



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER™
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Epidemiology Department Ph.D. Handbook

2016-2017

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Welcome to the Department of Epidemiology! The Student Handbook outlines the requirements, policies, and procedures for the operation of our graduate programs. Please keep in mind that any of these may change. The department will make every effort to communicate changes in requirements, procedures, and policies; however, the student is advised to be on the alert for such notices.

Contact Information:

For all inquiries, please contact Sharon Barnett, Department Office Associate II at:

E-mail: sharon.barnett@unmc.edu
Phone: 402-559-248
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Information about the Department of Epidemiology

Mission and Goals

Epidemiology is the study of the distribution, causes, and prevention of disease and injury in human populations—it is often called the basic science of public health. Epidemiologists use an array of quantitative tools to measure the occurrence of illness, injury and risk factors, estimate the effect of exposures on disease risk, and evaluate interventions. The goal of the Department of Epidemiology is to promote research and training in epidemiology, disease control, and evaluation of health interventions.

The primary goal of the doctoral program in the Department of Epidemiology is to prepare graduates for professional careers as scientists, teachers, and practitioners of epidemiological methods. Career opportunities in epidemiology exist in academic institutions, local, state, and federal health agencies, and in commercial enterprises.

Training: Graduate program in epidemiology prepare practitioners and researchers for positions in academia, government agencies, and the private sector. Our department is the principal provider of epidemiology training for the public health workforce in Nebraska and the region. The focus of all of our graduate programs in epidemiology is to achieve epidemiological, preventive, and health care evaluation skills for application in clinical and community-based settings and to develop qualified, independent research scientists in epidemiology. Therefore, both the curriculum and student evaluation are designed to prepare students mastery of competencies in epidemiology and how to apply competencies in real life situations.

Research: Faculty and students in the UNMC Department of Epidemiology conduct research on a broad range of health outcomes and exposures. Examples of areas that we emphasize include occupational and environmental hazards, cancer, infectious diseases, perinatal conditions, injuries, mental health, substance abuse, global health, and epidemiological methods.

Department Organization

The Department of Epidemiology is one of five departments in the College of Public Health: (1) Biostatistics, (2) Environmental, Agricultural & Occupational Health, (3) Epidemiology, (4) Health Promotion, Social & Behavioral Health, and (5) Health Services Research & Administration.

The Head of the Department of Epidemiology is the department chair, who is responsible for administration, educational, research, and professional service functions of the department. The vice-chair of the department assists the chair with administrative tasks, and the Graduate Program Director is responsible for the department academic programs.

The department administrative office personnel support the day-to-day activities of the department, assist in coordinating the activities of faculty members, and a variety of student affairs activities. Office and e-mail addresses for primary faculty and support staff can be found in Appendix A.

Student Organizations

The College of Public Health Student Association

The purpose of the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) College of Public Health (CoPH) Student Association, identified with the acronym, “CPHSA,” is to maintain a body representatives of CoPH students to college leadership and external entities to advance the academic and social needs of CoPH students and to provide and sustain vehicles for communication between and among students, faculty, administration, alumni, and the community at-large. The CPHSA also works to: create and promote opportunities for community involvement; disseminate educational and professional development resources; support a positive educational experience; and stimulate interest in and advance the profession of public health. For more information e-mail cophstudent@unmc.edu or contact one of the following Executive Board members:

President	: Abigail Irlbeck
Vice President	: Emma Schultz
Secretary	: Alisha Aggarwal
Treasurer	: Jessica Bednat Chakraborty

The Graduate Student Association

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the association of the Graduate College and is the primary representative, administrative, and service organization for graduate students at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) advocates for graduate student interests across the entire UNMC campus.

For more information, contact the current GSA president, Kristin Wipfler, at: kristin.wipfler@unmc.edu

Resources for Students

Availability of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who are in need of accommodations should contact the Student Disability Services office (see below). To be eligible for accommodations, the student is responsible for registering with this office and providing documentation of disability. The student must register and provide documentation well in advance of the semester for which the accommodation is needed (at least six weeks is suggested). Once the request has been approved, an individualized accommodation plan will be formulated, and an official “Letter of Disability Accommodation” will be issued to the student. Instructors will not provide classroom accommodations without the student having documentation of this prior approval.

For additional information, please contact (next page):

Kelly Swoboda, LMHP
Services for Students with Disabilities
Counseling & Student Development Center
Bennett Hall 6001
e-mail: kelly.swoboda@unmc.edu
(402) 559-5962

Computer Labs

The College of Public Health (CoPH) computer lab is on the second floor of our building, the Maurer Center for Public Health (MCPH), and is available for use at any time. Students are assigned computer accounts at orientation, or they can contact the Office of Information Technology (IT) in the lower level of the CoPH building.

Desk Space

Limited space is available in the CoPH building for Ph.D. graduate students and graduate students working as graduate teaching or graduate research assistants. Priority is given to students who are in the Ph.D. program conducting research and to graduate research assistants or teaching assistants. Space allocations are reviewed each semester and are renewed in August. However, designated space can be reassigned at any time as needed and as space becomes available.

