UNC Charlotte PhD
in Health Services Research
Student Handbook

College of Health and Human Services
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

2010-2011

This Handbook describes the program, policies, and practices of the UNC Charlotte PhD program in Health Services Research. In the event of a conflict between this document and University documents on any issue, University documents shall have precedence.

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The College of Health and Human Services

College Overview, Mission, Vision, Goals, Educational Objectives and Competencies

Overview

The College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte) is one of seven academic colleges in the University. The College of Health and Human Services offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs that lead to careers in the health and human services professions. Undergraduate programs are available in nursing, athletic training, exercise science, respiratory therapy, public health, and social work. Graduate degrees are available in health administration, public health, clinical exercise physiology, social work, and nursing. Specialties available in the graduate nursing program are Community/Public Health Nursing, Nurse Anesthesia, Family Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Administrator, and Nurse Educator. Programs in the CHHS are accredited by national professional organizations including the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Council on Social Work Education, the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs, the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education, and the Council on Education for Public Health. The CHHS is located in a 138,000 square foot new building (opened in 2006), with state of the art classrooms, offices and laboratories. The CHHS is located across from a new Student Union, with 200,000 square feet of state-of-the-art facilities.

Primary Goal

The College of Health and Human Services aspires to excellence in educational programs, scholarship and research, and community service in the health and human services.

Mission

The College of Health and Human Services offers professionally recognized and accessible undergraduate and graduate programs that are nationally and globally relevant, and responsive to changing health care and human service needs in the state and region. The College achieves excellence through informed and effective teaching in its degree programs, community partnerships, and professional activities and research to create knowledge, advance science and inform practice in the health and human services professions.

The PhD Program in Health Services Research: Overview

Health services research is a field of scientific investigation that studies how financing systems, health technologies, organizational structures and processes, personal behaviors, social factors, and policies affect access to health care, quality and cost of health care and societal health and well-being. It is an interdisciplinary field that draws on a wide range of disciplines, including biostatistics, epidemiology, sociology, social work, economics, medicine, nursing, public health, engineering, management, and policy studies. Health services research provides knowledge to guide the decisions of those who direct
the billions of dollars allocated to health care each year in the United States and globally.

The Institute of Medicine of The National Academy of Sciences offers a similar definition:

Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of inquiry, both basic and applied, that examines the use, costs, quality, accessibility, delivery, organization, financing, and outcomes of health care services to increase knowledge and understanding of the structure, processes, and effects of health services for individuals and populations. (Committee on Health Services Research: Training and Workforce Issues. (1995). Health Services Research: Workforce and Educational Issues. M.J. Field, R.E. Tranquada, and J.C. Feasley (Eds.). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

The PhD Program in Health Services Research at UNC Charlotte is an interdisciplinary program. It includes course work in health economics, health organizational structures and processes, epidemiology, health policy, health behavior, social factors that affect access to health care and health disparities, quality and cost of health care, societal health and well-being, grant writing, statistical analysis, research design and implementation, program evaluation, and research ethics. Graduates are prepared to conduct interdisciplinary research using quantitative and qualitative methods, to create new knowledge supporting innovations in health care delivery systems and health policy. Students complete core courses, courses and projects sufficient to develop an individual area of interest, and a dissertation. The dissertation is the capstone of the program and is expected to be a significant contribution to knowledge. It is original and independent research of sufficient quality to warrant publication in peer-reviewed, indexed journals. Our program also emphasizes development of skills in grant writing, which are useful for obtaining research funding. Students are encouraged to submit grants to support their PhD studies and their dissertation research, as well as their research expenses and professional travel.

Mission of the Program in Health Services Research

The PhD program in Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte is committed to providing students the interdisciplinary knowledge and skills needed to excel in research and education that improves health and human services in diverse socioeconomic groups and geographic settings.

Core Competency Goals of the PhD Program in Health Services Research

The PhD Program in Health Services Research encompasses fourteen core knowledge and skill competencies common to all health services research professionals trained at the doctoral level. These competencies were developed by key stakeholders from schools of public health accredited by the Council on Education of Public Health (CEPH) in a report to the U.S. Agency for Health Care Research and Quality (available at: http://www.ahrq.gov/fund/training/hsrcomp.htm.)
Health Services Research (HSR) Doctoral Level Core Competencies

To develop doctoral competency in health services research, HSR PhD students at UNC Charlotte will:

1. Know how to apply alternative theoretical and conceptual models from a range of relevant disciplines to HSR.

2. Apply in-depth disciplinary knowledge and skills relevant to health services research.

3. Use knowledge of the structures, performance, quality, policy, and environmental context of health and health care to formulate solutions for health policy problems.

4. Pose innovative and important research questions, informed by systematic reviews of the literature, stakeholder needs, and relevant theoretical and conceptual models.

5. Select appropriate interventional (experimental and quasi-experimental) or observational (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) study designs to address specific health services research questions.

6. Know how to collect primary health and health care data obtained by survey, qualitative, or mixed methods.

7. Know how to assemble secondary data from existing public and private sources.

8. Use a conceptual model to specify study constructs for a health services research question and develop variables that reliably and validly measure these constructs.

9. Implement research protocols with standardized procedures that ensure reproducibility of the science.

10. Ensure the ethical and responsible conduct of research in the design, implementation, and dissemination of health services research.


12. Use appropriate analytical methods to clarify associations between variables and to delineate causal inferences.

13. Effectively communicate the findings and implications of health services research through multiple modalities to technical and lay audiences.

14. Understand the importance of collaborating with policymakers, organizations, and communities to plan, conduct, and translate health services research into policy and practice.

Source, Table 1. Health Services Research (HSR) Doctoral Level Core Competencies; available at:
Admission Criteria and Application Requirements

Applications to the HSR PhD program must be submitted through an online system called "ApplyYourself," which is available through the website of the Graduate School at UNC Charlotte (http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/index.asp). The website includes general admission requirements. All applications must be made on-line. Applicants should review the requirements thoroughly before applying.

**Application Deadline is February 1**

We continue to review applications submitted after February 1 until the fall class is complete. However, for best consideration applications should be completed before February 1. This is especially important for applicants who want to be considered for assistantships or for fellowship opportunities.

In addition to the general requirements for admission to the graduate school, the following are required for admission to the PhD Program in Health Services Research:

1. Master's or doctoral degree from a regionally accredited university in a health related field, including, but not limited to public health, nursing, medicine, social work, kinesiology, health psychology, public administration, business administration, and nutrition.

2. A graduate GPA of at least 3.5 on a four point scale.

3. A minimum score of 500 each on the verbal and quantitative sections, and a minimum score of 4.0 on the analytical section of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). If the GRE is taken more than once, the most recent score will be accepted.

4. Completed at least 1 graduate level course in each of the following areas, with a grade of B or higher in each:
   - Statistics or biostatistics
   - Health policy
   - Epidemiology

Applicants will be considered for admission if they have not completed one or more of the above three prerequisite graduate courses. Admitted students lacking any of these courses are able to be admitted; however, the prerequisite courses must be successfully completed before enrolling in the corresponding doctoral level course. Masters level courses in these areas that are taken to fulfill the prerequisite requirements are not counted toward the 64 credit total for the PhD.
5. An essay addressing professional and academic experiences, motivation for pursuing the degree, specialty area of interest to pursue in the program, and how the program fits your career plans. The essay should also identify at least one member of the HSR PhD Program Faculty or Participating Faculty with whom the applicant would like to work, based on shared research interests. The applicant must include a statement indicating how his or her specific research interests align with those of at least one specific member of the HSR PhD Program Faculty or Participating Faculty.

6. A current curriculum vitae.

7. Applicants whose native language is not English must submit a satisfactory score on Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

8. Interviews with the Ph.D. Program Director and potential mentor(s) on the HSR PhD Faculty, either in person or by telephone. Before the interviews, the applicant should provide the Program Director and potential mentor(s) with a current curriculum vitae and a record of completed degrees, with their grade averages.

