

**Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health**

**DrPH Program in Public Health Leadership**

**Dissertation – Policies and Procedures**

**Fall 2022**

## **I. Definition of the DrPH Dissertation**

The goal of the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health (COPH) DrPH Program in Public Health Leadership is to deliver excellent education in public health science, practice, management, and leadership to prepare students for careers in executive-level positions within public health agencies, industries, and organizations, as well as in academic public health programs. The DrPH curriculum is composed of formal coursework, comprehensive examinations, field-based practical experiences, and a large-scale final project known as the Dissertation.

The DrPH Dissertation is the culminating project of the DrPH program. The Dissertation is required so that the DrPH Faculty may assess students' mastery of program competencies and learning objectives and students' readiness to assume a high level of responsibility and autonomy in addressing public health issues and challenges. The Dissertation provides students an opportunity to apply principles and skills learned in coursework and other parts of the DrPH curriculum to a significant topic of public health interest. The Dissertation affords an opportunity to bring the interdisciplinary perspective obtained through the DrPH curriculum to bear on an in-depth study within an area of concentration. It is intended to be a new learning opportunity that will enhance students' readiness to embark on their public health leadership careers.

The Dissertation must address an empirical question that is relevant to a public health problem or challenge and that entails clear implications for leadership at organizational, community, and/or policy levels. The Dissertation must address a significant public health issue at the individual, group, organization, community, or population level and should strive to address multiple levels whenever possible. The Dissertation must be both innovative and significant. To be considered innovative, it must either (a) identify new approaches to existing problems or apply existing approaches to a new problem, or (b) identify new principles for addressing existing public health issues or identify existing principles that can be used to guide new efforts in public health. To be considered significant, either (a) the implementation plan generated by the Dissertation must have the potential to make one or more important improvements in the health of the public, or (b) the Dissertation's identification and analysis of past failures and successes must lead to principles for leading organizational, policy or community change that have potentially important ramifications for the public's health.

In addressing the empirical question of interest, the Dissertation must advance the knowledge and practice of leadership in public health. The student will incorporate leadership experience into their Dissertation by directly playing leadership roles in designing, implementing, and/or evaluating responses to the public health problem of interest and using findings from research and evaluative activities to derive implications for future efforts to lead organizational, policy or community change.

The Dissertation must generate a written product. The written product may take the form of a traditional research dissertation, a cohesive series of at least three (3) manuscripts that are ready for submission to national- or international- level public health journals, a technical report accompanied by a grant proposal that is appropriate for submission to a major funder, a

case study report that encompasses all phases of scholarship from design through analysis and interpretation, or another similar scholarly document. The form of the written product must be approved by the student’s Dissertation Committee prior to the initiation of Dissertation activities. Written products are expected to be concise, clear, and directed toward the Dissertation’s empirical question(s) as well as the public health applications of the findings (including proposed solutions that are based on the findings). The written product should emphasize the implications of the Dissertation project for public health practice, policy, research, and leadership.

**DrPH Foundational and Program Competencies to be Addressed in the Dissertation Process**

The process of preparing and defending a dissertation proposal, completing a dissertation project, preparing the final product summarizing the project, and publicly presenting and defending the project are part of the learning process leading to the successful completion of requirements for the DrPH degree. This process provides faculty with opportunities to observe student mastery of DrPH foundational and program competencies, as well as opportunities for the student to develop additional competency. No single dissertation project is likely to address all program competencies; however, all projects should address the following:

	Assessment of competency mastery				
	Proposal document	Proposal defense	Dissertation project	Final product	Final defense
<b>Foundational Competencies</b>					
1. Explain qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and policy analysis research and evaluation methods to address health issues at multiple (individual, group, organization, community and population) levels	X	X			X
2. Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue	X	X			X
4. Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders and others partners	X	X	X		

	Assessment of competency mastery				
	Proposal document	Proposal defense	Dissertation project	Final product	Final defense
5. Communicate public health science to diverse stakeholders, including individuals at all levels of health literacy, for purposes of influences behavior and policies	X	X			
6. Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values and potential contributions from multiple professions and systems in addressing public health problems	X	X			X
10. Propose strategies to promote inclusion and equity within public health programs, policies and systems	X	X	X	X	X
12. Propose human, fiscal and other resources to achieve a strategic goal	X	X		X	X
17. Propose Interprofessional approaches to improve public health	X	X			X
<b>Concentration Competency</b>					
1. Evaluate leadership best practices that should be employed on the range of public health interventions to address a given public health issue	X	X	X	X	X

## II. The Dissertation Committee

Students may not embark on Dissertation activities without establishing a Dissertation Committee and receiving approval from that Committee for all Dissertation activities. Requirements for membership on and leadership of the Committee are described below. Members of the student's Practicum/ Dissertation Planning Committee may be members of the Dissertation Committee, but it is not required.

