

Your
Qualifying Examination
& Dissertation

A Guide for Ph.D. Students

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY HEALTH

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INTRODUCTION

The qualifying examination and dissertation are designed to serve as culminating experiences following nearly 20 years of formal education. Despite all of this time and effort, few students have had the opportunity to systematically examine how the relevant knowledge they have gained can be integrated into a coherent framework of thought. Qualifying exams afford the opportunity to construct such a framework. Rather than simply adding new pieces of knowledge, students are encouraged to arrange the pieces into some kind of structure. The qualifying exams are uniquely suited to the tasks of sorting and reconceptualization required for mastery of a field. On the other hand, the dissertation is an opportunity to create new knowledge in the field. Students are expected to utilize their foundational knowledge and appropriate research tools to design, implement and evaluate a research project to further enhance the selected field of study.

THE QUALIFYING EXAM¹

Purpose of the Qualifying Examination

The purpose of the Doctoral Qualifying Examination is for the doctoral student to demonstrate that she/he has the ability to identify, undertake, and analyze a specific substantive area (or areas) of community and family health research that would be appropriate for a dissertation topic in public health.

The timing of the Doctoral Qualifying Examination will be determined by the student's faculty advisor(s) in consultation with the doctoral committee. Typically, students will complete the qualifying exam only after completing all required coursework for the PhD. However, in some cases, the student, a student's faculty advisor or doctoral committee may determine that additional coursework is needed *following* the qualifying exam.

The Doctoral qualifying examination involves a period of significant self-preparation where the student will emerge with the ability to identify a specific focus area within community and family health, summarize and synthesize the relevant research literature, and design a sound methodology for her/his doctoral dissertation research study.

The specific goals of the qualifying exam are for the doctoral student to demonstrate the capacity to:

- Develop a firm knowledge related to public health in general and specific to a relevant content area;
- Integrate information from these areas to identify a major public health issue;
- Design an appropriate methodological approach to define, evaluate, and analyze a major public health issue; and
- Discuss the potential contribution of the proposed research study to the body of knowledge of public health theory and implications for public health practice.

¹ This section borrows heavily from the USF Department of Anthropology Qualifying Examination Guidelines.

How to Register

It is the student's responsibility to notify the faculty advisor(s) of the intention to take the examination. Notification must be made at least **eight weeks** prior to the scheduled examination start date. The purpose of the notification is to allow adequate time to secure proper facilities and equipment for the examination, and to solicit questions from members of the doctoral committee.

All doctoral students planning to take qualifying exams will need to fill out a one-page ***Application for the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam*** and submit it to the COPH Office of Academic and Student Affairs, along with an updated Plan of Study form, at least **four weeks** prior to the exam. Students must check the exact deadline with the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. This form will allow staff in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs to check the student's grade point average and assure that there are no outstanding requirements. Students and advisors will be notified of approval to proceed with the qualifying exam.

Timing and format of the Qualifying Examination

- Prior to the qualifying exam, each student will develop a concept paper or research plan outlining the intended topics and goal of the dissertation. When the student and her/his faculty advisor(s) determine that the concept paper/research plan is sufficiently developed, the student will present the concept paper/research plan to the student's doctoral committee.
- Typically, following the presentation, a student's doctoral committee will determine the topics on which the exam will focus. At that time or following the meeting, the committee will draft and agree upon 4-5 questions on which the student will write for the exam.
- A student's doctoral committee will determine the specific expectations for the qualifying exam, although certain parameters must be met, as follows:
 - Each student will have 10 weeks to complete the exam from the time topics are finalized and provided to the student. Students who wish to complete the exam in less than 10 weeks may turn the exam in early.
 - Each student must answer between 3 and 5 questions for the exam, totaling no more than 75 pages double-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt font or Arial 11 pt font.
 - During the exam period, students may request clarification of the topics or questions to be addressed but drafts of the papers will not be reviewed by the committee.
 - Once the exam is complete, the doctoral committee will be given at least 2 weeks to review the exam. Within 3 weeks of exam completion, the student will receive written feedback from the committee chair, denoting strengths and weaknesses of the exam, and providing an evaluative assessment for each question (i.e., pass, borderline, or fail; see table below). After a student receives a "pass" for each exam question, the committee may choose to meet with the student for a post-qualifying exam discussion, during which the committee may ask questions to further

clarify statements in the exam and/or discuss future directions towards dissertation proposal development

