals
- Help to prepare PhD student Area Examination (both oral and written); get approval of exam questions from the Program Director
- Provide guidance on the student's dissertation topic
- Administer the doctoral dissertation proposal defense in accordance with the guidelines of the Graduate School
- Monitor and evaluate the student's progress and give clear direction as to the final work plan leading to graduation
- Conduct the final oral examination (also known as doctoral dissertation defense) to satisfy that the dissertation is original research and a contribution to the field. The oral portion of the examination must be conducted in compliance with Graduate School policies.
- Inform the PhD Program Director of all progress as the steps are completed, via email, within one day of the completion

The Supervisory Committee must collectively meet at least twice a year until before the student advances to candidacy, and then every semester thereafter, to review the student's research. These meetings should be scheduled by the student, in consultation with the Supervisory Committee Chair.

## PhD Curriculum

The PhD in Epidemiology program requires a minimum of 90 semester credits beyond the bachelor's degree. All students are required to complete, or to have completed, the following courses:

<i>Course</i>	<i>Epidemiology Prerequisites</i>
N/A	HIPAA & IRB certification
PHC 6001	Principles of Epidemiology in Public Health
PHC 6937	Introduction to Public Health for the Health Professions

The HIPAA & Privacy and IRB courses are available on [myTraining](#) through a sign in process using the Gator1 sign in. The HIPAA Class can be found by search "UF\_PRV801v\_OLT"; the IRB Course can be found by searching "UF\_IRB800\_OLT". Both trainings should be completed in the first 30 days of the program.

The current curriculum is shown below. All students must complete a minimum of 36 credits of epidemiology core coursework, 39 credits of Epidemiology Elective Courses, and 15 credits of dissertation work. Students will regularly review their progression towards meeting program curriculum requirements by completing the PhD Curriculum Form and reviewing it regularly with the Academic Assistant, the Research Mentor, and the Academic Advisor each semester.

### *Epidemiology Core Courses – Required (36 Credits)*

<i>Course</i>	<i>Statistics &amp; Data Management (8 Credits)</i>	<i>Credits</i>
PHC 6052	Introduction to Biostatistical Methods (SAS-based)	3
PHC 6053	Regression Methods for the Health and Life Sciences (SAS-based)	3
PHC 7065	Critical Skills in Epidemiological Data Management (PHC 7065)	2
<i>Course</i>	<i>Epidemiologic Methods (6 Credits)</i>	<i>Credits</i>
PHC 6000	Epidemiology Methods I	3
PHC 6011	Epidemiology Methods II	3
<i>Course</i>	<i>Epidemiology (9 Credits)</i>	<i>Credits</i>
<b>Choose 9 credits from these courses</b>	Epidemiology of Chronic Diseases and Disability (PHC 6003)	3
	Public Health Concepts in Infectious Diseases (PHC 6517)	3
	Advanced Epidemiologic Methods III (PHC 7017)	3
	Social Epidemiology in Public Health (PHC 6016)	3
	Spatial Epidemiology (PHC 6194)	3
	Genetic Epidemiology (PHC 7594)	3
	Cancer Epidemiology (PHC 7007)	3
	Psychiatric Epidemiology (PHC 7038)	3
	Introduction to Molecular Epidemiology (PHC 7595)	3
<i>Course</i>	<i>Doctoral Series (6 Credits)</i>	<i>Credits</i>
PHC 7727	Grant Writing for Population Health Research	2
PHC 7934	Seminar I: Epidemiology Past, Present, and Future	2
PHC 7000	Epidemiology Seminar II: Critical Evaluation, Research Proposals, and Methods	2
<i>Course</i>	<i>Writing Series (2 Credits)</i>	<i>Credits</i>
PHC 7901	Epidemiology Literature Review and Critique (Journal Club)	1
PHC 7902	Scientific Writing for Peer Reviewed Publications for Popular Science	1

<i>Course</i>	<b>Ethics (2 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7427	Ethics in Population Science	2
<i>Course</i>	<b>Measurement (3 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 6711	Measurement in Epidemiology and Outcomes Research	3

**Epidemiology Elective Courses (39 Credits)<sup>1</sup>**

<i>Course</i>	<b>Statistics Electives (6 credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Choose 6 credits from approved courses</b>	Clinical Trials Methods (PHC 6020)	3
	Introduction to Mixed Methods Research (PHC 6XXX)	3
	Introduction to Applied Survival Analysis (PHC 6059)	3
	<i>Other relevant approved advanced statistics courses</i>	VAR
<i>Course</i>	<b>Epidemiology Electives (18 Credits)</b> <i>If completing a concentration, see the concentration curriculum</i>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Choose from these or other courses above that are not already required, or other courses with substantial epidemiological content with approval of the Curriculum Chair</b>	Independent Study (PHC 7918)	1 - 3
	Hospital Epidemiology (PHC 6XXX)	3
	Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology (PHC 6XXX)	3
	Topics in Precision Medicine and Public Health Informatics (PHC 7199)	1
	Computational Epidemiology in Population Health (PHC 7083) (offered in even-numbered years only)	2
	Design and Analysis of Translational Research in Biomedical Sciences (GMS 6841)	3
	Meta-analysis in Clinical, Health Services Research and Public Health (GMS 6846)	2
	College Classroom: Teaching Process and Practice (RSD 6900)	3
	Advanced Pharmacoepidemiology (PHA 6935)	3
	National Field Epidemiology (PHC 7916)	1 - 3
	International Epidemiological Field Epidemiology (PHC 7910)	3
	<i>Can choose other courses as noted in column to the left under "Course"</i>	
<i>Course</i>	<b>General Electives (15 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Choose any course above that is not already required, or any other course with approval of the Curriculum Chair</b>	<i>Can choose other courses as noted in column to the left under "Course"</i>	
	Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research Designs for Community Settings (GMS 6844)	2

**Epidemiology Dissertation Research Courses – Required (15 Credits)**

<i>Course</i>	<b>Pre-Candidacy (3 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7979	Advanced Research	VAR
<i>Course</i>	<b>Dissertation (12 Credits)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7980	Doctoral Research	VAR
	Doctoral Research	VAR
	Doctoral Research	VAR
	Doctoral Research	VAR

**Optional Concentrations:**

*Students may designate up to 2 concentrations. Students must submit either (a) dissertation aims or (b) a first-authored publication that documents research in the area of the concentration in addition to required courses before concentration certification.*

<b>Course</b>	<b>Cancer Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7007	Cancer Epidemiology	3
PHC 7595	Molecular Epidemiology	3
GMS 6065	Fundamentals of Cancer Biology	3
	TOTAL	9