The Dissertation Committee ("the Committee") will be chaired by a faculty member who holds the rank of associate or full professor and has a primary faculty appointment in the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health (an assistant professor may serve as a co-Chair with an

associate or full professor). The Committee Chair (“the Chair”) must have an active teaching, advisory, or administrative role in the DrPH Program. The student should select a faculty member who meets these characteristics and is willing to serve as Chair; students should expect that a Chair will not agree to serve in this capacity without meeting with the student, learning about the student’s ideas for a Dissertation, discussing possible revisions that may need to be made to the Project ideas, and discussing ideas for other Committee members. The Chair, once he or she has agreed to serve, will work with the student to identify other members of the Committee.

The Committee will be composed of a minimum of three, but no more than five, voting members (including the Chair). At least three of the members must hold a doctoral degree from a nationally-accredited institution, and at least one of the members must have significant experience in public health practice. A majority of the members must have faculty appointments, either primary or secondary, in the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, at the time of their selection as a Committee member. Additional consultants who have expertise in the area of the Dissertation may be invited to participate in Committee meetings and provide guidance to the Project, but consultants will serve on the Committee without vote. Although the student is encouraged to discuss their Dissertation ideas with as many faculty as he or she wishes during the initial development of the dissertation project, the Committee Chair must approve the selection of all other Committee members and consultants before they are asked to serve on the Committee.

Once a Committee has been formed, the student must submit a completed **Doctoral Dissertation Committee Designation Form** to the DrPH Program Director. The DrPH Program Director must review the Committee composition and verify the appropriateness of the Committee membership. The DrPH Director will forward the approved Doctoral Dissertation Committee Designation Form to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for signature. The form will then be forwarded to the Office of University Registrar and to the COPH Office of Student Affairs for inclusion in the student’s official academic file, with copies to the student and the DrPH Program Director.

The Committee will guide the student and assist in defining the direction of the Dissertation Proposal. The Committee has the ultimate authority in the direction of the Dissertation; thus, data collection or other Dissertation activities shall not begin until the Committee approves the Dissertation Proposal.

If during the course of the Dissertation, a Committee Member leaves the COPH or UAMS, she or he may continue service on the Committee with the approval of the Director of the DrPH Program. Otherwise, the Member will be replaced with the approval of the Committee Chair. Should the Committee Chair leave the COPH or UAMS, she or he may continue service as a Committee Chair or as a Member with the approval of the Director of the DrPH Program.

Any change in the membership or leadership of the Committee requires that a **Change in**

**Doctoral Dissertation Committee Designation Form** be completed to document all changes to the Committee. This form is to be submitted to the DrPH Program Director for approval and signature and to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for approval and signature. The form must then be forwarded to the Office of University Registrar and to the COPH Office of Student Affairs for inclusion in the student's official academic file, with copies to the student and the DrPH Program Director.

### **III. The Dissertation Process**

The five major activities for the Dissertation are: (1) the establishment of the Dissertation Committee, (2) the creation of the Dissertation Proposal, (3) the defense of the Dissertation Proposal, (4) the completion of Dissertation Project activities; and (5) the final defense of the Dissertation. Dissertation activities may not move forward without the close involvement of the Committee; therefore, these activities are expected to be completed in sequence. A student should not expect his or her Committee Chair and Members to accept proposal ideas or activities without modification; therefore, it is in the student's best interest to identify and involve his/her Committee Chair and Members as early as possible in the process of developing the Proposal.

Students may register for Dissertation credit hours after successfully completing their practicum and establishing an approved Dissertation Committee.

### **IV. The Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense**

The Dissertation proposal ("the Proposal") is a formal written document that outlines the topic of the Dissertation, all Dissertation Project activities, and benchmarks and timelines for initiation, implementation, and completion of the Project. It also establishes the criteria that define what will constitute a final written product that will be acceptable to the Committee at the completion of the Dissertation.