9. Three letters of reference, at least one of which is from a graduate faculty member who taught the applicant and one from a former supervisor.

Credit Transfer

(1) To obtain approval to receive transfer credit, the student must submit an Application for Transfer of Credit into a Graduate Degree Program form (available on the Graduate School web site), approved by the HSR PhD Program Director, to the Dean of the Graduate School. If the courses being transferred are from another institution, the student must include an official copy of the transcript along with the request. The University is not obligated to accept any courses for transfer credit. (2) No more than six semester hours of transfer credit will be considered for acceptance into the HSR PhD program. (3) Undergraduate courses are not transferable for graduate credit. (4) Graduate courses that appear in the undergraduate section of a transcript are only transferable if the Registrar of the institution where the credit was received can verify in writing that the graduate courses in question were not counted toward the student’s undergraduate degree requirements. (5) The grade in any course accepted for transferred credit must be “A” or “B” as defined by UNC Charlotte. Courses that have been graded on a Pass/No Credit or Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory basis will not be accepted for transfer. Although the credit for a course may transfer, the grade will not be used to calculate the graduate GPA at UNC Charlotte. (6) Courses accepted for transfer are subject to the same time limitation as courses taken in residence. (7) To be considered for transferred credit, the courses must have been undertaken at a regionally accredited institution. (8) Courses in which credit is accepted must be clearly relevant to the HSR PhD curriculum.

The HSR PhD Program: Program Description

The Ph.D. program in Health Services Research is designed to prepare students to conduct health services research and/or teach at a university level. The program of study is designed around the interests of the individual, taking previous academic training and professional experience into account.
Emphasis in the program is in research methods, statistics, and theoretical and empirical concepts in health services research, policy and management. The HSR PhD Program is offered for full-time and part-time students.

Graduates of the PhD Program in Health Services Research will be prepared for employment as researchers and senior program leaders in: colleges and universities, federal and state governmental agencies, public health organizations, health care provider organizations, advocacy organizations, and international health provider and advocacy organizations.

Administratively located in the College of Health and Human Services (http://www.health.uncc.edu/), the HSR PhD program is interdisciplinary, with courses taught by faculty from the College of Health and Human Services, the Belk College of Business, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This approach allows the HSR PhD Program to incorporate multiple perspectives and draw on the strengths of scholars from diverse disciplines.

The PhD in Health Services Research consists of 64 total credit hours including four major areas:

1. Interdisciplinary health services research theoretical courses (15 credits);
2. Methods and methodological issues (25 credits);
3. Area of interest (6 credits); and

As defined in the Graduate Catalog, a semester course load totaling nine credit hours is considered full-time. Doctoral-level courses are considerably more time-consuming than most courses at the master’s level, and doctoral students should also typically be involved in conducting research in collaboration with faculty. Students should not register for more than 10 credit hours in a given semester. A course load less than nine hours is considered part-time.

Required courses in the curriculum include:

**Interdisciplinary Theoretical Courses (15 credits)**

HSRD 8001: Introduction to Health Services Research (3)
HSRD 8002: Healthcare Systems and Delivery (3)
HSRD 8003/PPOL 8665: Analytic Epidemiology (3)
HSRD 8004/PPOL 8667: Economics of Health and Healthcare (3)
HSRD 8005/PPOL 8663: Health Policy (3)

**Methods & Methodological Issues (25 credits)**

HSRD 8101: Design of Health Services Research (3)
HSRD 8102: Advanced Design of Health Services Research (3)
HSRD 8103: Large Data Sets and Health Services Research (3)
HSRD 8104: Program Evaluation, Outcomes and Quality (3)
HSRD 8106: Advanced Data Analysis for Health Services Research (3)
HSRD 8110/STAT 8110: Applied Biostatistics: Regression (3)
HSRD 8111/STAT 8111: Applied Biostatistics: Multivariate (3)
HSRD 8612: Seminar in Grant Proposal Writing (3)
HSRD 8881: Seminar in Research Ethics (1)

**Area of Interest (6 credits)**

Students may select one of the following areas to provide depth in a chosen area of special interest, or define an area of interest not listed here with the approval of the Program Director, Dissertation Committee Chair/faculty advisor, and other faculty as needed. Areas of interest include:

- Aging/long-term care
- Health policy
- Health disparities
- Health promotion
- Health care organization/administration
- Mental health
- Research methods

A student may also select another relevant area of interest, providing it can be fulfilled with existing graduate courses or through independent study courses with HSR PhD faculty.

Beginning with the fall 2010 semester, all newly admitted doctoral students will be required to enroll in the online non-credit course, GRAD 8990 - Academic Integrity. Students must successfully complete this course prior to registering for the next semester.

**Graduate Certificate Opportunities**

With careful course selection, students can also earn a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology, often with few or no additional courses. The Director of the Gerontology Program can provide specific information about this opportunity. The Department of Public Health Sciences offers a Graduate Certificate Program in Community Health. Also available are certificates in Community Health, Applied Ethics, and Health Information Technology. At this writing, a Graduate Certificate in Africana Studies also is being proposed; interested students should consult the Chair of the Department of Africana Studies.

**Academic Advising**

All course selections require the approval of the HSR PhD Program Director or the student’s faculty advisor. The Program Director serves as each student’s faculty advisor until the student is matched with a member of the Program Faculty who will serve in this role. Typically faculty advisors will be identified no later than the end of the student’s first year in the program. The faculty advisor must be a member of the HSR PhD Program Faculty.

During the first year of full-time study or two years of part-time study, students are expected to begin to narrow the focus of their research interest to an area of proposed dissertation study. Each student will typically identify a Dissertation Committee Chair during the second year of full-time study. Once the Dissertation Committee Chair is selected, she or he becomes the student’s faculty advisor for the remainder of the program. The Dissertation Chair will advise the student in her or his area of
specialization, guide the student in recommending additional courses relevant to the planned dissertation. The Dissertation Chair also will guide the student in the selection of additional dissertation committee members. Note that dissertation advisors must be members of the Program Faculty or members of the Participating Faculty with a Program Faculty member as co-chair of the dissertation committee.

Who is Covered by the Requirements of this Handbook

Requirements for all applicants to the program are those described in this Handbook. Program requirements for students who first matriculated in the program beginning in 2005 or 2006 are those published in the HSR PhD Handbook dated 2005. Program requirements for students who first matriculated in the program beginning in 2007 or 2008 are those published in the HSR PhD Handbook most recently dated 2008, which was also available in an edition dated 2007. Program requirements for students who first matriculate in the program in 2010 or later years are those described in this Handbook. For additional details, please see Appendix A, Program Requirements for Previous Cohorts.

Time Limits and Continuous Registration

All work listed on the student's Application to Candidacy form offered for the PhD in Health Services Research, including any transferred credit, must be completed within an eight year period beginning with the first doctoral course in which the student is registered.

Continuous Registration

From the Graduate Catalog: Students in graduate degree programs are required to maintain continuous registration (fall and spring semesters) for thesis, dissertation, project, or directed study until work is completed. Students are not required to enroll in any summer term unless they are using campus facilities or they are completing degree requirements in that term. The continuous registration requirement begins with the semester in which the student first registers for his/her thesis, dissertation, project, or directed study. GRAD 9999 (graduate residence) has no fees associated with it and is only a one credit. If students are going to have an active dissertation committee and use University resources doctoral students are to continue to enroll in 3 dissertation credit hours even though they have completed the 18 dissertation credit hours. Doctoral students that are not using University resources and have already defended their dissertation – but have yet to graduate – can register for 1 credit hour of GRAD 9999. Students who have completed their coursework and must remain continuously enrolled but are not using University resources should apply for a leave of absence. Students choosing this option must file a Special Request for a leave of absence that states they will not use University resources during the leave period. If the leave of absence extends beyond one calendar year, the student’s matriculation is closed and the student must reapply for active status in the graduate program. International students on F-1 visa/status must remain continuously enrolled until the thesis, dissertation, project or directed study is completed. Those international students who wish to apply for a leave of absence are advised to consult with the International Student/Scholar Office prior to filing the
Special Request for leave of absence. **Students must be enrolled during the term (semester or summer) in which they graduate from the University.**

**Directed Study Courses (Independent Study)**

There are no specific limitations imposed by the Graduate School on the number of directed study credits for a PhD student. Students considering more than a total of 6 credits of directed study should consult with the Program Director.