<b>Course</b>	<b>Genetic Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 7595	Molecular Epidemiology	3
PHC 7XXX	Genetic Epidemiology	3
	A relevant course from Epidemiology or another department, with approval of concentration coordinator, identified in this handbook	3
	TOTAL	9

<b>Course</b>	<b>Gero-Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
GMS 6485	Population Based Research in Aging	3
GMS 6099	Research Methods in Gerontology	3
PHC 6016	Social Epidemiology	3
	TOTAL	9

<b>Course</b>	<b>Infectious Disease Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 6517	Public Health Concepts in Infectious Disease	3
PHC 7XXX	Hospital Epidemiology	3
	A relevant course from Epidemiology or another department, with approval of concentration coordinator, identified in this handbook	3
	TOTAL	9

<b>Course</b>	<b>Psychiatric Epidemiology Concentration (9 hours)</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PHC 6016	Social Epidemiology	3
PHC 7038	Psychiatric Epidemiology	3
PHC 6041	Landmarks in Psychiatric Epidemiology	2
PHC 6939	CPE Psychiatric Grand Rounds (Special Topics)	1
	TOTAL	9

<sup>1</sup>The Department of Epidemiology Curriculum Committee meets regularly to review and adjust the curriculum. The list of approved elective courses is updated regularly.

## **Curriculum Summary: PhD in Epidemiology**

The Epidemiology PhD Curriculum Form summarizes the required components of the University of Florida PhD in Epidemiology degree and includes a list of specific courses that have been approved as requirements or elective categories. Specific course availability varies and some courses may not be available every year.

The Academic Assistant will track the courses and maintain an updated file of each student's PhD courses using the PhD Curriculum Form that documents what curriculum requirements have been completed. At the time of each registration, the Academic Assistant will provide an official matrix of courses taken and requirements yet to take to the student, the Academic Advisor, and the Research Mentor.

Substitution or exemption for any specific curriculum requirements must be initiated with a letter of explanation that is signed by the student's Research Mentor and Academic Advisor (e.g., a specific course was cancelled or not offered for several years). Such requests will then be reviewed by the PhD Program Director, and the decision will be placed in the student's academic file.

## Registration

Registration requirements are consistent with the UF [Graduate School Requirements](#), unless otherwise specifically stated in this handbook. Full-time students in the Epidemiology PhD program are required to register for a minimum of either 9 (fall and spring semesters) or 8 (summer semester) credits while they are actively working toward their degrees. Students receiving assistantships or fellowships must register for the number of credits required by their specific award. Students must be registered every semester, including summer terms, until completion of their degree unless approved for a leave of absence or a medical withdrawal. Students facing other unexpected emergency circumstances that might affect academic progression should speak with the Program Director regarding options. Students failing to enroll as expected are subject to dismissal. Readmission requires an [application](#) and is not guaranteed except for a medical withdrawal. Readmission after an approved leave of absence depends on the student's fulfillment of the requirements of the leave of absence.

Part-time students in the Epidemiology PhD program are required to register for a minimum of either 3 credits in the fall and spring semesters and 2 credits in the summer session while they are actively working toward their degrees. Part-time status needs to be approved by the Program Director.

Full-time students are not permitted to change to part-time status without a specific written explanation approved by the Research Mentor, Academic Advisor, and PhD Program Director. Likewise, taking a leave of absence requires written approval (see Leaves of Absence) from the above leaders as well as the Chair of the Department.

### Registration Procedure

Registration for students in the Epidemiology PhD program is carried out by the PhD Academic Assistant after paperwork is completed by the student. Prior to each upcoming semester, the Academic Assistant will compile a list of courses to be offered that are approved by the Curriculum Committee as PhD core program requirements or electives. Students may request to take other courses as electives, but such courses must be recommended by the student's Chair of the Supervisory Committee and approved by the Curriculum Committee Chair, with notification to the Academic Advisor and PhD Program Director. Once students have identified their proposed schedule, they will complete a Course Registration Form, have the form signed by the people listed on the form, and submit it to the Academic Assistant.

### Registration for Independent Research

If registering for an independent study (PHC 7918), pre-candidacy work (PHC 7979) or post-candidacy dissertation research (PHC 7980), the student should initiate the process several weeks prior to registration. The steps needed to register for these courses include:

- Completing a Dissertation Research Contract with PHC 7979 or 7980 specified or an Independent Research Contract Form (PHC 7918) that outlines contact time with the instructor, time allocation by students, and specific plan (goals and objectives) and deliverables to be completed during the

semester.

- Obtaining signatures from the Chair of the Supervisory Committee and the instructor, if different from the Committee Chair.
- Obtaining signature from the PhD Program Director
- Submitting signed contracts to the Academic Assistant

The Academic Assistant will then complete the registration process and create a unique section number for the student that links the course to the supervising faculty member. By the end of the semester, students must complete the work in the contract to receive credit (S/U). If work is not completed, the instructor may assign an "I" (incomplete) grade if the student is eligible for an "I" grade according to UF requirements. For students being given an "I" grade, the instructor will complete the approved Incomplete Grade Contract with the student. This I grade can be changed once the student has completed the work outlined in the Incomplete Grade Contract.

Please refer to [the Orange Book](#) section 3, page 12 for additional information on what constitutes a violation of the honor code with regard to incomplete work.

### **Registration in Final Semester**

All PhD students must register for a minimum of either three (fall and spring semesters) or two (summer semester) credits of PHC 7980 during the term they graduate; students on a fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship must be registered appropriately for their appointments. As noted above, these credits are arranged and documented using the Dissertation Research Contract. Candidates must submit a Degree Application online through ONE.UF by approximately the second week of their final term (see the Graduate Catalog or posted deadlines for the exact date). They may only do this after written confirmation from the Program Director has been given that all course requirements will be filled by graduation. This application must be renewed for a subsequent term if all degree requirements are not fulfilled in the term in which the application was filed.

## Academic Residence Requirement

Student participation in Department and College seminars and activities and interaction with other students and faculty is an important part of doctoral education, therefore students must remain in residence in the Gainesville area to be able to attend these events and to meet face-to-face with their Research Mentor and Academic Advisor. Students who want to relocate more than reasonable commuting distance away from Gainesville may petition to do so only after they have advanced to candidacy. A petition for an exemption to the Academic Residence Requirement must be submitted at least 2 months prior to the proposed relocation date and must include:

- A statement of reasons for the relocation
- A written plan detailing the work the student will be completing during the time period out of residence
- A written plan outlining how the student will maintain regular contact with their Supervisory Committee Chair and Academic Advisor and how this contact will be documented
- Signatures of the student, their Supervisory Committee Chair and their Academic Advisor

Petitions will be reviewed by the PhD Program Director and the Epidemiology Department Chair. The student, their Research Mentor, and their Academic Advisor will be informed of the final decision within 3 weeks of receipt of the petition.