The Proposal has six parts. (1) Topic. It must outline the topic clearly and in detail. The topic must be stated as an empirical research question, and must be innovative and significant as defined in section I., above. (2) Literature Review. It must include a literature review which is a scholarly analytical synthesis that demonstrates the student's ability to critically evaluate the relevant literatures on leadership and organizational, community, or policy change as they relate to understanding the issue and identifying alternative courses of action. (3) Methodology. The Proposal must describe the proposed methodology for the Project clearly and explicitly. It should identify and describe appropriate methods to study the issue, which should include qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis, and/or evaluation research methods. The discussion should include a rationale for including the selected methods and strategies over alternative methods that might be appropriate. If primary data collection will be involved, methods of recruitment, data collection, and human subjects protections must be described in detail, and copies of data collection instruments should be included in an Appendix. (4) Product. The Proposal must specify the expectations for the final written product. (5) Significance. The Proposal must describe the implications of the Dissertation for public

health practice, research, and policy. (6) Competencies. The proposal must describe and synthesize the foundational and leadership competencies that will be addressed in the final written product. Dissertation proposals should not exceed 100 pages in length, inclusive of references, appendices, or other supporting material.

Any Doctoral Dissertation Proposal that involves research on human subjects or data obtained from human subjects must be submitted to the UAMS Institutional Review Board (IRB) and, when necessary, to all other IRBs with jurisdiction. The IRB supports the institution in its efforts to promote ethical conduct of research and to comply with federal requirements for educating faculty and students about research misconduct regulations. In accordance with federal and institutional regulations, any undertaking in which a UAMS faculty member, staff member, or student investigates and/or collects data on human subjects for research purposes must be reviewed by the IRB. The IRB has the authority to review, approve, disapprove, or require changes in research activities involving human subjects. For this reason, students and Committees are strongly encouraged to pursue IRB approval of the Proposal as soon as is feasible in the proposal process. Committees and students should work carefully together to identify the best time to apply for IRB approval; IRB approval must NOT be sought until the Project's methods have been approved by the Committee. However, students should be prepared to submit modifications to the IRB- approved protocol should such modifications be necessary based on feedback obtained during the proposal defense.

The Proposal will not be considered to be final, and thus will be subject to revision by the student and/or members of the Committee, until it has been successfully defended in a formal proposal defense meeting. Prior to the proposal defense meeting, students are expected to work collaboratively with their Committee Chair and Committee Members to ensure that the Proposal is satisfactory to all individuals serving on the Committee. This "first tier" approval is designed to ensure that the student has received full input from all individuals serving on his or her Committee, and to ensure that the student has their Committee's support to move forward. Without this "first tier" approval from the Committee, the Committee Chair may refuse to schedule the proposal defense. Additionally, the student will make available a copy of the proposal document to members of the DrPH Faculty Leadership Committee (FLC) for review no less than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled proposal defense. An electronic copy of the proposal document will be submitted by email to the DrPH Program Director and an email will be sent by the student to members of the FLC indicating that a copy of the proposal document is available for their review if requested. It is the responsibility of the student to send the document via email to any member of the FLC who may request it. Members of the DrPH Faculty Leadership Committee will not provide written feedback on the document but may provide verbal feedback during the proposal defense meeting.

The proposal defense will be arranged by the Committee Chair, after the Proposal has received "first tier" approval from all Committee Members. The proposal defense meeting will be a public presentation of the Proposal to the general Faculty in the College of Public Health and other interested parties. The Committee Chair and all Committee Members are expected to attend the proposal defense. With prior approval from the Committee Chair, a Committee

Member may join the proposal defense by conference call or other distance-conferencing technology. Other members of the CPH community may attend as well. The student, with assistance from the DrPH Program Director's office, will advertise the time, date, and location of the proposal defense meeting by posting flyers and by sending an email to all CPH faculty and staff and other interested parties no later than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. At the proposal defense meeting, the student will present the topic, literature review, methodology, IRB review status, and planned final product of their Dissertation to those in attendance. All those in attendance will be encouraged to ask questions and provide the student and Committee with additional input and/or suggestions regarding the Proposal.