Directed study classes can in some instances be used to satisfy a required course. The student completes a Graduate School Special Request form asking that the directed study class be substituted for the required course in the student’s program of study. With the approval of the Program Director, such a request can certify that the program accepts the directed study course as satisfying the course requirement. Students who would like to fulfill a required course with directed study must indicate the existing course on the HSR PhD Independent Study Application Form (see Appendix), which must be completed (with signatures from the student, the faculty mentor in the directed study course, and the Program Director) no later than the end of the first week of classes in the semester in which the directed study occurs. Directed study courses will not typically be approved to satisfy existing required courses that are offered in the semester that the directed study is taken or that are scheduled for the following semester. Directed study classes in the HSR PhD program will be taught by HSR PhD Faculty. The Program Director must approve all independent study courses taken to fulfill requirements of the HSR PhD program.

**Qualifying Exam**

The student takes the Qualifying Examination after completing all required HSR PhD courses excepting the dissertation hours, and after having prepared for the defense of the dissertation proposal. The Qualifying Examination and the defense of the dissertation proposal, although conceptually separate, are scheduled and conducted at the same time.

With the active participation of the dissertation committee chair, the student will select a committee that includes the chair and 3 additional faculty from the HSR PhD Program Faculty or Participating Faculty. These faculty also will serve as the student’s committee for the dissertation proposal and dissertation defense. The student submits the form, “Appointment of Doctoral Committee.” The Graduate School then appoints a 5th committee member. See the section below that describes the selection of the dissertation committee.

The Qualifying Examination includes an oral examination focused on the dissertation proposal and the student’s doctoral portfolio.

The portfolio must include:

- A detailed cover letter, which summarizes the student’s progress through the HSRD program to date and orients the examining committee to the contents of the portfolio.
- Current curriculum vitae.
- Papers completed during courses taken in the HSRD program, including research papers,
policy papers, grant proposals, etc., as relevant depending on the courses the student has completed.

- Research papers published or in press since admission to the HSRD program.
  - Typically every PhD student should have at least one manuscript published, in press, or at an advanced stage of preparation by the time of the Qualifying Examination.
  - If a student cannot present such a paper, a manuscript in progress may be substituted. In this instance the examining committee will be charged with conducting a peer-review of the manuscript, to ensure that the student is making adequate progress toward publishing and is prepared for dissertation research.
  - Papers representing research conducted with faculty or other HSRD students are acceptable for the portfolio, whether published, in press, or in manuscript form. However, as with any co-author, the student must have made significant contributions to such papers, which should be detailed in the cover letter. The examining committee will expect that students are completely familiar with the research represented in the paper, including, where applicable, the literature reviewed in the background section of the paper, the research design and statistical analysis, the findings and limitations, and the implications for policy and practice.

- Abstracts representing research presented at professional conferences since admission to the HSRD program.
- A professional personal statement (typically 2 to 3 pages) covering, at a minimum, the student’s research focus area(s), and the student’s 2- to 3-year research plan.

When relevant to the student’s experience and career plans, the doctoral portfolio may also include:

- Additional manuscripts published or under development.
- Syllabi developed by the student since admission to the HSRD program.
- Student and faculty evaluations of the HSRD student’s teaching.
- A statement of teaching philosophy.

A copy of the portfolio must be submitted to the HSRD Program Director for use by the examining committee at least one week before the qualifying examination. Students should also retain a copy of the portfolio. Students should maintain a record of materials relevant to the portfolio from their first day as doctoral students, and should begin to prepare the final portfolio well before the qualifying examination.

In addition to the oral examination on the portfolio, the Qualifying Examination includes the defense of the dissertation proposal described in the following section.

Students who do not pass the Qualifying Examination on the first attempt will be permitted to schedule one additional attempt. Failure on the second attempt will result in dismissal from the HSR PhD program.
The Dissertation Process

Summary of Dissertation Steps, with Required Forms

Note regarding forms: the forms described below are required by the Graduate School. So that the HSR PhD program has a complete record of each student’s progress, each form should be submitted to the HSR PhD Program Director. A copy of each form will be included in the student’s program file. The HSR PhD Program Director will forward the original forms to the Graduate School.

1) Select Dissertation Chair. The Chair must be a member of the HSR PhD Program Faculty, or a member of the Participating Faculty with a co-Chair who is a member of the Program Faculty. Students should consult with their faculty advisor and the Program Director as they develop their plans for selecting the dissertation committee chair, and for forming the dissertation committee. It is important that the Chair of the dissertation committee is actively involved with the selection of the other committee members; having identified a Chair who agrees to serve in that role, the student should work closely with the Chair on identifying other committee members, and typically should approach other faculty about serving on the committee only after consulting with the Chair.

2) Select Dissertation Committee. Must be at least 5 members. Four must be from the HSR PhD Program Faculty or Participating Faculty (one of whom is the Chair). The student submits the form, “Appointment of Doctoral Committee.” The Graduate School appoints the 5th member.

Experts in the University who are not members of the Program or Participating Faculty may be nominated for membership at the appropriate level. Interested faculty should contact the HSR PhD Program Director. Experts outside the university who can contribute usefully to the dissertation committee can also be nominated for participation. This requires: (1) adjunct faculty status in one of the departments of the College of Health and Human Services, (2) admission to the UNC Charlotte Graduate Faculty, and (3) admission to the HSR PhD Participating Faculty. It should be noted that the 3 approval processes just described can take several months; students who want to involve an outside expert should plan accordingly.

The five members of the dissertation committee will serve as the student’s committee for the refinement of the dissertation topic, the development and defense of the dissertation proposal, the development of the dissertation, and dissertation defense.

3) The Chair of the dissertation committee and the student together select the dissertation topic. The Chair is responsible to ensure that all members of the committee are actively involved and agree to the direction and the specifics of the proposal (e.g., data, methods). Ensuring this involvement and agreement is a major goal of the Topic Approval Meeting. When the Chair approves the topic and approach to the dissertation, the student schedules the Topic Approval Meeting with the Dissertation Committee. The student submits a 2-3 page description of the dissertation plan to the Dissertation Committee at least 2 weeks prior to the Topic Approval Meeting. This single-spaced description of the topic includes the following sections: (1) Specific Aims, (2) Background and Significance, (3) Research Design and Methods. The topic approval meeting is not typically open to visitors. Students will present a brief oral summary of: the dissertation topic, the context of related research literature, data and methods, and implications for policy and practice, followed by questions and discussion among the committee and the student. The topic approval meeting may
be repeated as needed.

4) Following the Topic Approval, the student writes the dissertation proposal and prepares for the Oral Proposal Defense. The proposal is written in the form of a grant proposal. The student is expected to use NIH PHS398 format, except that she or he is not required to use the NIH forms, and that the proposal does not require preliminary data, biographical sketches, letters of collaboration, or budgets. Thus, the proposal includes the following standard NIH sections:

- A. Specific Aims
- B. Background and Significance
- C. Research Design and Methods
- D. Human Subjects

The entire proposal (not including the Literature Cited section) is limited to 15 single-spaced pages (12 point font). At the discretion of the Chair, additional material may be included in appendices, such as additional details about the analysis, table shells, and so forth. However, it is the expectation of the HSR PhD program that the central elements of the dissertation proposal should be embodied in the 15 page maximum. This requirement is designed to ensure that students have experience writing the dense prose required for a successful grant narrative. It also provides a narrative that is appropriate for submission for funding the dissertation work. All members of the committee must receive the full proposal at least 2 weeks before the Proposal Defense.