Content of the Doctoral Qualifying Examination

The content of the doctoral examination will be drawn from four areas:

1. Specific knowledge of the state of the literature regarding the student's focus area(s).
 - Evaluation will be based upon a student's ability to obtain research materials, synthesize the literature, identify knowledge gaps, and discuss the potential to make contributions to the focus area.
2. Discussion of relevant theories for pursuing the area of interest and assessment of the contribution the study will make to theory and public health practice.
 - Evaluation will be based upon: a) the student's review of a broad range of theories that are derived from multiple disciplines and relate to the student's focus area; b) the student's evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each reviewed theory as it relates to the student's focus area; and c) the justification made for using one or more theories to study their area of interest.
3. Research methods and evaluation, including statistical competence, particularly related to the student's specific research interests.
 - Evaluation will be based upon the student's review of multiple methods for researching the focus area, discussion of strengths and weaknesses of each method, and conclusion about which method(s) are best suited to studying the area of interest.
4. The broad field of public health, including community and family health.
 - Questions related to this topic will vary. Evaluation will be based on the extent to which the answer directly corresponds to the question. Typically, synthesis of the pertinent research literature will be paramount to a successful response. Additionally, students may be required to identify and discuss aspects of public health, including but not limited to: core functions of public health, essential public health services, important historical milestones in public health, public health principles, and relevant theories or paradigms, and/or to apply their knowledge of the broader field to a specific scenario. Students may also be required to make recommendations for advancing the field.

Preparation of Examination Topics/Questions

Each member of the student's doctoral committee will be invited to contribute items to a pool of topics or questions for each section of the qualifying examination. The doctoral student may be invited to submit topics/questions for consideration. Topics/questions are

submitted to the student's faculty advisor(s). The faculty advisor(s) has responsibility for final construction of the qualifying examination.

Evaluation and Grading

Responses to each exam question will be evaluated and scored separately by the doctoral committee chair and at least two doctoral committee members. In addition, the doctoral committee will provide appropriate written remarks regarding strengths and weaknesses of the responses to each question. A topic/question of an examination is considered "failed" only after two committee members (one of whom may be the chair) evaluate the questions as "failed". A "failed" question of the exam will require a rewrite. The student will have one additional opportunity to be examined on the previously failed topic(s)/question(s). Students will be allotted two weeks for rewriting each exam question. In no case will a student be allowed a third attempt to complete examination or individual topics/questions of the exam. Topics/questions of the examination that have been passed on the first administration are not administered a second time. Failure to pass any topic/question after two administrations of the examination may result in the student's dismissal from the program. The doctoral committee will use the interpretive statement presented below for evaluating each question of the examination.

Evaluation	INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT
Pass	Competent and sound work for a doctoral student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well reasoned, and demonstrates clear recognition and good understanding of the salient issues.
Borderline	Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete, and overall performance, if consistently at this level, would be below the level of adequate graduate-level performance. Students will address these issues in the first chapters of the dissertation or in a rewrite of the failed question, depending on the preference of the doctoral committee.
Fail	Unacceptable work for a doctoral student; work at this level demonstrates neither a conceptual grasp of salient issues nor an aptitude for scholarly work. Each student will be given one opportunity to rewrite their response to each "failed" question.

In rare instances, students whose performance is truly exceptional may be awarded a grade of "Pass with Distinction." Work at this level is creative, thorough, well-reasoned, insightful, well written, and shows clear recognition and an incisive understanding of the salient issues. Work at this level is of outstanding professional quality.