### Conference Travel

All conference travel days must be preapproved by all direct supervisors. Students must complete the Travel Authorization Request and this must be approved at least 10 days in advance of the start date of the travel. International travel requires an additional approval process.

### Personal Time

Per the [agreement](#) between the University of Florida Board of Trustees and Graduate Assistants United:

8.2 Personal time under this Article shall be with pay for up to five (5) days per semester appointment. Each person shall be credited with five (5) days at the beginning of each semester and shall use leave in increments of not less than one (1) day. For example, an employee scheduled to work six (6) hours on Monday and three (3) hours on Tuesday, who is unable to perform assigned duties on these days for any of the reasons described above, would be charged with two (2) days of personal time, regardless of FTE appointment, or number of work hours scheduled. The personal time provided under this Article shall not be cumulative.

Personal time days must be pre-approved by the Research Mentor via signature on the [Application for Leave](#). Personal time days do not carry over from one semester to another. The dates of each semester appointment are below.



Semester	Dates
Fall 2019	08/16/19 – 12/31/19
Spring 2020	01/01/20 – 05/15/20
Summer 2020	05/16/20 – 08/15/20

### Leaves of Absence

Per the [agreement](#) between the University of Florida Board of Trustees and Graduate Assistants United:

#### 8.3 Unpaid Leave

(a) Graduate Assistant shall be entitled to six (6) weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one (1) or more of the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child and in order to care for that child;
2. The placement of a child with a graduate assistant for adoption or foster care;
3. The care of a spouse, domestic partner, mother, father, sister, brother, child, legal dependent, or a relative living in the graduate assistant's household;
4. A serious health condition of the GA which makes the GA unable to perform his or her duties.

(b) The GA shall provide the University with written notice not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the requested leave if practicable. In the case of an emergency, the GA must give verbal notice within twenty-four (24) hours of taking leave. In the case of a serious health condition, the University may request medical verification from a health care provider. The University also may require the GA to see a health care provider of the University's choice and at the University's expense.

(c) The GA may request an extension of the leave which the University at its sole discretion may provide.

(d) The GA is entitled to return to the same or similar position at the conclusion of the leave. This return provision does not apply if the return date is after the completion of an employment contract.

(e) The University shall continue to pay the health care premiums during the duration of the GA's leave. If applicable, the University tuition waiver shall be maintained.

(f) A GA must be in at least a second semester of employment as a GA to be eligible for this leave provision.

## Transfer of Credits

The Department of Epidemiology and Curriculum Committee will *consider* transferring graduate coursework that was obtained prior to acceptance in the PhD program. This includes graduate work previously conducted at the University of Florida. All course transfers must meet guidelines outlined in the UF Graduate Catalog [guidelines for graduate degrees](#) as well as guidelines of the Department of Epidemiology.

A maximum of 30 credits can be requested to apply to the 90- credit requirements in the PhD in Epidemiology program with these caveats:

- The program in which the course was taken should lead to an MPH or MS in Epidemiology degree at that institution; courses that do not meet this criterion may be requested but are not guaranteed to be transferred.
- A grade of B or higher was obtained. Pass/Fail courses are not transferrable.
- Required courses are not transferrable unless there is a direct match to our course.
- Only courses directly related to the PhD in Epidemiology will be transferred.
- Course credits are based on instructional hours; in general, one hour of instruction per week during a semester equals one credit.
- Generally, no more than 6 credits of General Electives may be transferred.

### Procedure

Course transfer requests must be submitted in the first semester after enrollment in the PhD program. (i.e., Courses begin in August - transfers must be submitted by October 31<sup>st</sup> of that year). Transfers will only be considered once; in other words, you may not submit transfers separately over several months or later in the program. To request a transfer, students must:

- Be sure to have previous academic transcripts, course syllabi, have identified potential courses that may qualify for transfer, and have identified which required courses or general categories within the current PhD curriculum that each transferred course may fulfill or replace prior to meeting with their Academic Advisor.
- Meet with the Research Mentor and Academic Advisor to complete the Course Transfer Request Form and obtain signatures of approval.
- Submit the Course Transfer Request Form and any accompanying course syllabi to the Academic Assistant.

The Academic Assistant will track that this was submitted, and give transfer request materials to the Epidemiology Curriculum Committee for review. The Curriculum Committee will approve, disapprove, or request more information for each course transfer request. The Academic Assistant will then submit the approved courses to the UF Graduate School for final approval.

**Final Check**

No transferred course can be taken for PhD credit at UF. For example, if the student is allowed to transfer Spatial Epidemiology from University X, Spatial Epidemiology cannot be taken at UF for credit towards the PhD in Epidemiology. However, the Supervisory Committee Chair may request an exception based on the academic needs of the student.

## Qualifying Examination

The University of Florida requires all PhD students to complete both a written and an oral PhD qualifying examination. The Department of Epidemiology has additional criteria.

The exam has three components: 1) the Written Preliminary Examination, 2) the Written Area Examination, and 3) the Oral Area Examination.

**1) The Written Preliminary Examination** begins the process. It can only be completed if the student:

- Has a minimum 3.00 GPA and is in good academic standing;
- Has completed the core (non-elective) coursework for the PhD program, with the exception of *PHC 7727 Grant Writing for Clinical and Health Research* and *PHC 7427 Ethics in Population Science*, which may be taken after the Written Preliminary Exam;
- Is currently registered for coursework at the time the examination is taken.

Students interested in taking the Written Preliminary Examination should get permission from their Research Mentor to take it, and should request it in writing to the PhD Program Director and the Academic Assistant no later than three weeks in advance of June/December 1<sup>st</sup>. The Academic Assistant will confirm that the student has completed the necessary coursework and is eligible to take the exam. No later than two weeks in advance of the test date, the Academic Assistant will provide a list of interested and eligible students to the Department Chair and the PhD Program Director.

The Written Preliminary Examination is offered twice each calendar year—in June and December. High stakes exam protocols are utilized during the exam period: no internet availability, no phones, and minimal to no breaks. All grading is blinded through a number system that only the Academic Assistant knows. All communication of grading and exam results to the student go through the PhD Program Director. The Written Preliminary Examination has two parts.

**Part 1 is a 100-point exam that** tests epidemiology core concepts and program competencies. 75 is a passing score on Part 1.

**Part 2** involves the critique of a recent journal article that is provided at the time of the Part 1 exam. Students are graded on the article critique, proper use of epidemiology terms, clarity, and proper use of English and grammar. Part 2 is graded pass/fail by consensus of the faculty members grading the exam. Therefore, for the student to receive a passing grade, the majority of reviewers must agree that the critique has passed. A unanimous vote is not required to pass or fail a student.