5) The submission of the proposal is followed by the Oral Proposal Defense.

In the HSR PhD program, the Oral Proposal Defense is open to HSR PhD faculty and HSR PhD students. The student must provide the title of the proposed dissertation, and the date, time, and location of the Oral Proposal Defense to the Program Director no later than two weeks prior to the Oral Proposal Defense. This is designed to ensure that interested HSR PhD faculty and students have adequate notice to attend the Oral Proposal Defense. HSR PhD students are particularly encouraged to attend these Oral Proposal Defenses.

The student should prepare a PowerPoint presentation approximately 20 minutes in length summarizing the research proposal. Following the student’s presentation, the committee will ask questions about the research plan. The student will be excused from the meeting to permit the committee to discuss the merits of the proposal, after which the student will return to the meeting to receive the committee’s comments and required modifications to the research plan. After successful completion of the Oral Proposal Defense, the student submits three forms, “Graduate School Petition for Topic Approval”, “Report of Comprehensive exam or Qualifying exam (Doctoral)” and “Application for Admission to Candidacy.”

A doctoral student advances to candidacy after the dissertation topic and approach has been approved by the student's advisory committee and the Dean of the Graduate School. NOTE: Completing Step 3 above, the topic approval meeting, does not constitute advancement to candidacy. Advancement to candidacy requires approval of both the topic and the detailed dissertation plan at the time of the oral proposal defense, including any required plan for the protection of human subjects. If Human Subjects are involved, the Petition for Topic Approval requires the attachment of the IRB approval.

Candidacy must be achieved at least six months before the degree is conferred.
All members of the committee must usually be physically present at the Proposal Defense. The Graduate School provides for one exception only for a single committee member who may participate remotely via audio- or videoconferencing, where the latter is preferred. Remote participation requires the form, “Approval of Remote Committee Participation.” All conditions listed on the form must be fulfilled.

A student who fails to complete the Oral Proposal Defense / Qualifying Examination satisfactorily may be given the opportunity to revise components of the research proposal under the direction of the Chair and/or to repeat the Oral Proposal Defense, at the discretion of the Dissertation Committee; a second failure results in dismissal from the PhD program.

6) The student writes the dissertation. The student is required to maintain continuous enrollment in HSRD 8801 for dissertation study until the dissertation is completed. The continuous enrollment requirement begins in the semester after the dissertation topic is approved. Students conducting dissertation research should meet regularly with their committee Chair and other members of the committee. At a minimum, the student must meet with the committee Chair at least once each semester.

7) When the chair of the dissertation committee agrees that all work on the dissertation, including the defense, is likely to be completed successfully, the candidate completes the “Application for Degree” and submits it to the Graduate School. The application is submitted through Banner Self Service. See the section, “Deadlines for Form Submission,” below.

8) The Final Examination on the dissertation research, commonly called the Dissertation Defense, is the culminating activity of doctoral studies. Typically the dissertation chair and committee should not schedule the defense until they are reasonably confident that the dissertation is likely to be approved, either as-is or with relatively minor revisions. The Graduate School requires that the dissertation must be submitted to the committee at least three weeks before the date of the final examination in which the dissertation is defended.

The student also must inform the Program Director of the final dissertation title, and the place and time of the scheduled final examination, at least 3 weeks before the final examination. The final examination is open to the university community.

All members of the committee must usually be physically present at the Dissertation Defense. The Graduate School provides for one exception only, for a single committee member who may participate remotely via audio- or videoconferencing. Remote participation requires the form, Approval of Remote Committee Participation. All conditions listed on the form must be fulfilled.

In some instances the dissertation committee may not approve the dissertation at the time of the first defense. In keeping with the Graduate School’s regulations, no student is permitted to take the final examination more than twice.

Guidelines for the preparation of the dissertation are available from the Graduate School and on the Graduate School website.

Along with the accepted dissertation, the student files the form, “Dissertation Defense Report for Doctoral Candidates.” This form requires the signatures of the entire dissertation committee, and
should be completed at the conclusion of the successful dissertation defense.

The physical form of the dissertation is governed by the University. Dissertations must conform to required margins, paper type, and so forth, in order to be accepted by the Graduate School. The student should consult these resources at The Graduate School early in the dissertation process: Manual of Basic Requirements for Theses and Dissertations (July 2008), and also Thesis/Dissertation Manual Sample Pages.

**Deadlines for Form Submission**

Deadlines for submission of various forms, such as for Admission to Candidacy and Application for Graduation in a particular semester, are available in the Academic Calendar, [http://www.registrar.uncc.edu/calendar.asp](http://www.registrar.uncc.edu/calendar.asp). Students should note that dates for submission of candidacy forms and applications for graduation occur very early in each semester; for May graduation, for example, the date for the Application for Graduation and the final date for the Application for Candidacy typically occurs in the 3rd week of January. The Application for Candidacy for a Degree and the Application for Candidacy for Graduate Certificate forms are paper forms that are available from the “Graduate School Forms” page of the Graduate School Website at: [http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/gs_forms.html](http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/gs_forms.html). Similarly, the last day to file a dissertation with the Graduate School for May graduation typically occurs no later than the 3rd week of March. See the Academic Calendar for exact dates that apply for a given semester.

**Further Definition of the Doctoral Dissertation**

An appropriate dissertation provides an *original and significant contribution* to health services research as judged by the candidate’s doctoral dissertation committee. The dissertation is the culminating research experience of the HSR PhD program.

“Original contribution” implies that the body of work undertaken and intellectual contribution of the research is the candidate’s own. It is expected that the candidate will be an expert in the contributions of others scholars to provide a foundation for his or her original research.

"Significant contribution" implies that the result of the dissertation scholarship notably advances a useful area of health services research as judged by peer scholars. The most meaningful criterion in this regard is that the research is judged by the committee to be appropriate for submission in at least one or two manuscripts to scholarly peer-reviewed journals.

It is our expectation that doctoral candidates will be able to demonstrate competent application of research methods that are appropriate to the area of study; research methods include qualitative or quantitative methods, or mixed methods.

**Ethical Procedures Approval, Institutional Review Board (IRB):** All dissertation-related materials must comply with ethical review guidelines current at the time of review. Students are required to submit all required documents for review and receive formal approval prior to beginning any research involving human subjects.

**Dissertation Format:** Either of two formats may be used, at the discretion of the dissertation committee:
The traditional dissertation has a five-chapter format:

- **Chapter One:** Introduction: A relatively brief statement of the topic, and why it is important.
- **Chapter Two:** Literature Review: A thorough review of all literature relevant to the topic. The literature review should be focused on developing hypotheses to be tested and/or research questions to be addressed; the chapter should conclude with the hypotheses and/or questions.
- **Chapter Three:** Methods. A description of all methods to be used to complete the research. If a conceptual framework is used, it should be described. All variables should be described. The analysis approach, qualitative or quantitative, should be described, as well as how the hypotheses and/or research questions will be addressed.
- **Chapter Four:** Results. All results should be presented. Descriptive findings are usually presented first, followed by bivariate, and then multivariate. Results can also be organized by hypotheses and/or research questions.
- **Chapter Five:** Conclusions and Recommendations. This chapter should include a brief summary of the findings, the limitations of the research, a discussion of the implications of the research for policy and practice, and suggestions for future study.

**Separate manuscript format:**

Students who elect this option will complete Chapter One, as described above. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will be replaced by two to three manuscripts. Each manuscript must be complete and prepared for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Each manuscript will include a title page, abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion sections, as well as references, and tables/figures. Appendices to the manuscripts may provide additional detail. An additional final chapter may be included, briefly summarizing the dissertation findings, and discussing implications for policy and practice, as well research extensions, in greater detail. The specific format of the dissertation will be determined by the dissertation committee.