Notification of Examination Results

As noted, the committee chair will provide the student with written feedback denoting strengths and weaknesses of the exam, and providing an evaluative assessment for each question (i.e., pass, borderline, or fail). The Department Chairperson and the other committee members will receive copies of the written feedback. The Department Chairperson will submit written notification of the examination results to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, College of Public Health, using the ***Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree*** form (available on the Graduate School website). Exams

will be stored in student's permanent folder in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, College of Public Health.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

Letter of Candidacy

The student receives an official Letter of Candidacy from the Graduate School upon approval of written notification of qualifying examination results. In a semester during which a student completes the requirements for admission to candidacy, directed research credits may be counted toward fulfilling dissertation credits, with approval of the faculty advisor(s).

Mandatory Enrollment

Doctoral students who have completed all degree requirements, and have been admitted to candidacy are required to register for a minimum of 2 credit hours every semester following admission to candidacy, until the degree is granted.

BEGINNING THE DISSERTATION

Dissertation Committee

The student is ready for the dissertation process after the successful completion of the qualifying examination. The membership of the dissertation committee may be the same as that of the doctoral committee, unless the Ph.D. candidate or faculty advisor(s) recommends a change, and it is approved by the Department Chair and Associate Dean for Academics. The *Changes to the Graduate Student Supervisory Committee* form (available on the Graduate Studies website) must be used to request any changes to the committee.

The Graduate School has the following requirements for doctoral committees:

1. a minimum of four members; three members have their primary appointment in the Department, and one is outside of the Department.
2. members of the doctoral committee must be credentialed by the College of Public Health, and the Chair must be of full graduate faculty status; it is the student's responsibility to verify that each committee member is credentialed. (Note: Even though a faculty member may have "Professor" rank, this does not ensure credentialing for doctoral committees.)

Dissertation Format

A dissertation may take one of two formats. The first, the **traditional format**, has at least five chapters: Introduction, Review of the Literature, Methods, Results, and a final chapter containing Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations. The second option is the **manuscript format** which has at least four sections. The manuscript option also requires the student's committee to approve the refereed journals that will be targeted for submission and the number of manuscripts that will be included in the dissertation.

Table 1. Requirements for the **traditional format** dissertation.

Part	Chapter	Content
I		<u>Preliminary Pages</u>
		Title Page
		Note to Reader (if applicable)
		Dedication (optional page)
		Acknowledgments (optional page)
		Table of Contents
		List of Tables (if applicable)
		List of Figures (if applicable)
II		Abstract
		Main Text
	1	Introduction
	2	Literature Review
	3	Methods
	4	Results of the dissertation
III	5	Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations
		References/ Bibliography
		Appendices Title Page
IV		Appendix Sections (i.e., instruments, etc; if applicable)
		About the Author (required)

Table 2. Requirements for the **manuscript format** dissertation.

Part	Section	Content	
I		<u>Preliminary Pages</u> Title Page Note to Reader (if applicable) Dedication (optional page) Acknowledgments (optional page) Table of Contents List of Tables (if applicable) List of Figures (if applicable) Abstract	
	II		Main Text
		1	Introduction including theoretical framework
		2	First manuscript
		3	Second manuscript ²
	4	Conclusions and recommendations for the entire study	
	III		References/ Bibliography (comprehensive list)
		Appendices Title Page	
		Appendix Sections (this section <u>must</u> include a literature review, and may include instruments, etc.)	
IV		About the Author (required)	

Writing the Dissertation –Traditional Format³

The Ph.D. candidate, with the approval of the doctoral committee, will agree upon a dissertation subject and develop a proposal, consisting of three chapters: Introduction/Statement of the Problem, Review of the Literature, and Methods. The remaining chapters will be completed before the defense of the doctoral dissertation.

Chapter 1. Introduction and Statement of the Problem

The Introduction should describe the nature and purpose of the study, and explain the significance of and justification for conducting the study. This chapter should also present the specific hypotheses or research questions to be addressed by the dissertation study, clearly relating these to lines of investigation and conjecture detailed in current

² If additional manuscripts are required by the committee, the section numbers will change. For example, in a dissertation with three manuscripts, the third manuscript will be labeled Section 4 and the “Conclusions and Recommendations” will be labeled Section 5. In a dissertation with four manuscripts, the fourth manuscript will be labeled Section 5 and the “Conclusions and Recommendations” will be labeled Section 6.