Each exam section is graded by at least three core faculty members in the Department of Epidemiology.

If a student fails either Part 1 or Part 2 of the exam, he or she will be eligible to retake the failed Preliminary

Exam in 3 months, which will provide structured time to study and prepare for the re-take. Any questions or sections that did not receive a “Pass” the first time the student takes the exam will be communicated to the student. If the student retakes the Preliminary Examination and still scores below the pass mark of 75 on Part 1 or fails the re-do of the article critique, he/she will receive a ‘Failed’ status and will be asked to leave the program. By exception, the program director, in consultation with the faculty who graded the exam and the student’s advisor and mentor, may determine that the 3-month retake timeframe should be modified to address specific student performance concerns. If this occurs, the program director will discuss the concerns and modifications with the student prior to implementation.

## **2) Written Area Examination**

The Written Area Examination may only be taken after successful completion of the Written Preliminary Examination. The format of the examination requires:

- Knowledge of the specific area of expertise of the student
- Knowledge of the unique aspects of Epidemiology in study designs related to the area of expertise
- Ability to think conceptually and clearly, and speak clearly in Epidemiological terms about the area of expertise

The student will notify the Research Mentor of their perceived readiness to be examined. The student will prepare a 3-8 page summary of their research area and potential questions to address along with potential methods. The Supervisory Committee Chair will ask committee members for potential questions related to the field of study. Questions will take into consideration design of studies, persistent and current problems in the field today that need to be solved, and other research issues. At least five questions will be generated. Once agreed upon by the Supervisory Committee, the Supervisory Committee Chair will send the questions to the Epidemiology Curriculum Committee Chair for review at least two weeks before the exam. The Chair of the Curriculum Committee will ensure a consistent level of difficulty and standardization. The Curriculum Committee Chair will return the questions to the Supervisory Committee Chair who will ask the Academic Assistant to schedule a date for the exam period. The Supervisory Committee Chair will give the exam questions to the Academic Assistant who will send them to the student at 8:00 AM, with a deadline 7 days later, at 8:00 AM.

The student will choose which three questions to answer. Work must be that of the student alone. Faculty may not discuss the exam questions with students prior to the exam start and they may not help in any way. Answers must be typed, double-spaced in Arial 12-point font with one-inch margins all around. No more than 10 pages per question will be allowed; the 10 pages do not include references.

The Supervisory Committee Chair will ask the Supervisory Committee for help to grade the exam. Exams will be graded within two weeks of the exam completion. Each question will be graded as pass/fail. All three questions must be successfully answered to advance to the oral phase. The student will be given one opportunity to rewrite any question not successfully answered. Failure to pass a Written Area Exam rewrite

will result in the student being dismissed from the program. In such cases, options for completing a master's degree within the department will be discussed.

### 3) Oral Area Exam

Within two weeks of passing the Written Area Exam, the student must pass the Oral Area Exam. This one-hour exam, without any PowerPoint or presentation, will cover all five questions available for the Written Area Examination. All members of the Supervisory Committee must be present. If any member is not available due to illness or travel, a core faculty member of the Department of Epidemiology must be substituted to fill in, but only one substitute is allowable. It is expected that dates will be pre-vetted in order that all members will be able to attend. The Academic Assistant will send reminders one week ahead, 3 days ahead and the day before. The Oral Area Exam will be closed to students. Upon passing the Written Preliminary Exam, the Written Area Exam and the Oral Area Exam, the student will officially pass the Qualifying Exam and progress to the dissertation proposal phase. The date of passing the Written Area Exam and the Oral Area Exam will be entered into the student's record in the PhD database by the PhD Academic Assistant, after being notified by the Research Mentor. Any student who does not fully pass the Oral Area Exam will be allowed to do provisional remedial work through classes, or other sessions to strengthen his/her area and general knowledge. The Supervisory Committee will decide at the Oral Area Exam meeting whether they should reconvene after the remedial work is completed. If the Supervisory Committee decides not to reconvene, the Supervisory Committee Chair will inform all members of the student's status. The remediation period can be as short as one month or as long as one semester. After successful remediation, the Supervisory Committee Chair will inform the Program Director and the Program Assistant of the student's status.

### Qualifying Examination

Exam Component	Given By	When Taken	Content
Written Preliminary Examination (WPE)	Department of Epidemiology	After completion of core coursework and if criteria for status are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed book, closed notebook</li> <li>• One day, in house</li> <li>• General Epidemiology knowledge and</li> <li>• Journal critique</li> </ul>
Written Area Examination	Supervisory Committee with approval of Curriculum Committee Chair	After successful completion of WPE and prior to the Oral Area Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three of five questions written</li> <li>• Not in-house</li> <li>• One week</li> </ul>

Oral Area Exam	Supervisory Committee with approval of Curriculum Committee Chair	After successful completion of the Written Area Exam and at least six months prior to final dissertation defense.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any content from the five questions—even those not answered.</li> <li>• One hour</li> <li>• In-house</li> <li>• Knowledge of foundational aspects of the area</li> </ul>
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## Dissertation Proposal

As soon as the Candidate has completed the qualifying exam (Written Preliminary Exam, Written and Oral Area Exams), she/he must begin work on the dissertation proposal. The proposal consists of:

- Abstract—30 lines of text, similar to that of an NIH abstract
- Specific Aims—state clearly and concisely what is being proposed, and hypotheses that will be tested (2 pages max)
- Significance—such as defined by the NIH grant application, with relevance to the field of epidemiology and public health (3 to 6 pages)
- Preliminary Studies (optional)—that describes what work has already been done as a beta test or leading up to the work to be done (3 pages max)
- Design and Methods—must have an understanding of how the work will be accomplished, with a flow chart and time line, power calculation, statistical tests to be performed, strengths and limitations. (5 to 10 pages)
- Literature Cited (no page limit)

In advance of any scheduling of the dissertation proposal defense, the Supervisory Committee Chair will meet with the PhD Program Director, and the Academic Assistant to discuss the process of the dissertation proposal defense in the Department of Epidemiology. Students will work with their Supervisory Committee Chair to prepare the dissertation proposal. Once the Chair feels it is ready for review, the student will send it to the Supervisory Committee for review. Once the Committee members agree it is ready for defense, the Academic Assistant will set up a dissertation proposal defense date. The student must submit their final proposal to the committee at least three weeks before the proposal defense date. The Academic Assistant will inform the Chair of the Department and the PhD Program Director about the defense and post the name and date of the defense on the back-hall magnet wall.