Mailboxes

Every student has a mailbox in the department common area. Mailboxes are assigned by last name. The administrative assistant of the department maintains this mailbox. Please check your mailbox frequently.

E-mail

Every student should apply for a university e-mail account upon enrollment. The student will then be connected to the College of Public Health network individually and as part of the Epidemiology Student Group e-mail list. Students receive course information, seminar announcements, job announcements, and program information via UNMC e-mail accounts only.

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondence sent to and from their standard UNMC e-mail address. Students should check this account frequently.

Forms

See Appendix B for commonly used forms.

Job and Internship Announcements

Announcements of job and internship opportunities are communicated to students via e-mail by the Office of Career Services Office. For more information about any of these opportunities, or to schedule an appointment, please contact Career Services at 402-552-7226.

For more information about student resources, check the following web link: www.unmc.edu/publichealth/currentstudents/index.html.

Financing Your Education

Cost of Tuition

Tuition and fee tables are posted on the UNMC Registrar's website at <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/tuition/index.html>.

To Apply for Financial Aid

To apply for financial aid, any student may submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. The Office of Student Financial Aid provides information on how to access and submit this form as well as additional financial aid information for graduate students. Contact:

Office of Student Financial Aid

e-mail: finaid@unmc.edu

Room 2016, Student Life Center; Telephone: 402-559-4199

Employment

Once admitted as a graduate student in the Department of Epidemiology, students are responsible for finding their own employment or other means of funding. Although students may apply for any job they wish, either on or off campus, if they wish an on campus job, graduate students typically apply for one of four types of jobs at UNMC: (1) hourly employment; (2) staff employment; (3) graduate research assistantships (GRAs); or (4) graduate teaching assistantship (TA). Students are encouraged to apply for any posted openings for which they are qualified.

Important Academic Policies for Students

All Epidemiology students are bound by the policies and regulations below, as well as by the more complete listings found in the [CoPH Student Handbook](#), the [UNMC Student Handbook](#), and the [UNMC Graduate Studies Bulletin](#) and all published revisions. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with, and abide by, all applicable policies and regulations.

Academic Conduct Standards and Procedures

Academic Integrity: The University of Nebraska Medical Center has established a policy on academic integrity and professional conduct. This policy may be found in the [UNMC Student Handbook](#). All graduate students are expected to adhere scrupulously to this policy. Cheating, academic misconduct, fabrication, and plagiarism are viewed as serious matters and will lead to disciplinary action as described in the UNMC Student Handbook under Procedural Rules Relating to Student Discipline. Additional material related to Responsible Conduct in Research can be found in the UNMC Student Handbook.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the coordinator of each course for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with

documented disabilities; however, faculty are not required to provide accommodation without prior approval. To be eligible to receive reasonable accommodation, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office. Once the request has been approved, an individualized accommodation plan will be formulated and an official “Letter of Disability Accommodation” will be issued to the student. To register, contact Kelly Swoboda, LMPH at 402-559-5962 or kelly.swoboda@unmc.edu.

Nondiscrimination: The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive work and learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. UNMC is dedicated to creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected and included. UNMC does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, Veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment. UNMC complies with all local, state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination, including Title IX, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. The following persons have been designated to handle student inquiries concerning:

Discrimination or Disability: Cheryl Bagley Thompson, Ph.D., RN, Assistant Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs/Student Affairs, Student Life Center – Office #2036, Telephone: 402-559-2792; e-mail: cbthompson@unmc.edu.

Title IX: Carmen Sirizzotti, MBA, Title IX Coordinator, Administrative Building (ADM), Office# 2010, Telephone: 402-559-2717; e-mail: csirizzotti@unmc.edu.

Cheating: A general definition of cheating is the use or attempted use of unauthorized materials or information for an academic exercise. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

Using unauthorized materials such as books, notes, calculators or other aids during an examination or other academic exercises;

- Receiving unauthorized assistance from another person during an examination or exercise such as copying answers, receiving answer signals, conversation or having another person take an examination for you;
- Providing assistance to another person during an examination or exercise, such as allowing your answers to be copied, signaling answers or taking an examination for someone else;
- Obtaining answers and/or other information without authorization from someone who has previously taken an examination; including all or a portion of previous work for another assignment without authorization.

Academic misconduct: Academic misconduct is defined as the falsification of official documents and/or obtaining records, examinations or documents without authorization. Several examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorized acquisition of all or part of an un-administered test;
- Selling or otherwise distributing all or part of an un-administered test;

- Changing an answer or grade on an examination without authorization;
- Falsification of information on an official university document such as a grade report, transcript, an instructor's grade book or evaluation file or being an accessory to an act of such falsification;
- Forging the signature of an authorizing official on documents such as letters of permission, petitions, drop/add forms, transcripts, and/or other official documents;
- Unauthorized entry into a building, office, file or computer database to view, alter or acquire documents.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, *i.e.*, an appropriate attribution or citation. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- A graduate student describing a procedure, in the methods section of their thesis, as if he/she used this method in doing the research for their thesis; whereas, in reality, the procedure was developed by a fellow graduate student in the laboratory of their major professor; however, neither the student who developed this procedure nor the major professor was given credit in the student's thesis. This implies that the author of these had himself developed the procedure. Another example would be:
- In the background section of a thesis, a graduate student quotes verbatim the results of a previous investigator's work but fails to credit the individual through a proper citation. The work is recent and thus cannot be considered common knowledge.