Following this question-and-answer session, the student will be asked to wait outside while the members of the Committee consider the proposal and defense. A majority of the Committee Members must approve the Proposal for it to be considered approved. At the conclusion of the proposal defense meeting, the student and Committee will meet and discuss any necessary revisions to the Proposal; the Proposal will be considered to be final after those revisions are completed and accepted by the Committee. This approval must be documented by completion of the **Dissertation Proposal Defense Approval Form**. The form is signed by members of the Dissertation Committee and forwarded to the DrPH Program Director and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for signature. (Because the DrPH is not affiliated with a single department, no signature from a Department Chair is required.) The form is then sent to the Office of University Registrar with copies forwarded to the student, the DrPH Program Director, and the CPH Office of Student and Alumni Affairs.

Students must register for Dissertation credit hours in every semester until the project has been completed and successfully defended. The determination of the number of Dissertation credit hours for which the student should register in a given semester is made by the Committee Chair and should be based on the amount of work that is expected to be attempted by the student and his/her Committee during the semester. Typically, the student will register for 3 credit hours each semester. Registering for fewer than 2 credit hours in any given semester must be approved in advance by the DrPH Program Director.

## **V. The Dissertation Final Product and Public Defense**

The Dissertation final product will take the form of a written document. A final product is expected to be a well-written, cohesive document that is concise, clear, and directed toward the empirical question of interest as well as the public health applications of the findings (including proposed solutions that are based on the findings). The final product may take the form of a traditional research dissertation, a cohesive series of at least 3 manuscripts that are ready for submission to national- or international- level public health journals, a technical report accompanied by a grant proposal that is appropriate for submission to a major funder, a case study report that encompasses all phases from design to analysis and interpretation; or another similar scholarly document.



The final product must (a) identify the topic and major question(s) of the Dissertation; (b) include the literature review for the Dissertation; (c) describe the methodology used to address the question(s) of the Dissertation; (d) summarize the results of the Dissertation and conclusions drawn, i.e., what was discovered as a result of studying the issue using the methodology in the Dissertation, and (e) include a discussion of the project's significance, including its implications for public health practice, research and policy.

Upon completion of Dissertation Project activities and receipt of a draft of the Final Product, the Committee Chair will guide the student to prepare a refined draft for an oral and public defense. The student should anticipate multiple revisions with the Committee Chair during this process and should discuss the time that is required for these revisions with his/her Chair. The Chair must approve the refined draft prior to the student's disseminating the full draft to Committee Members. The Committee Chair and Members must all have an opportunity to review and provide feedback about the draft prior to the public defense. Minimally, the Committee Members must have received a copy of the refined full draft from the student at least six weeks prior to the defense date and have had an opportunity to provide feedback to the student and Committee Chair. Thus, students and Committee Chairs must work closely during this phase of the Dissertation to determine the student's readiness to distribute drafts to the Committee Members. The Committee Chair is responsible for scheduling the public defense date and must assure that all Committee Members have received a minimum of six weeks' review time.

The public defense must be advertised throughout the COPH community, and an open-door policy will apply. The Committee Chair and all Committee Members must attend. With prior approval from the Committee Chair, a Committee Member may join the public defense meeting by conference call or other distance-conferencing technology. Members of the DrPH Faculty Leadership Committee and the DrPH Program Director are strongly encouraged to attend, as are all current DrPH students. The Final Product will be presented and defended by the student during this milestone event. In the public defense, the student will be expected to demonstrate that the Dissertation meets the criteria for a scholarly work as outlined above, with an emphasis on the implementation of the methodology, how the results logically follow from the findings, and the implications of the project for public health practice, research, and policy.

The defense should be scheduled so that a minimum of 30 minutes is reserved for attendees to ask questions of the student regarding the Dissertation and the final product. At the conclusion of the question-and-answer period, the Dissertation Committee members will confer in a private, closed-door session to discuss the defense. The student will remain close by and available to the committee. Two outcomes are possible at this closed-door session: a pass or fail. If the student receives a determination of fail, the Committee may require substantial revisions to the dissertation, followed by a repeated defense, or the Committee may determine that the student has failed with no option for revision. Passing or failing status is determined by a majority vote of the Dissertation Committee. The Chair of the Committee will convey the pass or fail decision to the student immediately after the closed-door session, in a private conversation.