**Graduation**

During the semester before the PhD candidate expects to receive the degree, the candidate will review his/her academic record and progress on the dissertation with the chair of his/her dissertation committee. If the chair of the dissertation committee agrees that all work on the dissertation, including the defense, is likely to be successfully completed by the end of the following semester, the candidate will complete the Application for Degree form on Banner Self Service. The candidate will then be billed by Student Accounts for the Application for Degree fee. Graduation announcements may be ordered through the campus bookstore. Caps, gowns, and hoods may be either rented or purchased through the bookstore.

The student signs the form and submits it to the advisor, who verifies that the listed courses fulfill the requirements for the degree. Once all signatures are in place, this constitutes an agreement between the student and the University, guaranteeing that the student will receive the degree if the listed courses are completed satisfactorily. For this reason, the form must be completed well in advance of
graduation; otherwise graduation may be delayed.

Residency Requirement

The student must satisfy the UNC Charlotte continuous residency requirement for the program by completing 21 credit hours. Residency is considered to be continuous if the student is enrolled in one or more courses in successive semesters until 21 hours are earned. Continuous enrollment in fall and spring semesters is adequate for the purpose of establishing continuous residency.

The purpose of the residency requirement is to ensure that doctoral students benefit from and contribute to a broad array of educational and professional opportunities provided on the UNC Charlotte campus. When establishing residency, it is expected that the student will interact regularly with faculty and peers by regularly participating in courses, seminar series, and actively use the library and other facilities, including laboratories, available for graduate education.

The HSR PhD Graduate Assistantship

The Benefits of a Graduate Assistantship

Exceptionally qualified full-time students may be offered graduate assistantships. The assistantship provides a stipend (salary), currently $18,000 per year for a 12-month position with a work commitment of 20 hours per week (excluding university holiday periods). Students with assistantships will assist faculty with research, teaching, and/or service. The HSR PhD program strives to match student research interests with those of the faculty with whom they are assigned for the graduate assistantship, although this cannot be guaranteed in every instance.

For students with assistantships, the University’s Graduate Assistance Support Plan (GASP) provides a highly competitive multi-year support package, used to attract and retain top tier graduate students to UNC Charlotte. The award package covers both resident and non-resident tuition (as relevant), and provides coverage under the University’s student health insurance program. For NC residents the total award is approximately $3600 for the academic year. For non-residents it is approximately $13,800, which is in addition to assistantships and/or fellowship stipends. Other student fees totaling about $900 each semester are not covered by this award.

The College of Health and Human Services will in most instances provide 3 years of assistantship support. Students with assistantships must maintain good academic standing.

Professional Responsibilities of Students with Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are intended to serve as an extension of the teaching and research mission of HSR PhD program and the College of Health and Human Services, by giving students experience in research and teaching in a mentorship relationship with faculty. Students with assistantships will also gain experience with fulfilling academic service needs, and in this way will learn more about becoming a
productive and successful member of an academic community. While serving in on- or off-campus graduate assistantships, students are representatives of UNC Charlotte. As such, they will act with total professionalism at all times.

Graduate assistants are expected to provide service to the HSR PhD program, the College, the University, and the community. Such service can include attending orientation for 1st year HSR PhD students (for 2nd year students and above), mentoring 1st year doctoral students, attending faculty candidate research presentations, meeting with faculty candidates during times scheduled for students, service as an officer or active member of the HSR PhD student organization, membership on departmental, College, or University committees, assisting the Program Director with occasional information gathering required by the HSR PhD program and the College, performing service in the community as a representative of the HSR PhD program, and so forth. Although success in the HSR PhD program is primarily judged by scholarship, the HSR PhD program takes the student’s record of service into consideration when recommending students for fellowships and grants, including travel grants, tuition support, and competitive dissertation-year fellowships at the university.

All graduate assistants are required to provide monthly reports of their work schedules and productivity as a requirement of retaining the graduate assistantship.

Graduate assistantships are typically arranged for 12 months annual commitment. Graduate Assistants receive University holidays, but are otherwise expected to work on their normal schedule throughout the 12 month period.

A graduate assistant must register for at least six graduate level semester hours during each semester in which an assistantship is awarded. Graduate assistants enrolled in the Graduate Assistance Support Plan (GASP) must register for a minimum of 9 graduate credit hours each term. **Students with support from the Graduate Assistance Support Plan must maintain at least a 3.0 average to be eligible for continued support.**

If a student does not have an assistantship, the Graduate School does not impose any limitations on either part-time or full time employment. Students with assistantships are limited to no more than 20 hours of total weekly employment. Thus, students with assistantships of 20 hours per week are not permitted to have additional employment. Students with assistantships who consider taking part-time teaching positions at the University must consult with the Program Director, as in this situation the number of hours devoted to the assistantship must be reduced to limit total weekly work hours to 20.

**Conference Support & Travel**

**Conference Travel Support through the HSR PhD Program**

- Priority will be given to national conferences, although regional and state conference travel also may be funded as resources permit; of the latter, North Carolina conferences will be given priority.
- Support can include conference registration, air and ground travel, food and lodging.
- Podium and poster presentations will be given equal priority.
- Individuals seeking HSR PhD travel support must complete the travel application in appendix C and provide the HSR PhD Director a description of the conference, a copy of the accepted abstract and the acceptance notification, and a travel budget. Students working on travel budgets should
consult with Ms. Sarah Grant, in the Dean’s Office; however, it is the student’s responsibility to develop the initial travel budget and itinerary.

e. Students arranging conference travel are responsible for making flight reservations, identifying a hotel (see item “i” regarding “appropriate restraint”), registering for the conference, and for making any related reservations or arrangements. Students are encouraged to work closely with Ms. Sarah Grant in the Dean’s office regarding these arrangements, but making reservations for flights, lodging, and conference reservations are the student’s responsibility.

f. For conferences in the spring through the end of the fiscal year, travel dollars will be reserved for students who are awaiting acceptance for submitted abstracts, assuming that the student has provided a copy of the submitted abstract and the conference information to the Graduate Director; the student has met with Ms. Sarah Grant to estimate conference travel costs.

g. Particularly in an era of tight budgets, conferences that might be viewed by the public as taking place in resort areas or related travel destinations will not be funded.

h. For both faculty and students, by State budget requirements travel is limited to instances involving public safety, public health, job requirements, economic development opportunities and emergency situations. Provide a justification that addresses one or more of these categories. The Graduate Director can help with this.

i. **Showing “appropriate restraint” in the budget request can increase the likelihood of funding; this can be shown by sharing costs among students (e.g., shared lodging), selecting low-cost lodging, etc.**

j. Students receiving conference travel support are expected to provide all required receipts and evidence of conference attendance (e.g. boarding passes) to Ms. Sarah Grant within one week following their return from the conference.

Student conference travel receives the highest priority.

a. Students are expected to seek funding from the UNC Charlotte Graduate & Professional Student Government. Students will not be reimbursed for support dollars that would typically be funded by GPSG travel funds. Travel forms are available at http://gpsg.uncc.edu/treasurer/Forms.asp

b. Priority will be given to abstracts that include one or more HSR PhD faculty; however, students are encouraged to submit abstracts with or without faculty, and travel for the latter will be funded when possible.

c. We cannot guarantee funding for all travel requests. Please do not assume that you have received a travel award until the HSR PhD director has notified you.

d. Conference funding is available to both full- and part-time students. Special State budget criteria apply to students who do not hold assistantships; although their conference travel may be fundable, students who do not have assistantships should consult Ms. Sarah Grant about the budget criteria details.

e. Additional criteria, Professional Responsibilities of Students with Graduate Assistantships, apply to conference support as outlined in the Handbook: “Although success in the HSR PhD program is primarily judged by scholarship, the HSR PhD program takes the student’s record of service into consideration when recommending students for fellowships and grants, including travel grants.” Among other requirements, students with assistantships must be current in the submission of time sheets to be eligible for travel support from the HSR PhD program.