Plagiarism Tutorial: All students are expected to review the Plagiarism policy on the UNMC Student Handbook (page 71) that can be accessed from the link:
<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/documents/Handbook.pdf>.

Concerns about Faculty Actions

Students who have a concern about a faculty action should first address the issue with the instructor, then with the academic advisor, and then with the department chair. Students may also contact the Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs in the College of Public Health. If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved at the departmental and/or college level, or informally by the University Ombudsman's office, students may file a formal complaint to the Office of the University Ombudsperson. For further information, contact:

David S. Carver, Ph.D.
 Ombudsperson for Students
 Bennett Hall, Room 6001, Telephone: 402-559-2491
 (Call for a confidential appointment)

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), 20 U.S.C. §1681 *et seq.*, is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities. All universities receiving any Federal funds must comply with Title IX. Under Title IX, discrimination on the basis of sex can include sexual harassment or sexual violence,

such as rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion. At UNMC Title IX provides protections to students, post docs, residents, fellows, and others participating in academic programs. To report an incidence of sexual harassment or sexual violence, contact Carmen Sirizzotti, MBA, Division Director, Strategic Staffing, Compensation, Records, HRIT, 402-559-2710, csirizzotti@unmc.edu, Title IX Coordinator. Students may also address complaints to Cheryl Bagley Thompson, Ph.D., RN, Assistant Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs/Student Affairs, 402-559 2792, cbthompson@unmc.edu.

Academic Standards

Standards of Student Academic Performance: Students enrolled in degree programs at the University of Nebraska Medical Center are expected to make satisfactory academic progress toward the completion of their degree requirements. Failure to make adequate academic progress may have financial aid implications. See the UNMC student policy for Satisfactory Academic Performance at <http://www.unmc.edu/media/studentservices/docs/satisfactory-academic-progress011713.pdf> for further information. The Department of Epidemiology adheres to UNMC academic standards for all programs. Graduate level students are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 and complete 100% of the cumulative yearly hours attempted and be enrolled in a minimum of four (4) credit hours per term.

Students on Probation

A student on probation is not permitted to take the comprehensive or final exam, nor are they allowed to receive any graduate degree or certificate until they are off probation.

The annual admission application deadline for the Ph.D. program is February 1st for all applicants

Applicants who wish to be admitted as early as possible (typically in the first Fall Semester after they have submitted their completed application materials) are advised to begin early to collect the required documentation and inquire to verify that the deadline continues to be February 1st for all applicants.

Admission

Application for admission must be made online through the UNMC Graduate School Admissions Office. Applications for admission must include:

- Fully-completed application form
- The \$60 (USD), non-refundable application fee
- Three letters of recommendation
- A narrative describing the applicant's career goals
- A felony disclosure statement, and
- Official transcripts of each institution previously attended

Official transcripts of all college level work completed outside of the United States (U.S.) must be sent to a credential evaluation service for evaluation. The transcript evaluation must be a course-by-course evaluation that identifies and describes each diploma or certificate with periods

of education and equivalency of each document. Preferred evaluation services include: Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. (ECE) or World Education Services (WES).

For university wide admission requirements, all prospective students should visit the UNMC Graduate School admissions page at: <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/admissions/requirements.html>.

To obtain an application, use the link: <https://unmc.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>.

Admission-related information can be found in the graduate studies bulletin at: <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/Graduate-Studies-Bulletin.pdf>.

The specific admission requirements for Ph.D. epidemiology can be found on page 106 at <https://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/currentstudents/College%20of%20Public%20Health%2016-17-v2.pdf>

Registration

How to register for Classes

In order to register for classes, students must first contact their academic advisor to discuss their goals and plan of study and come to an agreement on which courses the students need for the coming semester. Upon reaching mutual agreement the student's advisor authorizes the student to register. All students should utilize MyRecords <<http://myrecords.nebraska.edu>> to register for classes. Please see the graduate studies MyRecords page for instructions on registration procedures. Web link: <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/registration.html>.

First-year students will not be authorized to register until they have submitted a Plan of Study. New students must submit valid health forms to the Student Health Service before being allowed to register.

New and returning students are advised to check the Office of Graduate Studies Ph.D. Degree Requirements online site: <http://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/index.html>.

Instructions for Seguidor™ can be found at: <https://net.unmc.edu/seguidor/index.php>.

Changing Registration

Changes in registration are initiated by and may be changed online by the student without penalty until midnight of the established deadline day set by the graduate school. The UNMC graduate school hand book lists these dates.

Failure to drop classes by the established deadline will result in successively increased fees and an increased percentage of the tuition fee assessment; therefore, it is important to abide by the information and deadline dates found at: <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/registration.html>.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Epidemiology

The 48-credit Ph.D. in Epidemiology degree program is intended for students who wish to pursue a career in research and teaching. The program is designed for students with a background in epidemiology and a strong interest in biology and public health. The program emphasizes epidemiological theory and methods so that students are well-grounded in quantitative and analytical techniques as well as design and conduct of epidemiological studies.