The candidate and the Supervisory Committee Chair must be physically present at the defense and all efforts will be made to schedule the defense at a time when the remaining committee members can also be physically present. If any members must attend remotely due to unexpected circumstances this is allowed consistent with Graduate School guidelines. In such cases, the Academic Assistant should be informed as soon as possible in order to make the appropriate technological arrangements. The Proposal Defense will commence with a succinct, yet complete, overview of the student's research proposal given as an oral presentation that is approximately 30 minutes long and supported by visual aids (PowerPoint). It should

focus on the proposal topic and methodology. The final dissertation format (three journal articles or traditional dissertation proposal) will be discussed and agreed upon with the candidate's Committee at this point.

The Supervisory Committee will then evaluate the written proposal and the oral presentation. Thirty minutes will be given for questions for the Supervisory Committee to address such topics as:

- Literature evaluation skills
- Theoretical application
- Scientific background in the area
- Specific Aims
- Study design
- Models of disease/conditions
- Analytical methods
- Measurement methods
- Data and statistical analysis plans

After the student has answered questions from the Supervisory Committee, the Committee will meet without the student present to determine the outcome of the proposal defense. The results will be immediately communicated to the student and that same day the core Epidemiology faculty member will notify the PhD Director and the Chair of Epidemiology of the results. The following scale will be used:

1. Pass with no revisions
2. Pass with minor revisions—student must revise and submit the revisions to the Research Mentor who will send it to interested committee members.
3. Pass with major revisions—student must revise and resubmit. At the discretion of the Supervisory Chair, the committee may be reassembled.
4. Not acceptable—student and Research Mentor must meet with the PhD Director.

Any recommended revisions must be completed within 3 months from the time of proposal presentation. If a student needs more than one rewrite, the Chair of the Department will be notified. A re-examination may be requested but it must be recommended by the student's Supervisory Committee Chair and approved by the Program Director.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

Upon passing the proposal defense (#1 or #2 above), the student's Supervisory Committee Chair will obtain signatures from all Supervisory Committee members on the Admission to Candidacy Form and inform the student that he/she has advanced to candidacy. The Academic Assistant will obtain the form from the Supervisory Chair and submit the data to the Graduate School. Students who receive a 3 or 4 will complete all required revisions before admission to candidacy. The Academic Assistant will notify the Program Director and the Department Chair that the student has advanced to candidacy.



**IRB Approval**

All dissertations must receive IRB approval. This can take a few weeks to a couple of months depending on the timing and the state of the work. It is suggested that this be done as soon as possible after the defense to avoid lengthy delays. Students are advised to take an active role in the approval process.

## Dissertation

The written and oral phase of the Area exam must be passed at least six months prior to the final dissertation defense. Per the Graduate School, two semesters must elapse between the Dissertation Proposal Defense and graduation. The semester in which a student advances to candidacy counts as one of the two semesters if the student advances to candidacy prior to the midpoint of the semester. No more than three years may pass between passing the Oral Dissertation Defense and the conferring of the degree for the Department of Epidemiology.

Every candidate for an Epidemiology PhD degree is required to prepare and present a dissertation that shows independent investigation of a topic relevant to the Epidemiology discipline, and is acceptable in form and content to the Supervisory Committee and to the Graduate School. A doctoral dissertation must demonstrate the ability to conceive, design, conduct, and interpret independent, original, and creative research. It must describe significant original contributions to the advancement of knowledge and must demonstrate the ability to organize, analyze, and interpret data. The student and Supervisory Committee are responsible for the level of quality and scholarship.

PhD in Epidemiology candidates will work with their Supervisory Committees to identify an appropriate format for their dissertations. Two format options are acceptable: 1) traditional; and 2) three journal articles.

### **Traditional Dissertation Format**

The traditional dissertation format is one single document; it is an expanded version of the dissertation proposal format. The dissertation consists of:

- Abstract—Must be 350 words or less
- Specific Aims—state clearly and concisely the hypotheses that were tested
- Significance—such as defined by the NIH grant application, with relevance to the field of epidemiology and public health
- Design and Methods—clearly describe how the work was accomplished, with descriptions of statistical tests that were performed
- Results – Organize results by specific aim
- Discussion – Discuss the innovative aspects of the work, how the work advances the field, how the goals of the study were or were not met, and the strengths and limitations of the study. Include a discussion of future directions of the research.
- Study Participants – Discuss how study participants were included in each aim of the study, including how they were identified, recruited, participated in the informed consent process and provided informed consent, and how their rights were protected, including privacy.
- Literature Cited

## Journal Article Format

Candidates in scientific fields publish results of their research as journal articles. The three journal article dissertation format allows the student to prepare three journal articles, tied together by a common theme, as the core of their dissertation. However, all copyright concerns must be addressed and any chapter that represents a journal article must have a footnote at the bottom of the first page that states, “Reprinted with permission from...” and gives the source as it is listed in the references section. The Graduate School stresses the fact that the dissertation is the primary objective and publication is the secondary objective. Students must use the formatting requirements of the Editorial Office for spacing and margins, pagination and copy sequence, heading formats, and overall preparation.

The Journal Article format allows for presentation of three manuscripts developed for submission to scientific journals. The dissertation must have a common introduction and review of literature. It is highly recommended that there be a methods chapter. There must also be a final chapter summarizing the overall results, conclusions, and recommendations for further research. In addition, the dissertation must have the following elements:

- A common table of contents covering the entire body
- An abstract of the complete study immediately preceding page 1 of the main text
- A common list of references at the end of the text

The Graduate School encourages candidates to use the scholarly journal in which they have published as a guide for thesis and dissertation preparation. A printed journal article on an analogous subject serves as a tangible, graphic guide for style of writing, use of abbreviations and numbers, reference system, and overall usage policies. Do not use the journal style manual to format the thesis or dissertation, however. To prepare the thesis or dissertation, use the formatting requirements of the [UF Graduate School Editorial Office](#).

- All pages numbered in sequence—from page 1 through the biographical sketch
- A footnote at the bottom of the first page of each article that states, “Reprinted with permission from...” if applicable.

The Journal Article Format also requires that:

- The student must be first author of all three articles, one of which must be submitted for publication before the student graduates. Students are encouraged to review authorship standards of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recommendations for defining the role of authors and contributors.
  - Members of the committee should have the opportunity for co-authorship corresponding to their contribution to the dissertation manuscripts. Individual committee members may opt not to be a co-author on individual manuscripts.
- The work has been done while a student is in the PhD Program in Epidemiology
- The articles were not submitted for publication prior to advancing to Candidacy

Each student is expected to work closely with the Supervisory Committee during the active research phase

and while developing the written dissertation. A draft copy of the whole dissertation must be given to the dissertation committee at least one month prior to the defense. This allows time for any major changes to be conveyed and discussed prior to the defense. All committee members must provide written feedback to the student and the Research Mentor at least two weeks prior to the Defense. It is highly recommended that committees meet regularly to vet each chapter so that delays are avoided.