Specific areas of concern include the significance and appropriateness of the issue chosen, the appropriateness and execution of any conceptual model identified, the methodology used, whether the results logically follow from the findings, the completeness and feasibility of the proposed implementation strategy and evaluation plan, when applicable. Evaluation plans can be components of the technical reports or case studies that students can choose for the basis of their dissertation project.

After the dissertation defense, the Committee Chair will rate the demonstration and synthesis of the competencies addressed by the dissertation project using the **DrPH Competency Assessment Form**. This form will be submitted to the DrPH Program Director. Overall, the dissertation committee should be able to address the following questions about the dissertation such as:

Overall Dissertation Evaluation Criteria:

1. Considered as a whole, is the Dissertation, its methods, and findings significant and innovative?
2. Is the literature review thorough and applicable, and has it been synthesized effectively?
3. Are relevant theories cited and explained?

Needs or Problem Statement:

1. Is the need for the project clearly identified?

Data or Policy Analysis:

1. Have appropriate research and data analysis methods been employed? (For example, has the student used appropriate quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods analysis to evaluate competing options?)
2. Are the pros and cons in terms of effect on populations thoroughly analyzed?
3. Are considerations of the ethical implications of the change adequate and appropriate?

Recommendations:

1. Are the recommendations reasonable and based in the research findings?
2. Are the recommendations likely to lead to health improvements?

Competencies:

1. Did the dissertation address the identified competencies?
2. Were the activities relevant to the identified competencies?

The outcome must be documented by completion of the **Dissertation Final Defense Approval Form**. The form is signed by members of the Dissertation Committee and forwarded to the DrPH Program Director and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for signature. (Because the DrPH is not affiliated with a single department, no signature from a Department Chair is required.) The form is then sent to the Office of University Registrar with copies forwarded to the student, the DrPH Program Director, and the CPH Office of Student and Alumni Affairs.

Once the student has passed the public defense, the student will not be considered to have passed the Dissertation in its entirety until the final product has been accepted and passed by the Committee. After the successful public defense, the student must meet with the Dissertation Committee Chair to discuss any minor revisions needed to the final product; the Chair shall not require major revisions at this stage. The student should make these revisions in a timely manner, and at a minimum, all revisions must be complete and accepted by the committee two weeks (10 working days) prior to the deadline for degree conference for that semester. Once any necessary minor revisions have been made and the product is given final approval by the Committee Chair, the student may provide copies of the final product to the Committee Chair and Committee Members. A single copy must be provided to the CPH Office of Student and Alumni Affairs. The copy provided to the Office of Student and Alumni Affairs will be considered a public document and may be made available to faculty and students upon request.

In addition, the final dissertation with all committee signatures and E-filing form must be submitted in PDF form to the UAMS library (Libby Ingram, [IngramLibbyE@uams.edu](mailto:IngramLibbyE@uams.edu)) and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs no later than 10 business days before the degree is to be conferred (see UAMS Academic Calendar for degree dates). The PDF will be uploaded to the ProQuest Dissertation and Thesis on-line database. Uploading the PDF gives ProQuest a non-exclusive license to electronically publish the abstract and dissertation on the ProQuest website.

When the Library's formatting review is complete, Libby Ingram sends an email confirmation to the student and Latrina Prince (DAS). The DAS (Latrina Prince) ensures all required documents have been received from the student and signing faculty: o Complete thesis or dissertation; all "signature" emails received from faculty, or the scanned, signed committee signature page; Library review confirmation email; and completed student Thesis/Dissertation E-filing Form. The DAS files all documents and related emails in the department's student file and routes a formal email stating that the student's thesis/dissertation is officially approved and filed with the department. The DAS attaches copies of "sign-off" emails or the scanned signature page, a copy of the Library "sign-off" and a copy of the e-filing form to the official notification email. The DAS email notification date serves as the official time/date stamp for graduation and degree conferral purposes, and is sent to the following recipients: the student, the Library (Libby Ingram, [IngramLibbyE@uams.edu](mailto:IngramLibbyE@uams.edu)), and the Office of the University Registrar ([registrar@uams.edu](mailto:registrar@uams.edu)). The UAMS library saves the e-thesis to its thesis/dissertation repository and considers this the formal filing of the document complete

Students and their committee members should avoid copyright infringement that may occur when previously published and copyrighted material (e.g., copies of data collection instruments, figures and tables obtained from published documents, etc.) are included in the dissertation or

its appendices.