Degree Objectives

The Ph.D. in Epidemiology is offered through the Department of Epidemiology, College of Public Health. The Ph.D. in Epidemiology is a research-oriented program whose objective is to train outstanding scholars, researchers, and leaders. Students are provided with a broad foundation of key concepts in epidemiology and focused research training in a specific substantive area. The program prepares graduates for positions in government agencies, education, and the private sector in Nebraska, as well as nationally and internationally.

The program of study consists of at least 48 credits beyond the Master's degree, including a common core of methods courses, elective courses oriented toward the student's area of research specialization, and an original dissertation, part of which must be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. The Ph.D. program is intended for students with a prior Master's degree in epidemiology or a closely related field.

The primary goal of the doctoral program in the Department of Epidemiology is to prepare graduates for professional careers as scientists, teachers, and practitioners of epidemiological methods. Career opportunities in epidemiology exist in academic institutions, local, state, and federal health agencies, and in commercial enterprises.

Upon satisfactory completion of the Ph.D. in Epidemiology graduates will be able to:

- Recognize public health problems and the epidemiologic role in addressing them
- Develop comprehensive knowledge of epidemiologic concepts
- Critically evaluate scientific literature using epidemiologic principles and methods
- Generate and evaluate hypotheses for epidemiologic research
- Identify and discuss advantages and limitations of epidemiologic study designs, including practical aspects of their use and trade-offs in particular studies
- Independently design and implement epidemiologic investigations to answer specific research questions
- Recognize potential sources of bias in estimating population parameters, and implement strategies to control biases and reduce random error
- Identify appropriate data sources to answer specific research questions
- Develop and manage data collection procedures for new and existing data sources
- Critically evaluate reports of epidemiologic studies
- Select and apply appropriate statistical approaches to analyze epidemiologic data
- Use the results of epidemiologic data analyses to make causal inferences

- Understand and apply principles for ethical study conduct and treatment of research participants
- Know and apply principles of publication ethics related to conflict of interest, authorship, and falsification of data
- Bring epidemiologic perspectives to the development and analysis of public health policies
- Communicate epidemiologic concepts and findings orally and in writing in accordance with professional standards to professional audiences, policy makers, and the general public
- Demonstrate knowledge, communication skills, and respect for students necessary to effectively teach epidemiology
- Synthesize and communicate epidemiologic concepts, information from the scientific literature and original ideas to develop a competitive grant proposal

Ph.D. in Epidemiology Requirements

Students enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Epidemiology are required to complete a minimum of 48 credit hours in coursework (36 credits) and dissertation studies (12 credits) to graduate. The student may request a transfer of up to 12 credits of epidemiology and biostatistics courses from his/her degree from an accredited graduate program. The transfer request will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee of the Department after the student is enrolled in the Ph.D. program at University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). The committee will do a case-by-case review of the credits the student is requesting to transfer and will make a recommendation for approving or rejecting the request. The student who received an approval for credit transfer will need to take additional courses as recommended by his/her supervisory committee to satisfy the requirement of a minimum of 48-credit hours of doctoral study from UNMC. In addition to the coursework, the student is required to pass both qualifying and comprehensive examinations of the department. A detailed description of these exams is presented in a following section.

Upon enrollment into the program, in consultation with the Academic Advisor, the student will develop a draft program of study, using the form found at:

<https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/phdprogramofstudies.pdf>.

In addition to the planned coursework, the student may register for EPI 996 “Directed Reading & Research” credits in order to prepare for conducting their dissertation research. The required courses are classified into two types -a) courses required before the student can become eligible for the qualifying exam and b) additional courses required to improve the student’s education and to learn in his/her area of focus in epidemiology. Although courses can be taken in any order, the student is advised to complete the courses required for the qualifying examination first (mainly during the first 1-2 years after admission to the program).

The student is well-advised to begin preparation for the dissertation work early in their doctoral education and should register for EPI 996 Directed Reading & Research and other relevant research work as soon as it is approved by his/her academic advisor.

In order for the student to become eligible for the comprehensive exam the student needs to complete the majority of the courses required by the department and additional courses recommended by their supervisory committee. The majority of coursework is defined as all but one or two courses. The student may take the comprehensive exam during the semester while he/she is completing the last one or two courses. After passing the comprehensive exam, the student is a “candidate.” Once they become a candidate, the student may register for, and begin accruing, EPI 999 “Epidemiology Dissertation Research” credits. The student is well-advised to begin preparation for the dissertation work early in their doctoral education and should register for EPI 996 Directed Reading & Research and other relevant research work as soon as it is approved by his/her academic advisor.

In addition to the requirements specified by the Department of Epidemiology, the student must satisfy other requirements specified by the College of Public Health (CoPH) and UNMC Graduate Studies Program. These requirements are described in the COPH Student Handbook, UNMC Student Handbook and Graduate Studies Bulletin (UNMC Graduate Studies Bulletin).