Dissertations must be written according to the UF Graduate School requirements. If these requirements are not met, the dissertation will not be accepted. The Graduate Council requires the Graduate School Editorial Office, as agents of the Dean of the Graduate School, to review dissertations to ensure the format is acceptable, and to make recommendations as needed. When first presented to the Graduate School Editorial Office, the dissertation should be final and completely formatted. Students should be familiar with the format requirements and should work with the [Application Support Center](#) to troubleshoot their files before providing their first submission document to the Editorial Office for review. The Graduate School also regularly provides dissertation workshops to help students prepare their dissertations according to the guidelines. Students are encouraged to attend these workshops and to frequently refer to the Graduate Catalog while planning and preparing their doctoral dissertation.

[Thesis and Dissertation Format Requirements](#)

[Dissertation Checklist](#)

[Editorial Document Management System](#)

[Graduate School Graduation Checklist](#)

[ETD Technical Support](#)

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all dissertation requirements for the Graduate School are met; students are strongly encouraged to carefully review the [UF Graduate Student Handbook](#), and to attend [workshops or presentations](#) related to the dissertation process.

## Final Oral Dissertation Defense

After submitting the dissertation and completing all other work prescribed for the degree, the candidate is given a final oral examination by the Supervisory Committee, on campus. Before the date is scheduled, the Supervisory Committee will meet with the PhD Program Director, and the Academic Assistant. The Epidemiology Academic Assistant will contact committee members to schedule the defense date and time and will reserve a room for the defense.

The candidate and the Supervisory Committee Chair must be physically present at the defense and all efforts will be made to schedule the defense at a time when the remaining committee members can also be physically present. If any members must attend remotely due to unexpected circumstances this is allowed consistent with Graduate School guidelines. In such cases, the Academic Assistant should be informed as soon as possible in order to make the appropriate technological arrangements.

If a Supervisory Committee member cannot attend in person or remotely (for example, due to serious illness) then a substitution may occur, but the substitute will be a core member of the Department of Epidemiology. Per the [UF Graduate Catalog](#), “If a supervisory committee member cannot be present at the student’s final defense, a Graduate Faculty member in the same academic area may substitute for the absent committee member. The substitute should sign the Final Examination form on the left side, in the space provided for committee members, noting the name of the absent member. The chair of the student’s major academic unit also must indicate the reason for the absence and state that the absent member agreed to this substitution at the final examination. The substitute should not sign the ETD signature page. The original committee member must sign. No substitutes are allowed for the chair or external member of the committee.” In those cases, the defense will be rescheduled.

Two weeks prior to the defense the Academic Assistant will review all of the requirements again with the Committee Chair.

The PhD Dissertation Defense consists of an oral defense of the research results that are described in the dissertation. The oral defense is open to other faculty, family/friends, and other students. The Academic Assistant will publish the dates, titles, and presenter to all Graduate Faculty members in Epidemiology and relevant Department Chairs in PHHP and COM, and the Deans of these two Colleges. Supervisory Committee members must bring a written or electronic copy of the dissertation with them to the defense. The approximately two-hour defense begins with a 45-minute succinct presentation by the Candidate, followed by up to 20 minutes of questions from Supervisory Committee members, then up to 10 minutes of questions from other faculty members. Students may only ask questions if the Supervisory Committee Chair allows it, only after the committee and other faculty have had the opportunity (10 minutes maximum). It ends with all guests and the candidate leaving the room so the Supervisory Committee can confer briefly. The candidate is then invited back into the room and the defense continues for the remainder of the two hours total time. At the conclusion of the defense the candidate is again asked to leave the room and the

Supervisory Committee will vote on the outcome of the defense.

The Committee may vote:

- Pass—with or without minor revisions that the Research Mentor (Chair) will review and pass;
- Incomplete—with major revisions that will require all Committee members to review and finalize;
- Fail—which means that even major revisions will not make the dissertation acceptable. Hopefully, a student will never get this vote, as it is a negative reflection of the Supervisory Committee Chair as well as the entire Committee.

The Supervisory Committee Chair will inform the Department Chair and the PhD Program Director of the dissertation defense results within 24 hours of the defense.

The Supervisory Committee Chair must hold the ETD Signature Page until all members are satisfied with the dissertation. However, this form must be submitted electronically, via GIMS, by the Final Submission Deadline for the Graduate School Editorial Office, during the term of intended degree award.

If the Candidate passes without any changes, the candidate and the Supervisory Committee Chair sign the UF Publishing Agreement Form immediately after the dissertation defense, while the entire Supervisory Committee signs the ETD Signature Page and the Final Examination Report immediately after the defense. The forms will be returned to the Academic Assistant who will enter the results in GIMS.

If the Candidate passes with minor revisions, the candidate and the Supervisory Committee Chair sign the UF Publishing Agreement Form immediately after the dissertation defense, and all members of the Supervisory Committee except the Committee Chair sign the ETD Signature Page and the Final Examination Report immediately after the defense. The Supervisory Committee Chair will retain the ETD Signature Page; once the changes have been implemented to their satisfaction, the Chair will sign off on the ETD signature page and return it to the Academic Assistant.

If the Supervisory Committee votes that the dissertation is incomplete and needs major revisions, the UF Publishing Agreement Form and the ETD Signature Page and the Final Examination Report should not be signed until all committee members have reviewed and approved the required revisions. The Supervisory Committee Chair will retain those forms and will be responsible for gathering the signatures of the committee members after those revisions have been approved.

If the Supervisory Committee votes that the student has failed the dissertation defense, all forms should be returned to the Academic Assistant without signatures. In the event of a failed dissertation defense, the Supervisory Committee Chair will immediately inform the Department Chair and the PhD Program Director of the results.

Once all changes are made to the dissertation, or if no changes are needed, the Academic Assistant will announce the passing of the defense to the faculty and students along with the student's next steps.

For updates and requirements for dissertations, check the [Graduate School website](#) or check with the PhD Program Director.

## **Part III: Other Important Information**

### **GatorLink**

UF requires all students to maintain access to their GatorLink e-mail. To create your GatorLink, you must go to the [GatorLink home page](#).

### **Emails from the Department**

All students are required to respond in a timely manner to emails from academic program faculty and staff, including, but not limited to, the Department Chair, Program Director, and Academic Assistant.