³ This section generously used materials from http://www.albany.edu/etap/graduate_programs/doctoral/Dissertation%20guidelines.doc

literature. Terms likely to be used throughout the proposal should be defined in this chapter.

Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

Literature reviews should be thorough and systematic. Chapter 2 presents a critical analysis of prior scholarship related to the central questions of the dissertation. Although the degree of completion of the literature review at the proposal stage is a matter of deliberation with the committee, in most cases it is important that the literature review in a proposal:

1. Demonstrates thorough understanding of the subject of the dissertation, through review and analysis of previous research;
2. Identifies chief researchers and documents in the community of scholars to which the dissertation is meant to contribute;
3. Identifies areas of consensus, dispute, and ignorance in the scholarship of the field and evaluates the nature and quality of support for various contentions;
4. Draws new insights or new questions from the literature to offer a conceptual or theoretical framework in which the dissertation should be understood; and
5. Examines and weighs previous and potential methods for investigating the hypotheses or research questions to be addressed in the dissertation.
6. Prepares the reader to appreciate how the dissertation will contribute significant new understanding to this framework;

*Note: Citation of and specific credit to relevant earlier works is part of the author's scientific and scholarly responsibility. The review should focus only on literature and conclusions directly pertinent to the subject and the problem addressed in the dissertation.

Chapter 3. Methods

This chapter is typically divided into labeled subsections. Often a subsection describing participants or subjects, including a description of the population from which they are drawn, is followed by subsections describing data collection, testing or other measurement procedures to be undertaken with the participants and a subsection describing how the resulting variables will be analyzed to help resolve the problems stated in the introduction. Tense should be appropriate to the situation—if methods have yet to be done, they should be written in the future tense, whereas methods that have already been completed should be written in the past tense.

- **Subjects and setting:** The characteristics of participants of the study, how they were selected, and the setting of the study should be presented in detail.
- **Instrumentation:** Any tools or instruments that might be important for readers to understand (such as, assessment instruments, surveys, interview formats, observation protocols, and data collection devices), should be described in detail. If subjects interacted with special equipment or software, or other materials, a detailed description is essential.
- **Data collection procedures:** The readers should be given a thorough description of all the steps involved in data collection. Timelines are helpful, either in outline or graphical representation. Efforts to protect the reliability of findings and the validity of inferences should be detailed.
- **Data analysis:** Regardless of the data collection method used, an analytic strategy must be applied to make sense of the observations. Chapter 3 should describe the analytic strategies employed and a rationale for their use. To the degree that readers may be unfamiliar with the strategy, greater detail may be needed. Methods of “data cleaning” and refinement, categorization schemes and how they were developed, data transformations, statistical tests, and checks on the validity and generalizability of conclusions are suitable topics.

Chapter 4. Results

The fourth chapter summarizes and analyzes the study's data with only minimal interpretation. This chapter should bring readers as close as reasonable to the original data and experiences of the study. This involvement with the data gives the reader some chance to form his or her own inferences and match them against conclusions in Chapter 5. It should begin with a brief review of the purpose of the study and the research method employed. The presentation in Chapter 5 should closely follow the guiding questions or hypotheses articulated earlier in the dissertation. The results should be presented first in their simplest form (such as simple narrative descriptions, simple counts of frequency, and descriptive statistics), and later in more complex forms (multifactor interactions and generalized patterns or inferential statistics).

Generally, interpretation of findings is reserved for Chapter 5, but if the study is complex, it may become tedious for readers to review page after page of uninterpreted results. Sometimes it is useful to highlight the most important findings both in the text and in accompanying tables and to draw some simple conclusions in anticipation of more developed discussions in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

When completing a **traditional format** dissertation, Chapter 5 will include a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for research and practice. It is, perhaps, the most crucial chapter because it presents the contribution to the research literature and because some cursory readers will attend to this chapter only. Therefore, it is typical to give a brief summary of essential points made in Chapters 1 and 3: why this topic is important, and how the study's design contributed to understanding of the topic.