Program of Study

Total Hours required = 48 hours, minimum (36 hours coursework plus 12 hours dissertation)

Core Courses <Total 21 credits>

Epidemiology Methods and Pathophysiology (6 credits)

- EPI 905 Critical Evaluation of Epidemiological Research (3 credits)
- EPI 932 Epidemiology and Pathophysiology of Diseases (3 credits)

Chronic Disease (3 credits)

- EPI 812 Chronic Disease Epidemiology (3 credits)
 - **OR** EPI 846 Mental Health Epidemiology (3 credits)
 - **OR** EPI 801 Cancer Epidemiology (2 credits) **AND** EPI 802 Cancer Epidemiology in Special Populations (1 credit)

Infectious Disease (3 credits)

- EPI 825 Infectious Diseases Epidemiology (3 credits) [S] (Prerequisite: EPI 820)
 - **OR** EPI 936 Epidemiology of Cancer and Infectious Diseases (3 credits)]

Biostatistics (9 credits)

- BIOS 806 Biostatistics I (3 credits)
- BIOS 818 Biostatistical Methods II (3 credits)
 - **OR** BIOS 808 Biostatistics II (3 credits)
- BIOS 810 Introduction to SAS Programming

Additional Required Courses <Total 15 credits>

Epidemiology Methods (9 credits)

- EPI 821 Applied Epidemiology (3 credits)
- EPI 945 Epidemiologic Research Methods (4 credits)
- EPI 970 Epidemiology Doctoral Seminar (1 credit)] (Take this course 2 semesters = 2 credits total)

Public Health Core (3 credits)

- HPRO 830 Foundations of Public Health (3 credits)

Electives (at least 3 credits)

Other courses not listed here may be taken with prior approval of Academic Advisor.

- EPI 803 Topics in Cancer Prevention I (1 credit)
- EPI 804 Topics in Cancer Prevention II (1 credit)
- EPI 835 Health Information and Surveillance (3 credits)
- EPI 840 Epidemiological Measures and Research in Maternal Child Health (2 credits)
- EPI 910 Research Grant Proposal Development (2 credits)
- EPI 941 Epidemiologic Methods in Applied Clinical Genetics I (1 credit)
- EPI 942 Epidemiologic Methods in Applied Clinical Genetics II (1 credit)

EPI 999 Doctoral Dissertation – 12-15 hours of EPI 999 are required of all Ph.D. students.

Independent Development Plan (IDP)

Within 9 months after matriculation (12 months for part-time students), the student and his/her Academic Advisor must prepare and submit to the Graduate Studies Office a draft *Program of Studies* that includes designation of all required courses, options for electives (which may be identified as Yet to Be Determined (TBD)), and the general area of research for the dissertation (if applicable). Upon appointment of the Supervisory Committee,* the student should confer with that group and his/her Supervisor regarding the draft Program of Studies. [*Note: For information about the Supervisory Committee, see on page 23, titled: **Supervisory Committee and Dissertation Guidelines.**]

After making any necessary revisions to the document, the Committee-approved Program of Studies is to be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office within 13 months after matriculation (19 months for part-time students). The Program of Studies is a “living” document that is expected to change as the student progresses; however, any changes in the program or the dissertation topic must be approved by the Supervisory Committee and the action reported to the UNMC Graduate Studies Office. As a supplement to the academic and career guidance provided by his/her Advisor and Supervisory Committee, each Ph.D. student must complete an Independent Development Plan (IDP) within one year after matriculation. The student should consult with the Graduate Program Director to identify the specific IDP that must be utilized. Documentation that the student has completed an IDP (*e.g.*, Certificate of Completion, if using myIDP) must be submitted via Seguidor[™].

Table 1. Courses offered by the Department of Epidemiology

Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours	Semester Offered
EPI 801	Cancer Epidemiology	2	Spring
EPI 802	Cancer Epidemiology in Special Populations	1	Spring
EPI 803	Topics in Cancer Prevention I	1	Fall
EPI 804	Topics in Cancer Prevention II	1	Fall
EPI 812	Chronic Disease Epidemiology	3	Fall
EPI 820	Epidemiology in Public Health	3	Fall
EPI 820	Epidemiology in Public Health – Online	3	Spring
EPI 820	Epidemiology in Public Health – Online	3	Fall
EPI 821	Applied Epidemiology	3	Fall
EPI 825	Infectious Diseases Epidemiology	3	Spring
EPI 840	Epidemiological Measures and Research in Maternal Child Health	2	Spring
EPI 846	Mental Health Epidemiology	3	Fall
EPI 905	Critical Evaluation of Epidemiological Research	3	Spring
EPI 910	Research Grant Proposal Development	2	Spring
EPI 932	Epidemiology and Pathophysiology of Diseases	3	Fall
EPI 936	Infectious Diseases and Cancer	3	Spring
EPI 941	Epidemiologic Methods in Applied Clinical Genetics I	1	Summer
EPI 942	Epidemiologic Methods in Applied Clinical Genetics II	1	Summer
EPI 945	Epidemiologic Research Methods	4	Spring
EPI 970	Epidemiology Doctoral Seminar	1	Fall / Spring
EPI 996	Directed Reading and Research	*	Fall / Spring / Summer
EPI 998	Special Topics	*	Fall / Spring / Summer
EPI 999	Doctoral Dissertation	*	Fall / Spring / Summer

**Determined by agreement between the student and instructor*

Course Descriptions

Please refer to the [COPH Student Handbook](#).