### **Department of Epidemiology Seminar Series**

All doctoral students are expected to attend at least 75% of the departmental seminars and LunchNLearn sessions with the speaker offered each year. This requirement is part of the professional development of the student. A request for student volunteers to provide transportation to the seminar speaker and to escort him/her during the visit will be communicated to all doctoral students. The Department expects active participation from all students in the successful planning and conducting of the seminar series. The departmental seminar series is typically arranged on the first Thursday of every month. All doctoral students are expected to arrange their classes and meetings accordingly to ensure availability to attend the seminar series. A sign-in register will be maintained to log attendance. Also, the Chair's Travel Award to attend conferences will include consideration of each student's participation in attending the departmental seminar series.

### **Quarterly PhD Student Meetings**

All PhD students are required to attend the quarterly PhD student meeting with the Program Director and Department Chair. The PhD Student Representative must gather and present student questions and concerns at this meeting.

### **Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate Assistants are expected to complete all work as outlined in their letters of appointment. All students who plan to work in academia are strongly encouraged to enroll in RSD 6900 [College Classroom: Teaching Process and Practice](#) for basic training in formal instruction and teaching. This course counts as a departmental elective.

### **International Students**



To teach, international students whose official first language is not English must score at least 55 on the SPEAK Test or 28 on the Speaking Section of the Internet TOEFL to be eligible to teach in the classroom, laboratory, or other instructional setting. Those who score 45 to 50 on the SPEAK Test, or 23 to 27 on the Speaking Section of the TOEFL iBT, may teach if they concurrently enroll in EAP 5836 to help their personal interaction and public speaking skills. Those who have scores below these minimums are not eligible to teach.

## **Financial Aid**

Check the [Grants and Fellowships](#) page for grant ideas and tips on how to write a grant. Other funding resources are located at the [Graduate School website](#). For general information about your financial aid status, please contact the [UF Office of Student Financial Affairs](#) or make an appointment with the [PHHP financial aid officer](#).

Scholarship opportunities also exist within the [College of Public Health and Health Professions](#), the [College of Medicine](#), and the [university](#) as a whole.

## **Florida Residency**

Recommendations for establishing and declaring Florida as the legal state of residence are [outlined](#) on the UF Admissions site.

## **Funding for Professional Travel**

### **Epidemiology Chair's Travel Award**

The Chair's Travel Award provides travel funds to students enrolled in Epidemiology who are presenting a poster or paper at a professional conference or meeting. The activity must be related to the student's career development, the student must be in good academic standing and the student must actively participate in the department seminar series and receive approval from their Research Mentor to travel. It is expected that Research Mentors who have grant funds or other funds that can be used to support student travel will use those funds. It is also expected that students will apply for other funding sources (see below).

After official notification of acceptance of the abstract, the student must submit the [Chair's Travel Award Application](#), along with their official notice of acceptance and a statement of their estimated expenses using the [Travel Authorization Form](#), to the Academic Assistant. The Academic Assistant will request approval from the Chair. Students will be reimbursed after travel has occurred. Students must turn in all receipts for reimbursements with summary page of expenses along with all funders of the trip within 30 days of travel. Unused funds do not carry over. Availability of funds will be evaluated each fiscal year, and students will be notified if the award is cancelled. It is expected that the student will solicit travel funds from the Research

Mentor and the Graduate School first before asking for Department Travel Funds. Only early bird registration will be reimbursed. All other travel guidelines of the University will be followed.

#### **Graduate Student Council Travel Grants**

Grants are also awarded by the Graduate Student Council (GSC) to cover travel-related expenses for presenting research or participating in professional development at a professional conference. Travel Grants can be found on the [GSC](#) web page.

#### **UF Office of Research Travel Funds**

Students may request travel funds from the UF Office of Research under certain circumstances that are listed on the [website](#).

## **Academic Professionalism and Integrity**

In addition to prescribed coursework in the PhD program, students are required to collaborate with their Research Mentors and other faculty members on presentations at professional meetings, publications in peer-reviewed journals, and professional service, such as reviewing journal articles, consulting with community agencies, and serving on University and Department committees.

The Department of Epidemiology has opportunities for students to learn about current activity in the field of epidemiology and to meet practicing epidemiologists. Students are strongly encouraged to attend major seminars or talks that are directly supported by the Department of Epidemiology, and to meet with visiting epidemiologists during times that are allotted to PhD students. Students who cannot attend these organized, departmental activities must give a reason for non-attendance.

Professional communication and behavior are expected of all students in the program. Students are expected to attend all departmental seminars and the LunchNLearn sessions with the visiting speakers. Students are strongly urged to participate in service activities, including community service, service on Department or University committees or organizations, or service within professional organizations. Professionalism is an educational outcome of this program and therefore, is continually assessed by the Research Mentors and other faculty members based on student behaviors and interactions in the department and class. Professional behaviors and attitudes are also assessed during the yearly departmental assessments done by the Chair and Program Director, and can negatively impact academic standing and eventual readiness for graduation. Students are expected to adhere to the [Department of Epidemiology Dress Code Policy](#) when they are in class or in the Epidemiology suite. Students should dress more professionally for the Seminar Series and the LunchNLearn sessions than they would on a typical work day.

#### **Research Integrity**

All students are responsible for receiving ongoing training in the Responsible Conduct of Research. This training should begin in the first 30 days of the program; ignorance of federal regulations covering research

is not an excuse for misconduct. Graduate students can be and are held accountable for their conduct, and such accountability can lead to serious consequences. To meet this training need, students are required to take the Department Ethics Course. Students should also expect regular discussion of expected conduct with their mentors.

The University has an [Office of Research](#) and Research Compliance Officer. Become familiar with the information on their website.

Students are responsible for reading and understanding this policy before engaging in any research activities:

**UF Research Misconduct Policy.** “[It is the policy](#) of the University that each individual faculty, staff member and student is expected to maintain high ethical standards in the conduct and reporting of his/her scientific and scholarly research. Faculty, staff, and students have responsibilities for ethical conduct in research not only to the University, but also to the community at large, to the academic community, and to private and public institutions sponsoring the research activities. Research Misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or reporting the results. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data. It also does not include authorship or credit disputes. Should alleged incidents of misconduct in research occur, reporting of such possible violations is a shared responsibility, and it is the duty of the faculty, staff members and students to respond in a fitting manner to resolve issues arising from such alleged misconduct. Such an allegation should be brought to the administrative officer to whom the accused reports (e.g., supervisor, department chair, dean or director). The procedures for reporting misconduct may vary depending on the type, seriousness, and technical nature of the alleged misconduct.”

In addition to the administrative officer to whom the accused reports, academic and research misconduct will be reported to any persons who have a legitimate educational need to know about the issue. This may include the Department Chair, the PhD Program Director, members of the dissertation committee and other faculty members.