When a final product has been deemed as acceptable to the Dissertation Committee, the Committee Chair shall file a grade report with the CPH Registrar, indicating a “Pass” on all Dissertation project hours for which the student is registered. *Filing the Dissertation Final Defense Approval Form is not equivalent to filing this final grade report; these two documents are distinct from one another, and both must be filed to indicate completion of both the public defense and written requirements of the Dissertation. Submission of the final document must be submitted to the Office of Student and Alumni Affairs and the UAMS Library in order for the Dissertation to be finalized.*

If the Committee determines in its closed-door session that the student has failed the defense but has the option of substantial revisions, the student must schedule a meeting with the Committee Chair as soon as possible, to determine the nature of the Committee’s concerns and to determine what changes must be made to address those concerns. The student will then be required to make the necessary changes, re-draft the final product, and follow the procedures above for distributing new versions of the final product to the Committee and for preparing a new public defense. A student is permitted only one “fail” vote; should the student fail a second Dissertation Final Defense; the student will be dismissed from the program.

## **VI. Recommended Sequence of Events for the Successful Dissertation**

The successful Dissertation will most likely follow the sequence of events outlined below. Students who proceed to activities that are described later in the sequence prior to completing earlier activities may be at risk for delays in the approval or implementation of their Project. Students who encounter difficulties in completing this sequence of events are strongly encouraged to consult with their Committee Chair, their faculty mentor, and/or the Program Director as early as possible, to seek guidance and support.

1. Students will familiarize themselves with current policies and procedures regarding the DrPH Dissertation and begin brainstorming possible Dissertation ideas as early as possible in their DrPH program.
2. The student will complete the Doctoral Projects Informational Meeting. Students will not be allowed to establish a Practicum/Dissertation Planning Committee or register for Practicum credit hours until this requirement has been completed.
3. During the Fall semester immediately prior to the summer in which the student expects to take the Qualifying Examination, the student will convene a Practicum/Dissertation Planning Committee and work with that Committee to identify ideas and plans for the Practicum and Dissertation.
4. After successfully passing the Qualifying Examination, the student will complete a Practicum. The Practicum may, if approved by the Practicum/Dissertation Planning Committee, serve as foundational activity for the Dissertation.

5. The student will begin to identify potential Dissertation Committee Chairs. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with potential Chairs, share their ideas, and continue brainstorming.
6. The student will invite an appropriate CPH faculty member to serve as Chair of his or her Dissertation Committee, and (if necessary) continue making invitations until a Chair agrees to serve.
7. The Committee Chair will work with the student to identify other Committee members. The student and Committee Chair will extend invitations to Committee members until the Committee is fully constituted. Additional consultants, who serve as non-voting members, may also be invited at this time. The Committee Chair and student will complete a **Doctoral Dissertation Committee Designation Form** and submit it to the DrPH Program Director.
8. The DrPH Program Director will either approve the Committee as proposed by the Chair or make other suggestions. The Director may consult with the Faculty Leadership Committee if needed but will notify the student and Committee Chair immediately if there are concerns about the Committee Membership. The Director will notify the student and Chair of the approval or rejection of the Committee Membership in a timely manner.
9. The student will convene a meeting of the full Committee to discuss the Dissertation and its activities, and to receive suggestions from the Committee about any adjustments or changes that may be desirable.
10. The student will, with guidance from the Committee, prepare a first draft of the Dissertation Proposal according to the guidelines in this document. The student will work closely with the Committee Chair and all Committee Members throughout the development of the proposal so that the Committee is well-informed about the proposal prior to the proposal defense.
11. The student will present a complete draft of the Dissertation proposal to the Committee Chair (or, at the student's and Committee Chair's discretion, to the entire Committee membership) for review. At this point, the student and Committee Chair will begin planning for the "first tier" review of the proposal. The student and Chair will be precise in identifying the version of the proposal that Committee Members should consider for the "first tier" review.
12. The Committee Membership will review the appropriate version of the student's proposal carefully and provide feedback during a "first tier" review meeting. After the Committee has approved the proposal, the Committee Chair will schedule the proposal defense in collaboration with the student.
13. The Committee Membership will review the appropriate version of the student's proposal carefully and provide feedback during a "first tier" review meeting. After the Committee has approved the proposal, the Committee Chair will schedule the proposal defense in

collaboration with the student.