Ph.D. Qualifying Examination

The qualifying exam is designed to test the student's ability to integrate, synthesize, and apply major epidemiologic concepts. A student is eligible to take the qualifying exam after completing at least one year (one fall semester and one spring semester) in the Epidemiology Program at the UNMC and completing the basic epidemiology and biostatistics courses recommended by the Epidemiology Department Graduate Program Committee. The qualifying exam is given once a year in May. The exam is given in two parts: Part 1 (in class) and Part 2 (take-home). Part 1 consists of 3 questions from methodological courses. Students are required to answer all three questions in Part 1. Part 1 is an in-class test that takes approximately 7 hours to answer. Part 2 consists of 5 questions from which each student can choose 3 questions to answer. Part 2

questions cover different epidemiology topics including chronic diseases, infectious diseases, maternal child health, and global health. Part 2 questions will be distributed immediately after Part 1 has been completed. Students will be given 7 days to complete.

The Epidemiology Department will assign two faculty members to write questions and grade each question ('exam writers'). Exam questions will be reviewed and approved by Epidemiology Department faculty before they are finalized to ensure absence of any ambiguity or misunderstanding or language. Two exam writers who wrote the question will independently grade the student answer. Each question will be graded on a 0-100 scale and weights are evenly distributed across the questions for both Parts 1 and 2. Based on the feedback from the faculty graders, the Department will collectively assign a final grade for each question for each student and will make a recommendation of pass, conditional pass, or fail (Table 2). A conditional pass will require students to satisfy a condition in the area in which they received a score of less than 60%. Examples of conditions include taking courses for credit, completing exercises in addition to the course for credit, tutorials, or taking another exam question. These conditions must be satisfied before the next qualifying exam.

Table 2. Possible outcomes for the overall exam grade

Outcome	Criteria and Consequences
Pass	An overall mean score (Part I and Part II combined) of 70% or more <u>and</u> No score on any question that is less than 60%
Conditional pass	An overall mean score (Part I and Part II combined) of at least 60% but less than 70% <u>or</u> Up two (i.e. 1 or 2) questions with scores less than 60%
Fail	A mean score on all questions that is less than 60% <u>or</u> Three or more questions with scores less than 60%

Students may appeal their exam grades or the conditions set for completing a conditional pass after meeting with the graders of the exams they failed and reviewing their answers. Those wishing to do so should submit a formal written request to the Examination Committee Chair within two weeks of receiving the results of the Competency Examination. The request should explain the basis for the appeal. If not resolved, the appeal should be presented to the Department Chair. If not resolved, the appeal will be presented to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Students can take the qualifying exam a total of two times. If the student fails after 2 times, the student will not be allowed to continue in the program.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination will assess the student's readiness to undertake the dissertation research. The student who completed the majority of didactic coursework recommended by his/her supervisory committee is eligible to take this examination.

Comprehensive Examining Committee:

The student's Supervisory Committee chair and members comprise the comprehensive examination committee.

Content of the Take-Home Examination:

The examination consists of two components — a take-home examination and an oral defense. Based on the dissertation proposal draft the student submitted, the supervisory committee will develop 3-5 take-home test questions related to the dissertation research. The student will be given 7 days to complete the take-home portion. After reviewing the take-home test answers, the supervisory committee will prepare 3-5 additional questions they will ask during the oral defense. The oral defense will be held within 10 days after the student submits the written answers. Objectives of these questions are to clarify the take-home test answers and to assess concepts and knowledge covered in the dissertation research. The oral defense consists of a student presentation of his/her dissertation proposal and a question and answer session.

Final Grade:

After the completion of the oral defense, the supervisory committee will assign pass, conditional pass, or failure. The assignments for the conditional pass need to be satisfactorily completed within 3 months of the oral defense.

Re-examination:

If a student fails the comprehensive examination, they will be given one more opportunity to take the examination; however, it must be taken within 6 months of the first examination.

Continuous Registration after Completion of the Comprehensive Examination:

A student is required to register each fall and spring semester after passing the Ph.D. comprehensive examination until the degree is awarded. If a student has no courses to take, the student may fulfill this requirement by registering for one credit hour of EPI 999 Doctoral Dissertation per semester.

Ph.D. Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation must be an original and significant piece of epidemiological research that makes a contribution to the field. Dissertation research will be carried out under the guidance of a research advisor who chairs a supervisory committee of at least 4 members of the graduate faculty. The supervisory committee will be assembled by the advisor, reviewed by the Epidemiology Department Graduate Program Committee, and approved by the Epidemiology Department Chair. For the preparation of the dissertation proposal, the student may register for EPI 996 Directed Reading and Research. After the student has passed the qualifying examination, completed the majority of the required coursework and additional coursework recommended by their supervisory committee, the student becomes eligible to take the comprehensive exam. As mentioned in the above section, the student will submit the written dissertation proposal to the supervisory committee as part of the comprehensive examination. Also, the student shall give an oral defense of the dissertation proposal that is acceptable to the supervisory committee.