The remainder of the chapter teases out the implications of the study's findings. These implications can be grouped into: theory or generalization, public health practice, and future research. Theoretical implications involve interpretation of the dissertation findings in terms of the questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

It is appropriate to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the work, including the degree to which conclusions are credible given the method and data. It also should provide a critical retrospective examination of the framework presented in the literature review in light of the dissertation's findings.

Practice implications should delineate applications of new insights derived from the dissertation to solve real and significant public health problems.

Two kinds of implications for future research are possible: one based on the study's actual findings and the other based on its limitations. Generally, future research could look at different settings, interventions with new protocols or dependent measures, or new theoretical issues which emerged from the study. It is appropriate to suggest which of these possibilities are likely to be most fruitful.

The last words should give the "take home message," the enduring ideas or conclusions. This should be presented in the simplest possible form, being sure to preserve the conditional nature of the insights.

Writing the Dissertation –Manuscript Format

The Ph.D. candidate, with the approval of the doctoral committee, will agree upon a dissertation subject and develop a proposal, consisting of three or four sections, depending on whether two or three manuscripts will be in the dissertation. After careful consideration and approval of committee members, candidates will select a minimum of two scientific journals (one primary and one secondary) where they will plan to submit each manuscript for publication. Listed below are essential points to consider:

- Please review the previous traditional format's description of each chapter as this will give guidance as to the expectations for each section.
- This version of the dissertation is formatted in sections instead of chapters. Section 1 is the introduction which includes the statement of the problem and theoretical framework. The Introduction should describe the nature and purpose of the study, and explain the significance of and justification for conducting the study. This section should also present the specific hypotheses or research questions to be addressed by the dissertation study, clearly relating these to lines of investigation and conjecture detailed in current literature. Terms likely to be used throughout the proposal should be defined in this section. A thorough review of the conceptual/theoretical framework(s) or models to be used is expected.

- Prior to approval of the proposal, the committee may decide that three or more publications are needed to report results adequately. At least two of the manuscripts must report on the research data. A systematic review of the literature may be considered as a third publication if there is an appropriate scholarly journal that publishes systematic reviews.
- In preparation for the proposal defense, manuscripts will be Sections 2 and 3. If more than two manuscripts are required by the committee, those manuscripts will be Sections 4 (for third manuscript) and 5 (for fourth manuscript). Each proposed manuscript will follow the specific manuscript guidelines, and will include the introduction and statement of the problem, literature review, and methods. It is recommended that a copy of the journal's instructions for authors be available to each committee member.
- At the oral defense of the proposal, the student is expected to present items in Section 1, a comprehensive review of the literature,⁴ as well as an overview of each manuscript's research questions/hypotheses, specific methods, and rationale for each journal selection. The manuscripts are to cover the entire dissertation research.
- The final dissertation will include Section 1 (introduction and framework), a section for each completed manuscript (including all components required by the specific journal guidelines), final conclusion and recommendation section, references, and appendices. The last section focuses on conclusions and implications of the entire dissertation. Additionally, it is necessary for this section to cover the items below **if not** covered in the manuscripts.
 - ❖ Theoretical implications involved in interpretation of the dissertation findings and in terms of the questions and hypotheses that guided the study. It also should include a critical, retrospective examination of the framework presented in Section 1 in light of the dissertation's findings.
 - ❖ An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the work, and the degree to which conclusions are credible given the methods and data.
 - ❖ Practical implications and new insights derived from the dissertation to solve real and significant public health problems.
 - ❖ Implications for future research based on the study's actual findings and the study's limitations. Generally, future research could look at different settings, interventions with new protocols or dependent measures, or new theoretical issues which emerged from the study. It is appropriate to suggest which of these possibilities are likely to be most fruitful.
 - ❖ A "take home message," the enduring ideas or conclusions that readers need to keep when they are done. This should be presented in the simplest possible form, being sure to preserve the conditional nature of the insights.

⁴ The student must present a comprehensive review of the literature in the appendices.