14. The student will prepare for the proposal defense and obtain guidance and support for the defense from his or her Committee Chair and Members.
15. No less than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled defense, the student will send an email to the DrPH Faculty Leadership Committee indicating the availability of the written proposal document and email a copy to those who may request it.
16. The student will complete a public defense of the proposal.
17. At the conclusion of the public defense, the Dissertation Committee Chair and Members will hold a closed-door meeting. Together, these faculty will determine whether the student passed or failed the defense. The Committee Chair will complete and sign the **DrPH Competency Assessment Form**. The Committee will complete and sign a **Dissertation Proposal Defense Approval Form**, and the Chair will convey the decision and any recommendations for modification of the proposal and project to the student.
18. The student will make any final refinements to the proposal, and request approval from the Committee to finalize the proposal and initiate the project.
19. The Committee will consider the refined proposal, and when satisfied with the proposal, provide final approval to the proposal.
20. The student will complete the activities outlined in the proposal, seeking regular support and guidance from the Committee Chair and Members as needed.
21. Upon completion of the activities of the Dissertation, the student will draft the final product, according to the expectations outlined in the proposal.
22. The student will provide the Committee Chair (and, when agreed upon by the student and the Chair, provide the Committee Members) with drafts of various sections of the final product, incorporating feedback received.
23. The student will provide the Committee Chair with a full draft of the final product. The Committee Chair will carefully review the final product, and provide all necessary feedback to the student to refine the final product. This may include involving Committee Members in reviewing at this point.
24. Once the student and Chair agree that the refined final product is ready for dissemination to the Committee, the student will provide the Committee members with the final product. This must occur, at minimum, four weeks before the public defense date.
25. In consultation with the student and the Committee members, the Committee Chair will set the date for the public defense. The student will work with the Office of Academic Affairs to prepare and disseminate the public notice of defense, no less than one month in advance of the date.

26. The student will prepare for the public defense, in collaboration with the Committee Chair and Members. The student may wish to seek an opportunity to rehearse their public defense with their Chair, the full committee, and/or with fellow student.
27. The student will prepare for the public defense, in collaboration with the Committee Chair and Members. The student may wish to seek an opportunity to rehearse their public defense with their Chair, the full committee, and/or with fellow students.
28. The student will present their final product at the public defense, with Committee Chair and Members in attendance at this public meeting.
29. At the conclusion of the public defense, the Dissertation Committee Chair and Members will hold a closed-door meeting. At this point, the Dissertation Committee members will determine whether the student passed or failed the defense. The Committee will complete and sign a **Dissertation Final Defense Approval Form**, and the Chair will convey the decision to the student.
30. Once the student has passed the public defense, the student and Chair should meet to determine any minor revisions needed to the final product. The student should make these changes and obtain final approval from the Chair. Revisions must be completed, final signatures obtained on all necessary forms, and final copies no later than 10 working days before the end of the semester in which the degree is to be conferred.
31. Once the final product is approved by the Chair, the student should provide copies of the final product to the Chair and the Office of Student and Alumni Affairs. In addition, the student should submit a PDF copy to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and UAMS Library for submission to ProQuest. The following policies apply:  
<https://registrar.uams.edu/graduation/>.
32. Once the final product is approved by the Chair and all copies have been submitted, the Chair must file a grade report with the UAMS Registrar, indicating the student has passed all Dissertation hours for which the student is registered.
33. If the student has failed the public defense, the student and Chair should meet to determine the needed revisions to the Final Product. The student should make those changes and work with the Committee to refine the product, to distribute changes to the Committee, and to schedule a new public defense.

*The Faculty Leadership Committee for the DrPH Program in Public Health Leadership at the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health gratefully acknowledges the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health's DrPH Program and its guidelines for the DrPH Dissertation, which formed the basis for the original version of this document.*

Appendix A:

### **Doctoral Dissertation Committee Designation Form**

**Instructions:** DrPH Students should, in collaboration with their Dissertation Committee Chair, complete the form on the following page and obtain the appropriate signatures. Once this Form is complete, copies should be provided as indicated on the form. The student is encouraged to keep a copy on file as well.