Upon passing the comprehensive exam, the student is awarded candidacy status. The student will register for 12-15 credit hours of EPI 999 Epidemiology Dissertation Research while carrying out the dissertation research activities. Depending on the progress of the dissertation research, the student may take more than 15 credit hours, but 12 credits are the minimum number of hours required to satisfy the graduation requirement. Before the oral defense of the dissertation, the student shall submit to and have obtained approval of their written dissertation from their supervisory committee. This document consists of three publishable papers preceded by a comprehensive literature review chapter and followed by an integrative concluding chapter. The student must have prepared or submitted the three papers to peer-reviewed journals before the oral defense. Following review of the dissertation draft by the supervisory committee, the dissertation must be presented orally and successfully defended before the supervisory committee. The dissertation is complete when the supervisory committee has approved both the written dissertation and the oral defense and after the student makes the final corrections/editing requested by the committee (if any are requested).

Dissertation Format:

Students are advised to refer to the Graduate School Dissertation Manual for formatting templates and further specific information on Graduate School regulations and helpful resources for preparation of doctoral dissertations. These may be found in the doctoral dissertation guidelines section at <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/Dissertation-Graduation-Instructions-PhD-Candidates.pdf>

Dissertation Defense:

The work for the degree culminates in a final dissertation defense, which is administered by the Graduate Program of the Department of Epidemiology. This defense shall include:

1. A critical inquiry into the purposes, methods, and results of the investigation — not a mere recapitulation of the procedures followed; and
2. Intensive questioning on areas of knowledge constituting the immediate context of the investigation.

Submission Timeline:

The following timeline must be adhered to for successful completion of the doctoral degree in Epidemiology.

Before February 10th – for May graduation; June 10th – for August graduation; or October 10th – for December graduation students shall submit a degree application via MyRecords.

- Recommended: Two-to-three months in advance of the approximate date of the Final Oral Examination, the student should consult with his/her Supervisor and Supervisory Committee and establish the tentative (unofficial) date and time for the examination. It is also advisable at this point to reserve the rooms in which the public and closed-door components of the examination will be held. Note that the Final Oral Exam must occur at least 2 weeks before commencement (graduation).

- Recommended: Approximately 6 weeks before the tentative date of the Final Oral Exam, the dissertation should be presented to the Supervisor so that the student can receive feedback and revise the document, if necessary, before proceeding to the following steps.
- At least 4 weeks before the Final Oral Examination (at least 6 weeks before commencement), the dissertation must be presented to members of the Supervisory Committee. The student is responsible for ensuring that the dissertation is properly formatted (for more <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/Dissertation-Graduation-Instructions-PhD-Candidates.pdf>) and has been thoroughly checked for errors in terminology, grammar and spelling before presenting the document to the Supervisory Committee. It is also recommended at this time to request permission to include published materials in the dissertation. During the ensuing period of at least 2 weeks, the members of the Supervisory Committee shall review the dissertation to determine if it is of sufficient merit (based on scientific criteria established) and in a fit condition (based on formatting and writing quality) to warrant holding the Final Oral Exam.
- At least 2 weeks before the Final Oral Exam: With approval from the Supervisor and Supervisory Committee, and if no serious objections have been raised, the student must (via Seguidor™) establish the Examining Committee and officially schedule the Final Oral Exam. The Supervisory Committee must agree to the date and time before this information is entered into Seguidor™. The examination location must also be established at this time. Advance planning is necessary, because Seguidor™ will not allow examination scheduling within 2 weeks of the desired examination date. The examination may be scheduled more than 2 weeks in advance, but only if the Supervisory Committee has had at least 2 weeks to make a judgment regarding condition of the dissertation (see above).
 - Although all members of the Supervisory Committee should serve on the Examining Committee, only members of the UNMC and Nebraska Medicine Graduate Faculty can serve as Graders (in Seguidor™).
 - At least three Graduate Faculty members of the Supervisory Committee must be present for the Final Oral Examination, otherwise the examination must be rescheduled.
- At least 2 weeks before commencement the student shall take the Final Oral Examination. It is recommended that students complete the Report on Doctoral Degree (see final page of the Ph.D. Dissertation and Graduation Instructions) before the examination and have their Supervisory Committee sign the form immediately following the examination and before leaving the examination room.
- No more than 7 days after the Final Oral Examination the Results of the Final Oral Examination must be reported to the Graduate Studies Office (via Seguidor™). It is recommended that the Examining Committee complete this task immediately following the examination and before leaving the examination room.
- At least 7 days before commencement: All required graduation documentation (see PROCEDURES AFTER THE FINAL ORAL EXAM) must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office, and the dissertation must be submitted electronically to the McGoogan

Library for publication via the DigitalCommons@UNMC. For more information review: <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/Dissertation-Graduation-Instructions-PhD-Candidates.pdf>.

Formatting Guidelines:

In general, all instructions given in the Dissertation Manual published by the University of Nebraska Medical Center Graduate School are to be followed when preparing the dissertation. The web link: <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/Dissertation-Graduation-Instructions-PhD-Candidates.pdf>.