Faculty conference travel may be supported.

a. Although student conference travel is given a higher priority, some faculty conference travel may be funded as resources permit.
b. Typically, faculty travel will be funded only in spring semester through the end of the fiscal year, to ensure that resources remain available for student travel.

c. Abstracts must include one or more HSR PhD students.

d. Faculty are expected to obtain any usual departmental or College conference funding before seeking HSR PhD travel funds.

Academic Standards and Graduation Requirements

UNC Charlotte requires that graduate students maintain academic standards as outlined in the Graduate School Bulletin.

- Graduate students must average at least B (3.0 on a 4 point system) over all courses attempted as part of the requirements to qualify to receive a graduate degree.
- Complied with relevant university policies and procedure including:
  - Candidacy and Diploma. The timely application and payments of fees for candidacy and for the diploma (See Graduate school website for specific deadlines and fees)

Useful websites are listed below:

Application for degree: http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/gs_forms.html/
https://selfservice.uncc.edu/pls/BANPROD/twbkwbis.P_GenMenu?name=homepage

Accumulated low grades. Doctoral studies typically require excellence in academic performance. It is typically expected that most PhD students will earn “A” grades in most or all of their courses. A student earning a large number of “B” grades as a doctoral student should recognize that this may indicate questionable preparation for the dissertation, and may be viewed negatively by some potential employers—particularly colleges and universities. A total of three C grades or a single grade of U results in suspension. A suspended student may not register for classes unless approved for reinstatement. If the program reinstates a student, a subsequent grade of C or U will result in immediate dismissal from the program. If a program does not approve reinstatement, the student is dismissed from the program.
(Note that even a single C grade is unexpected in doctoral study; it is unlikely that the HSR PhD program will consider reinstating a student in this situation in the absence of unusual extenuating circumstances.)

Annual Evaluation of HSR PhD Students

Each HSR PhD student will complete an annual evaluation. The evaluation will help prepare doctoral students professionally and document their progress in the HSR PhD program. The entire evaluation process must be completed by April 1 of each year.

By March 1 of each year, each HSR PhD Student will submit the following items to his or her faculty advisor:

- The student’s professional portfolio, including a current curriculum vitae, copies of abstracts submitted during the past year, manuscripts in progress or submitted during the past year,
major research papers submitted for courses during the past year, and related materials. The portfolio is described in detail in the section of this manual that describes the qualifying exam. The portfolio is required for all students entering the program beginning with the fall of 2009. Students from earlier cohorts are encouraged to develop portfolios, and are required to do so if they choose the portfolio evaluation option for the Qualifying Examination.

- A 1 to 2 page single-spaced self assessment (required of all students). The self assessment should be organized as follows, using the following "headings" or sections:
  
  1. Major accomplishments in research during the past year should be described;
  2. Progress in Academic Training (including courses completed and grades);
  3. Experiences and training in teaching (when relevant);
  4. Goals for Scholarship and Academic Training, including goals for grant writing or other applications to support the student’s studies.

For students assigned as graduate assistantships, the faculty advisor is either the faculty member to whom the student is assigned, or another member of the HSRD faculty approved by the Program Director with whom the student has established a formal mentor-protégé relationship. For students conducting dissertation research, the faculty advisor is the dissertation Chair. Most other students will be assigned a faculty advisor, who will typically share the student’s research interest. For students not assigned a faculty advisor, the evaluation materials should be submitted to the HSR PhD Program Director.

The faculty advisor will review the materials, and prepare a summary and evaluation in the form of a 1 page letter to the HSR PhD Program Director. The letter is due to the HSR PhD Program Director by March 15, and should be accompanied by the student’s current curriculum vitae and self assessment. The faculty advisor should provide his or her evaluation of the HSR PhD student’s progress in research/scholarship and academic training, which includes the student’s performance in any assistantship. The advisor will return the portfolio to the student at the conclusion of the annual evaluation.

The advisor evaluation becomes part of the student’s permanent file. They may be used when evaluating the adequacy of student progress for continued assistantship funding, fellowship opportunities or other honors, determining priorities for funding 4th year assistantships in years when they might be available, preparing letters of recommendation for employment, and so forth.

The course plan for the HSR PhD represents the minimum number of courses and credit hours for completion of the degree. Students whose progress in developing skills or knowledge required for successful completion of the dissertation may be required to take additional courses. The requirement to take additional courses will be determined jointly by the student’s advisor and the Program Director.

**Graduate Institute**

To be successful, graduate students must do more than excel in their academic work. Success requires that students develop skills like public speaking, professional writing and financial literacy. The Graduate School sponsors professional development opportunities for graduate students through the
Graduate Institute. The Institute features teaching seminars, writing workshops, sessions on research skills, programs on writing the dissertation, and more. In addition to gaining new skills, students have the opportunity to network with peers from across disciplines. These workshops are covered through the usual tuition and fees, without addition cost. You can find details about the Graduate Institute at: http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/gs_profdevelopment.html

The Graduate School at UNC Charlotte also offers a broad array of other professional development activities, including career fairs, funding opportunities, and special guest speakers, throughout the year. HSR PhD students are updated about these opportunities through email announcements from the HSR PhD Program Director.

Career Services

The UNC Charlotte Career Planning and Placement Center offers career development services to both graduate and undergraduate students. The office is located at 150 Atkins Building. This office exists to serve students who need assistance in making a successful transition from college or graduate school to their chosen field or career. Their contact information is, Phone: 704-687-2231; Fax: 704-687-2683, internet: http://www.career.uncc.edu/index.cfm

Student services offered by the Career Planning and Placement Office include workshops on: career planning, internships, resume’s and cover letters; effective interviewing.

Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services works with current undergraduate and graduate students along with prospective students to ensure equal access to UNC Charlotte’s campus and educational programs. All services are dependent upon verification of eligibility. Once approved for services, students receive appropriate and reasonable accommodations which are based upon the nature of an individual’s disability and documented needs. Their contact information is, Phone: 704-684-8073, Internet: http://www.ds.uncc.edu/index.htm

Counseling Center

The UNC Charlotte Counseling Center offers individual counseling to assist students with concerns of a personal nature by helping them develop better coping strategies, resolve conflicts and handle crisis situations. Typical concerns are depression, anxiety and stress, relationship issues, identity development, substance use problems, eating and body image issues. Further information is at: http://www.counselingcenter.uncc.edu/

Also available is a staff psychiatrist, through the Student Health Center, to assess whether medication may be helpful in addressing the student’s concern or for follow-up on previously prescribed medications. The psychiatrist will write prescriptions when appropriate and follow-up with students to make adjustments to medications as necessary. Further information is at:
Students who wish to consult with our psychiatrist should contact the Student Health Center directly at 704.687.7400. Students can also discuss a referral to psychiatry with a counselor at the Counseling Center. The counseling and psychiatry services are supported by the usual tuition and fees, and are available without additional cost.

Professional Student Organization

Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG)

The purpose of the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG), according to the by-laws, is to serve as an appropriate voice on campus for graduate students, to meet the various needs of graduate students, and to establish a liaison between graduate faculty, graduate students, and the University. The UNC Charlotte GPSG is here to serve as an advocate for students, and it will be as strong and effective as the passion and participation of its members; thus, your active participation will ensure that your issues are heard and addressed.

UNCC Academy Health Graduate Student Chapter (AHGSC)

The purpose of UNCC-AHGSC is to foster an environment that contributes to the enhancement of the academic and professional concerns, goals, and careers of the graduate student in the Health Services Research Doctoral Program. UNCC-AHGSC membership is open to any UNCC student with an interest in graduate and professional development in Health Services Research. The chapter meets monthly during the fall and spring semesters. Active members of AHGSC who regularly attend its meetings and participate in related activities may be eligible for travel funding through GPSG to support attendance at academic conferences.

Doctoral Student Responsibilities and Code of Ethics

Code of Student Academic Integrity

Students enrolled in any educational program in the College of Health and Human Services are required to demonstrate the highest ethical standards. These requirements pertain to both academic and professional behavior.