The full University Policy of Research Misconduct section can be accessed [here](#).

If you have any concerns about conduct, please see your Research Mentor or the PhD Program Director to clarify the UF policy and to consider possible action.

### **Student Honor Code**

Each Student and every Student Organization is required to abide by the Student Honor Code and the Student Conduct Code when on University-controlled property, at University sponsored events, or off campus in accordance with sections 3 and 4 of [the Orange Book](#). In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the

University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

**On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.**

Unprofessional conduct or violations of the Student Honor Code can result in dismissal from the program regardless of GPA.

## **Grievance Procedures**

The grievance procedure is as follows:

- Step 1. Oral discussion between the graduate student and the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance is strongly encouraged. The discussion should be held as soon as the student first becomes aware of the act or condition that is the basis of the grievance. The student may wish to present his or her grievance in writing to the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. The person alleged to have caused the grievance must respond to the student either orally or in writing.
- Step 2. If the student considers the response to the discussion and/or written document from Step 1 to be unsatisfactory and feels that the grievance still exists, the grievance should be brought in writing, with all supporting documentation, to the Program Director. If the grievance still remains unresolved, the Program Director will liaise with the Department Chair. The department must respond to the student's grievance in writing in a timely fashion.
- Step 3. If the grievance is still considered to be unresolved, the student may then file the grievance in writing with the Associate Dean for Education of the College of Public Health and Health Professions, who shall investigate the matter and respond to the student in writing within a reasonable timeframe.
- Step 4. The right of appeal in writing to the Ombuds for graduate and professional students, as the authorized representative of the President of the University, shall be the final appeal but only after the above steps 1–3 have been exhausted. The Office of the Ombuds is located in 31 Tigert Hall, 392-1308 and their website is <http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>.

Other Grievance Resources: Most employment-related grievances are covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 22, between the Florida Board of Education of the State University System and Graduate Assistants United. Students with employment-related concerns should contact the GAU office at 392-0274,

or Human Resource Services at 352-392- 2477.

Allegations of research misconduct should be brought to the attention of the administrative officer (e.g., department chair, dean) to whom the accused party reports. Students may wish to seek advice from the Director of the Division of Research Compliance, 460 Grinter, 392-9174, before making a formal complaint. Graduate students who have complaints or problems with other aspects of university life should consult the Dean of Students Office in 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261 for the appropriate grievance procedure.

## **Required Immunizations**

All students are required to comply with the College of Public Health and Health Professions' [student immunization requirements policy](#). Please note there are immunizations you must complete prior to enrollment.

## **Computer Requirements**

All students are required to comply with the College of Public Health and Health Professions' [computer requirements policy](#).

## **HIPAA and FERPA**

All students in the College of Public Health and Health Professions are required to complete HIPAA on-line training and to sign a HIPAA Confidentiality Agreement. You must complete HIPAA every year you are in the program. The HIPAA training website is located at <http://privacy.health.ufl.edu>. You must also read and sign the Confidentiality Statement.

Certificate of Completion of HIPAA and signed Confidentiality Agreement should be turned in to your Department/Program. Instructions for submission will come from your Department/Program. Please keep a copy of your HIPAA compliance documents. Students in noncompliance will have a hold put in their record. The College will drop all classes of students remaining in noncompliance by the end of the second week of classes. Please note: Even if you have completed HIPAA at another institution including Shands Hospital, you must repeat the on-line training and sign another confidentiality agreement.

The 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, also known as the Buckley Amendment, is a federal law (20 U.S.C. 1232g) that protects the privacy of a student's educational record. FERPA applies to all educational institutions receiving funds from the United States Department of Education, from kindergarten through university level.

FERPA training is required annually for UF graduate assistants. When working with student records, a student assistant should work cooperatively with their supervisor to ensure FERPA compliance.

## IRB

All students are required to complete IRB registration and training before participating in any research.

## Additional Resources

Students should be aware that multiple resources exist to assist students with teaching and research. See the Graduate School's [Office of Professional Development](#) for a list of these resources.

## Counseling and Student Health

Students may occasionally have personal issues that arise in the course of pursuing higher education or that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing problems affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and to seek confidential assistance at:

[University of Florida Counseling & Wellness Center](#), 352-392-1575 Visit their website for more information.

U Matter, We Care, [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575

Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from: [Alachua County Crisis Center](#): (352) 264-6789

BUT – Do not wait until you reach a crisis to talk with a counselor. The University of Florida Counseling Center has helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance; you are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.

The [Student Health Care Center at Shands](#) is a satellite clinic of the [main Student Health Care Center](#) located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at Shands offers a variety of clinical services including primary care, women's health care, immunizations, and pharmacy services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 352-294-5700 or visit the website.

It is the goal of the [Disability Resource Center](#) to foster a sense of empowerment in students with disabilities by educating them about their legal rights and responsibilities so that they can make informed choices, by encouraging them to engage in critical thinking and self-advocacy and by supporting them in being successful students, campus leaders and positive contributors to the campus community. The Disability Resource Center, in conjunction with the Division of Student Affairs, is helping students to create an unparalleled experience where students embrace learning and diversity to become leaders in the service of the global community.

## Shared Governance

Shared governance is important at the University of Florida and in the Department of Epidemiology. The Department of Epidemiology invites student participation on several committees including the:

- Epidemiology Curriculum Committee
- Epidemiology Seminar Committee
- Epidemiology Awards Committee
- Other Committees as determined

Student representatives will be invited to faculty meetings depending on the agenda.

Annual Appointments to committees are made by the Chair of the Department, who is notified of a students' interest by the PhD Program Director except for the doctoral student representative who is voted on by the doctoral students.

PHHP has a Doctoral Student Council and students are encouraged to participate.

At the University level, Graduate Student Council serves as a liaison between UF graduate students, UF administration, and the UF Student Government. General body meetings are held each month of the Fall and Spring term. More information can be found on the [Graduate Student Council](#) website.

## Readmission Requirements

Students who have left the program prior to graduating and wish to be readmitted require the following:

- A minimum GPA of 3.00.
- GRE scores that satisfy the admission requirements of the PhD program in effect at the time of readmission.
- A detailed letter from the student addressing why they should be considered for readmission, their relevant experiences since leaving, and why their goals are now in line with a PhD program

Readmission is not guaranteed, irrespective of the circumstances that necessitated it, with the exception of medical withdrawals.

## Policy Changes

Any and all policies outlined in this handbook are subject to changes in the University and College regulations.

Suggestions for changes to this handbook?  
Contact the [PhD in Epidemiology Program Director](#).

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand all policies outlined in the PhD in Epidemiology Handbook.

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Print name

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Date

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Signature