Rules governing the establishment of a DrPH Dissertation Committee:

1. The Committee must be composed of at least three (3) and no more than five (5) voting members.
2. At least three (3) of the Committee Members must have doctoral degrees from accredited institutions.
3. A majority of members must have faculty appointments, either primary or secondary, in the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health at the time of their appointment to the Committee.
4. At least one (1) of the Committee Members must have significant public health practice experience.
5. Additional consultants with expertise in the area of the Dissertation may be invited to participate in Committee activities but will serve without vote.
6. One (1) Committee Member will serve as the Committee Chair. This individual must hold a primary faculty appointment at the rank of associate professor or above in the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health and must have an active role in the DrPH Program in Public Health Leadership.
7. The Committee Chair must approve all other Committee Members and additional consultants before they are asked to serve on the Committee. The Chair's signature on the form indicates both his/her willingness to serve as Chair of the Committee and his/her approval of the other Committee members.





## Change in Doctoral Dissertation Committee Designation Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Program:  DrPH     EPI     HPPR     HSSR

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_@uams.edu

Committee			Replacement		
Name	Role on Committee (check one)	Signature/Date	Name	Role on Committee (check one)	Signature/Date
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member			<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member			<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member			<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member			<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member			<input type="checkbox"/> Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Member	

Five (5) or More Committee Members are required

Doctoral Program (co)director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Doctoral Program (co)director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Dean, Graduate School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Please attach original Dissertation Committee Designation Form and any previous Change in Doctoral Dissertation Committee Forms.

- Original:    Office of the University Registrar  
Cc:         Student  
              Doctoral program director(s)  
              COPH Office of Student Affairs  
              Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, COPH  
              Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, Graduate School

# Dissertation Proposal Defense Approval Form



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_@uams.edu

Academic Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester first enrolled in doctoral program (e.g., Fall 2016): \_\_\_\_\_

Program:  DRPH\*  EPI  HPPR  HSSR

*\*DRPH Does Not Require Graduate School Signature*

---

We certify by our signatures below that \_\_\_\_\_ has successfully passed the oral defense of dissertation proposal, as required for completion of his/her doctoral degree program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Co-Chair/Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Doctoral Program (Co) Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Doctoral Program (Co) Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Department Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Dean, Graduate School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Original: Office of the University Registrar  
Cc: Student  
Doctoral Program Director(s)  
COPH Office of Student and Alumni Affairs  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, COPH  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Graduate School

# Dissertation Final Defense Approval Form



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_@uams.edu

Academic Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester first enrolled in doctoral program (e.g., Fall 2016): \_\_\_\_\_

Program:  DRPH\*  EPI  HPPR  HSSR

*\*DRPH Does Not Require Graduate School Signature*

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We certify by our signatures below that \_\_\_\_\_ has successfully passed the oral defense of dissertation, as required for completion of his/her doctoral degree program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Chair Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Co-Chair/Member Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Member Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Member Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation Committee Member Date

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Doctoral Program (Co) Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Doctoral Program (Co) Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Department Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Dean, Graduate School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

- Original: Office of the University Registrar  
Cc: Student  
Doctoral Program Director(s)  
COPH Office of Student and Alumni Affairs  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, COPH  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Graduate School

**College of Public Health**

DrPH Competency Assessment Form  
Dissertation Project

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_@uams.edu

Dissertation Committee Chair(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the level of demonstration of the competencies addressed by the dissertation project:

**Rating Rubric**

Unsatisfactory: Little to no demonstration of the competency in dissertation. Project clearly lacks connection to the identified competency.

Competence: Minimal demonstration of the competency in dissertation. Poor connection to the identified competency.

Satisfactory: Some demonstration of the competency in dissertation. Adequate connection to the identified competency.

Mastery: Clear and consistent demonstration of the competency in dissertation. Clear connection to the identified competency.

Foundational and Leadership Competencies Addressed (List competencies below)	Unsatisfactory	Competence	Satisfactory	Mastery

Please indicate the level of synthesis of the competencies addressed by the dissertation project:

Rating Rubric

Unsatisfactory: Little to no synthesis of competencies in dissertation. Project clearly lacks connection to identified competencies.

Competence: Minimal synthesis of competencies in dissertation. Poor connection to identified competencies.

Satisfactory: Some synthesis of competencies in dissertation. Adequate connection to identified competencies.

Mastery: Clear and consistent synthesis of competencies in dissertation. Clear connection to identified competencies.

	Unsatisfactory	Competence	Satisfactory	Mastery
Synthesis of the Competencies Listed in the Above Table				

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Dissertation (ILE) Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, DrPH Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date