All HSR PhD students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity (http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html). Please especially note: you are held accountable to this Code even if you violate it inadvertently.

Violations include the following:

- **Cheating** - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids, or other devices in any academic exercise. This definition includes unauthorized
communication of information during an academic exercise.

**Fabrication and falsification** - Intentional and unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification is a matter of altering information, while fabrication is a matter of inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.

**Multiple submissions** - The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without instructor approval.

**Plagiarism** - Intentionally or knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The only exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the ideas, information, etc., are common knowledge.

**Abuse of academic materials** - Intentionally or knowingly destroying, stealing, or making inaccessible library or other academic resource material. Typical Examples: Stealing or destroying library or reference materials needed by other students.

**Complicity in academic dishonesty** - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

**Applicable Policies**

HSR PhD students are expected to be knowledgeable about and abide by the policies of the College of Health and Human Services and UNC Charlotte. The policies for the College of Health and Human Services (in the College of Health and Human Services Handbook) are located at: http://www.health.uncc.edu/students/files/. The Graduate School policies are located at: http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/gs_catalog.html. The University level policies can be found at: http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/. University policies that are highly relevant for HSR PhD students are:

- The Code of Student Responsibility (http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-104.html)
- The Code of Student Academic Integrity (http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html);
- Sexual Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedures (http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-61.html)
- Responsible Use of University Computing and Electronic Communication Resources (http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-66.html)

*Note: Both the Graduate School and the College of Health and Human Services have adopted policies requiring students to demonstrate knowledge and awareness of academic integrity violations and policies. Both are in the process of developing an electronic tutorial on these topics, which all students will be required to complete. Please be alert for announcements regarding the availability of these tutorials.*

*Doctoral students are typically expected to have a thorough understanding of academic integrity issues as a result of their undergraduate and master’s-level education. As a result, the HSR PhD program simply expects academic integrity. A doctoral student who commits any of the violations listed above may be dismissed from the HSR PhD program.*
Position Description: Director, HSR PhD Program

General
The Director of the Health Services Research Ph.D. Program is an administrative coordinator position appointed by the Dean. The Program Director is a 12 month administrative appointment with teaching responsibilities. The Program Director provides oversight of the program and reports to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Health and Human Services.

Program Planning and Evaluation
The HSR PhD director is responsible for preparing an annual assessment of progress in achieving strategic goals and program evaluation of the PhD Program. S/he facilitates course evaluations, including faculty teaching the HSR PhD program, doctoral student evaluations and evaluates contribution and progression of doctoral students.

Program Operation
The HSR PhD Director is responsible for providing leadership and oversight for the HSR PhD program in student recruitment, progression, advising, graduation and evaluation of students in the HSR PhD program. Responsibilities of the Program Director include:

- Chairs the Ph.D. Program Committee
- Communicates and coordinates program development and evaluation to the Associate Dean and to the College faculty.
- Oversees student recruitment and admission efforts
- Recommends program budget needs to the Associate Dean
- Coordinates scheduling of courses
- Maintains student records in collaboration with the Associate Dean
- Assigns an advisor to entering students
- Coordinates scheduling of dissertation defenses with chairs of dissertation committees
- Serves as the liaison to the Graduate School
- Represents the program to external professional and community constituencies
- Has teaching responsibilities as appropriate to program needs
- Works collaboratively with School Directors and Department Chairs

Appointment Criteria
- Meets the qualifications of a tenured senior professorial rank and is a member of the Graduate Faculty and the Program Faculty of the Ph.D. Program
- Will have a 12 month administrative appointment
Health Services Research (HSR) Ph.D. Program Committee

The Ph.D. Program Committee advises the Program Director to ensure the successful implementation, growth and evaluation of the doctoral degree program. Membership will consist of one representative from each participating department and one at-large representative from one of the participating academic units from the College. All members will be regular members of the Graduate Faculty. The committee will assist the Program Director in administering the Ph.D. program to ensure a program of the highest quality. The length of terms of committee members will be staggered.

The HSR Ph.D. Program Committee:
- Serves as the Curriculum Committee for the Ph.D. program in Health Services Research
- Reviews and recommends student admission to the Graduate School for the HSR PhD program
- Approves the appointment of faculty members as either Program Faculty or Participating Faculty
- Assures that the Qualifying Examination is administered properly for this program
- Determines that program requirements are completed by each student
- Coordinates the evaluation of the program and student outcomes

Members of the HSR Ph.D. Program Committee (with the exception of the Program Director who is appointed by the Dean) will be appointed by the HSR Ph.D. Program Director in consultation with the HSR Ph.D. Program Committee.
Health Services Research Faculty Description

The UNC Charlotte PhD program in Health Services Research program has two levels of faculty status. Interested faculty may be nominated for status as either Program Faculty or Participating Faculty. Appointments to faculty status at either level are made by the HSR PhD Program Committee.

Program Faculty: Criteria for Appointment and Responsibilities

Criteria for appointment to Program Faculty include ALL of the following:

1. Regular member of the Graduate Faculty\(^1\) at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.
2. Full-time, joint, or adjunct appointment in the College of Health and Human Services.\(^2\)
3. Rank of Associate Professor or Professor, with Tenure.
4. Experience directing at least 1 dissertation, or as a member of at least 1 successfully completed dissertation committee, in Health Services Research or a related field.\(^3\)
5. Expertise that is relevant to health services research.
6. An active, ongoing research program\(^4\) with evidence of generating:
   - Past and current, regular and consistent scholarly contributions that are widely disseminated in peer reviewed contexts in professionally recognized venues.
   - Presentations at national and/or international professional conferences.
   - Substantive sponsored research support.

Responsibilities of Program Faculty

Program Faculty will assume leadership roles, which may include: chairing dissertation committees; chairing Qualifying Examination committees; advising and mentoring students; being a member of the doctoral program committee; developing and teaching courses; mentoring dissertation committee members in successful dissertation committee membership; etc.

Participating Faculty: Criteria for Appointment and Responsibilities

Criteria for Appointment to Participating Faculty include any of the following:

1. Knowledge, skills and abilities that augment the Health Services Research program curriculum and objectives.
2. Regular Member or Associate Member of the Graduate Faculty at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.\(^5\)
3. An active, ongoing research program\(^4\) that augments the Health Services Research Program curriculum and objectives.

Responsibilities for Participating Faculty may include: serving as dissertation committee member; serving as Qualifying Examination committee member; developing and teaching courses in the HSR PhD program. Participating Faculty with research expertise unavailable among the Program Faculty may be approved to Co-Chair dissertations, providing:

1. The other Co-Chair is a member of the Program Faculty
2. The Participating Faculty member holds the rank of Associate Professor or Professor
3. The Co-Chair arrangement is approved by the HSR PhD Program Director and the HSR PhD Program Committee
4. Possess Regular Graduate Faculty membership.
Regular members of the Graduate Faculty: “All full-time faculty members holding academic rank of Professor, Associate Professor or Assistant Professor, who meet the qualifications established by their departmental faculty and approved by the UNC Charlotte Graduate Council, shall be eligible for membership in the Graduate Faculty” (http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/f_faculty%20appt.html). Thus, part-time faculty and those with emeritus appointments cannot serve on the Program Faculty.

Program Faculty with a joint or adjunct appointment in the College of Health and Human Services must fulfill criteria #1 for Program Faculty, being a “regular member of the Graduate Faculty at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte,” and thus have a full-time faculty appointment at UNC-Charlotte holding academic rank of Professor or Associate Professor, with tenure. Definitions and procedures regarding adjunct faculty are available at: http://www.provost.uncc.edu/epa/handbook/chapter_VIII.htm#A.

Experience as the Graduate School representative on a dissertation committee does not fulfill this criterion.