To satisfy the format-check procedure of the Graduate School, the dissertation must appear in all ways as a typical dissertation. For example:

- A chapter that contains a manuscript must be formatted as if it were a chapter in a typical thesis or dissertation.
- The chapters must each contain a title and be numbered consecutively.
- The format of subheadings must be consistent from chapter to chapter.
- The same referencing style must be used throughout the dissertation regardless of whether the articles are submitted to different journals with different referencing styles.
- There can be only one abstract, at the beginning of the dissertation, and one bibliography, at the end of the dissertation. However, each chapter containing a manuscript could include an initial subheading titled, “Summary of Findings” (or equivalent terminology) that would, in essence, be the abstract included with that article.

Graduation

Applications for graduation must be submitted not later than February 10th for May graduation, by June 10th for August graduation, and by October 10th for December graduation. Find more details about preparing for graduation are at <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/index.html>.

Commencement Ceremony

The UNMC Graduate School and the College of Public Health each hold two commencement ceremonies per calendar year, one in December and one in May. Although there are no ceremonies held at the end of the summer session, students who finish at the end of the summer may make arrangements to attend the December or May Commencement.

Ph.D. Student Overall Timeline:

The following link provides a complete Ph.D. program timeline: <https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/index.html>.

Appendices

Appendix A: Contact information of Epidemiology Faculty and Staff

Last name	First name	Position	Phone #	Office #	E-mail
Baccaglini	Lorena	Associate Professor	402-552-6634	MCPH 3030	lorena.baccaglini@unmc.edu
Barnes-Josiah	Debora	Assistant Professor	402-471-9048	MCPH 3032	debora.barnesjosiah@nebraska.gov
Chamberlain	Robert	Research Professor	713-201-2332		robert.chamberlain@unmc.edu
Cieslak	Theodore	Associate Professor	402-552-3360	MCPH 3040	ted.cieslak@unmc.edu
Farazi	Evi	Assistant Professor	402-559-5907	MCPH 3053	evi.farazi@unmc.edu
Freifeld	Alison	Professor	402-559-8668	ECI 3021	afreifeld@unmc.edu
Hill	Jennie	Associate Professor	402-552-3397	MCPH 3054	jennie.hill@unmc.edu
Islam	KM	Associate Professor	402-559-8283	MCPH 3024	kmislam@unmc.edu
Khan	Ali	Professor/Dean	402-559-4950	MCPH 2015	Ali.Khan@unmc.edu
Kortepeter	Mark	Professor	301-619-4924		mark.g.kortepeter.ctr@mail.mil
LeVan	Tricia	Associate Professor	402-559-3985	DRC2 1031	tlevan@unmc.edu
Levine	Paul	Professor	301-469-7394		paul.levine@unmc.edu
Levy	Deborah	Professor/Chair	402-552-9879	MCPH 3022	deborah.levy@unmc.edu
Medcalf	Sharon	Assistant Professor	402-552-2529	MCPH 1040	smedcalf@unmc.edu
Minhas	Veenu	Assistant Professor	402-552-7863	MCPH 3027	veenu.minhas@unmc.edu
Panigrahi	Pinaki	Professor	402-552-6682	MCPH 2038	ppanigrahi@unmc.edu
Smith	Philip	Emeritus Professor	402-559-8650		pwsmith@unmc.edu
Soliman	Amr	Professor	402-559-3976	MCPH 1031	amr.soliman@unmc.edu
Watanabe-Galloway	Shinobu	Associate Professor	402-559-5387	MCPH 3023	swatanabe@unmc.edu
Pomicter	Jenelle	Administrator I	402-559-2915	MCPH 3017	jpomicter@unmc.edu
Fetrick	Ann	Project Coordinator	402-559-3755	MCPH 3031	afetrick@unmc.edu
Barnett	Sharon	Office Associate	402-559-4248	MCPH 3014A	sharon.barnett@unmc.edu

For additional contact information, visit page 6-7 of CPH Student Handbook at

<https://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/currentstudents/College%20of%20Public%20Health%2016-17-v2.pdf>.

Appendix B: Links to commonly used forms

Registration website

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/registration/index.html>

Change of Campus/Intercampus Registration

<https://intercampus.nebraska.edu/cNotice.aspx>

Nebraska Residency

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/residency.html>

Application for Residency Classification for Tuition Purposes

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/Residency-Application-Revised-2016-08-15.pdf>

Transcripts Request

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/transcripts/index.html>

Name Change Request form

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/name-change-form-2016-8-4.pdf>

Verifications/State Licensure website

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/transcripts/index.html>

Degree verification website

<http://studentclearinghouse.org/>

FERPA

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/ferpa/index.html>

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/ferpa/ferpa-notification.html>

Commencement Information

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/commencement/index.html>

Program of Studies for the Ph. D. Degree

<https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/phdprogramofstudies.pdf>

PhD Degree Requirements

<https://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/programs/phdprograms/phdepidemiology.html>

Tuition and Financial Aid website

<https://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/programs/tuitionfinancialaid/index.html>

Options for Funding your Degree

<https://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/programs/tuitionfinancialaid/fundingoptions.html>

Dissertation & Graduation Instructions for Ph.D. Candidates

<https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/current/degree-requirements/phd/Dissertation-Graduation-Instructions-PhD-Candidates.pdf>

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>

Commencement Information

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-services/academic-records/commencement/index.html>