The criteria identifying “an active ongoing research program” will be those established by the College of Health and Human Services for adequate progress for reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

Regarding Associate Graduate Faculty Membership, see: http://www.uncc.edu/gradmiss/f_faculty%20appt.html. The Associate Graduate Faculty combines several previously existing categories of non-regular Graduate Faculty including adjunct, ad hoc, and Professional Affiliate.
HSR PhD Program Faculty

**Bruce Arrigo, Ph.D.**, Adjunct Professor and Professor, Dept of Criminal Justice, Adjunct Professor in Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Mental health services research from the perspective of medical sociology, bioethics, and law. [barrigo@uncc.edu](mailto:barrigo@uncc.edu)

**Dee Baldwin, Ph.D., RN, FAAN.**, Professor in Nursing. Research interests: Cancer, Community/Public Health, Cultural Competence and Diversity, Healthcare Disparities, Healthcare Literacy, Race/Ethnicity/Culture, Social Justice. [dbaldwi5@uncc.edu](mailto:dbaldwi5@uncc.edu)

**Suzanne Boyd, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Social Work. Research interests: Child and adolescent mental health, adult mental health, consumer-operated services, peer support mental health services, building research capacity within organizations, program evaluations, recovery-based mental health systems. [sboyd@uncc.edu](mailto:sboyd@uncc.edu)

**Bill Brandon, Ph.D.**, Professor, Political Science, Adjunct in Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Health Policy & Administration; gerontology; public administration; public policy; health services research. [wilbrand@uncc.edu](mailto:wilbrand@uncc.edu)

**Mitchell Cordova, Ph.D.**, Professor, Kinesiology. Research interests: Sports medicine; biomechanics; motor control; knee and ankle osteoarthritis. [mcordova@uncc.edu](mailto:mcordova@uncc.edu)

**Andrew Harver, Ph.D.**, Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Asthma; dyspnea; COPD; symptoms. [arharver@uncc.edu](mailto:arharver@uncc.edu)

**Larissa Huber, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Public Health Sciences. Research interests: Reproductive epidemiology including unintended pregnancy, contraceptive failure, and trends in contraceptive use. [lrhuber@uncc.edu](mailto:lrhuber@uncc.edu)

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Appendix A: Program Requirements for Previous Cohorts

Most aspects of the program are consistent from cohort to cohort, and from Handbook to Handbook. This current Handbook adds the requirement of a Qualifying Examination for students entering the program 2009 or later and slightly modifies the courses required for fulfilling the program requirements. The Qualifying Examination (which occurs at the same time as the defense of the dissertation proposal) for Cohorts that first matriculated in 2007 or 2008 includes a requirement for three substantive papers, on which the student is examined at the time of the Qualifying Examination:

- Review of the literature of research area including relevant theories relating the research area to the goals of health services research
- Methodological paper
- Ethical and policy considerations of conducting health services research in the student’s topical area

This requirement does not appear in this current edition of the Handbook, and is therefore not required of cohorts first matriculating in 2009 or later. Although students in the 2007 and 2008 cohorts formally have the option to fulfill the requirement stated above, as this was the requirement at the time of their first matriculation, the HSR PhD Faculty strongly encourage students to instead fulfill the Qualifying Examination requirements outlined in this Handbook. In addition to preparing the dissertation proposal, students fulfill the revised requirement by preparing a doctoral portfolio. The HSR PhD Faculty believe that the portfolio will be useful to all doctoral students, and will help to prepare them more fully for successful professional careers. Please see the sections below describing the Qualifying Examination and the dissertation process.

All students are required to maintain a doctoral portfolio beginning with the fall semester of 2009, and to participate in an individual annual evaluation of their progress as a doctoral student. See the section below headed, “Annual Evaluation of HSR PhD Students.”

In addition to these modifications, the current Handbook includes the addition of two 3-credit courses (Grant Writing and Advanced Data Management for Health Services Research), and the elimination of 3 1-credit seminars (Grant Proposal Writing, Health Disparities, and Research Implementation and Design). The Area of Interest courses have been reduced from 9 credits to 6, thus retaining the 64-credit degree requirement. The dropped courses will not be offered again. Students who first matriculated before 2009 who have not completed one or more of the dropped seminars have the option of completing the seminar requirements through directed study (i.e., an “Independent Study” under the supervision of a member of the HSR PhD faculty), or by taking a regularly-offered graduate course that fulfills the course content of the required course. Students affected by these changes must consult with the Program Director to arrange for fulfilling the program requirements, and must do so before taking the relevant other courses or independent studies.

Additionally, most course pre-requisites in the program have been dropped or streamlined, so that students can typically take most courses in the curriculum without having completed other courses in the curriculum. Courses that require a logical sequence progression, such as Applied Biostatistics: Multivariate, continue to require pre-requisites. Master’s-level courses in health policy, statistics or biostatistics, and epidemiology continue to be required as pre-requisites for the corresponding courses in the HSR PhD program.
Appendix B: HSR PhD Independent Study Application

This proposal will serve as the course syllabus. It can be referred to in cases of grade challenges. After approval by the Program Director, only changes agreeable to both the student and advisor are permissible. Changes must be in writing, signed by the student and faculty member, and approved by the Program Director.

Title of proposed independent study course: HSRD 8800,

Number of credits:

Semester:

HSR PhD faculty member who will direct the independent study:

Objectives:

Assignments, projects, products, or other means of evaluating the student’s learning:

If the independent study is intended to substitute for a required regular course in the HSR PhD curriculum, describe how the independent study will fulfill the goals of the regular course. Independent study courses are not typically permitted to substitute for courses offered in the same semester, or scheduled for the following semester. Provide a rationale for the course (why the “independent” dimension is required). Students preparing independent study applications intended to substitute for a required regular course in the HSR PhD program should consult with the Program Director before preparing a detailed application.

Projected resources, bibliography of readings, data to be analyzed, etc. (Include attachments as needed.)

It is the student’s responsibility to verify that this course is added to his or her schedule, following approval by the Program Director.

I understand and agree that an independent study course requires a minimum of 4 hours each week per credit hour during the spring or summer semesters, or approximately 9.3 hours each week per credit hour for summer courses. It is my responsibility to make appropriate arrangements with the faculty member for submission of completed work and evaluations.

_______________________________________________  _________________________
Student Name Printed and Signature                    Date

I agree to supervise this independent study on a regular basis, and to provide a final grade.

_______________________________________________  _________________________
Faculty Name Printed and Signature                    Date

_______________________________________________  _________________________
Graduate Program Director Signature/Approval          Date
Appendix C: HSR PhD Student Travel Application

NAME _____________________________  E-MAIL _____________________________

AMOUNT REQUESTING* $_____________  LOCAL PHONE __________________________

PLEASE ATTACH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS SUPPORT OF THIS APPLICATION:

1) Name of conference or organization _____________________________

2) Date of Conference _____________________________

3) Site of conference _____________________________

4) Has the abstract/paper been accepted for presentation? □ YES □ NO

5) Will you present the paper/abstract at the conference? □ YES □ NO

6) Have you applied for GPSG travel funds? □ YES □ NO

   If yes, when? _____________________________

NOTE:  ALL APPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING. PLEASE CHECK EACH INCLUDED.

1) □ A copy of the accepted abstract;

2) □ A description of the conference (preliminary program);

3) □ A letter of support or endorsement from the applicant’s advisor including an indication of the importance of the conference or event forum.

4) □ A copy of the acceptance notification to participate in the conference. An email invitation will suffice for application but a formal invitation or notation in the final conference schedule will be required to be submitted with receipts for payment.

5) □ Travel budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Applicant</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Advisor</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signature of HSR PhD Director</td>
<td>Date</td>
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</tbody>
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APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE HSR PhD DIRECTOR AT LEAST 21 CALENDAR DAYS PRIOR TO TRAVEL.

   Approved: □ YES □ NO   Amount: $____________

*We cannot guarantee funding for all travel requests. Please do not assume that you have received a travel award until the HSR PhD director has notified you.