- The entire dissertation must conform to basic format requirements as required by Graduate School. (see http://www.grad.usf.edu/newsite/manuscript_format.asp) This format includes dissertation abstract, table of contents, acknowledgements, pagination, format style (e.g. APA), table, figure, and appendix numbering, font type and size, margin and spacing requirements and header consistency. Each manuscript in the dissertation will follow *journal* requirements/standards as to page length, abstract format, and general structural guidelines. Although co-authors will need to be identified for manuscript submission, co-author's names should not be included in the dissertation itself. There will be one comprehensive reference list at the end of the dissertation that will conform to Graduate School guidelines. All appendices will be at the end of the dissertation.
- There may be situations in which the original publication plan or manuscript structure is not well suited to the dissertation findings. In those cases, students can work with their Major Professor or Co-Major Professor to modify the publication plan prior to the dissertation defense.
- The acceptance of any of the manuscripts for publication is not a requirement for graduation although the manuscripts must be submitted for publication before graduation. The student and committee should agree to authorship of the publications before the defense of the doctoral proposal and reconfirm prior to the dissertation defense.
- In the unlikely situation that a manuscript needs to be published before the dissertation is submitted (e.g., there is a submission deadline for a special issue), the committee must review and approve in writing that the manuscript is ready for publication.

Standard Writing Style

Research is discovery to be shared, and the USF Graduate School sets guidelines to help you display your research results in a consistent, professional manner. As researcher and author, the graduate student has full responsibility for the form and substance of the dissertation. The major professor and the members of the committee are a panel of advisors to oversee the substance, direction, and writing of the research, in addition to providing guidance for the format of the document. The Manuscript Editor of the Graduate School ensures University format guidelines are met. The Graduate School offers workshops to assist graduate students in meeting the goal of consistent and professional presentation. Contact the Graduate School for more information and to find out when the next available workshop will be held.

Choice of Style Manual

The Graduate School does not prescribe any single style for dissertations as formats differ across disciplines. Students should select a style manual established by their

department or committee and consistently follow the guidelines of that manual throughout the entire manuscript (not only for the reference/bibliography sections).

PRESENTING YOUR RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The proposal is presented in a formal meeting to the doctoral committee. This meeting is open to other faculty, other Ph.D. students and other students. At the discretion of the student and the Committee, guests of the student and the general public may be invited. The proposal date is scheduled by common agreement of the student and the doctoral committee members. This date is approved by the Department Chairperson. Proposals may only be scheduled during the regular fall semester, spring semester, or summer C session. A list of important dates and deadlines is published by the department and distributed at the beginning of each semester.

Summary of Steps in the Presentation of the Research Proposal Process

1. The student has the option of scheduling a final committee meeting prior to distributing the research proposal that will be presented. At this meeting, the student and committee should finalize any changes needed to prepare the proposal for presentation. After this meeting, the student will make the recommended changes. If a meeting is not scheduled, the draft proposal must be received by committee members at least four and a half weeks prior to the anticipated defense date. Committee members are permitted two weeks to review the proposal and discuss changes prior to signing the *Request for Presentation of Research Proposal* form.
2. All committee members sign the *Request for Presentation of Research Proposal* indicating that they have read the proposal and approve it for presentation. This form is available from the Department's Academic Coordinator or on the CFH Student Resources web page.
3. Submit the *Request for Presentation of Research Proposal* and a copy of the announcement (*Research Proposal Announcement*) to the Department Chairperson at least 18 days prior to the presentation.
4. The *Research Proposal Announcement* must be posted at least 14 days prior to the proposal presentation. Once approved, the Academic Program Coordinator will post and distribute the announcement to the faculty and to the Ph.D. students. Flyers will be posted throughout the College, placed on the CPH listservs and USF-NEWS.
5. A final copy of the research proposal is given to the committee members and the Department Chairperson 7 days prior to the defense. **No further changes may be made to the research proposal until after the presentation.** Approval for presentation is not an endorsement of the proposal as a completed research plan.
6. All forms are placed in the student's advising file.

Presentation of the Research Proposal

The purpose of the dissertation proposal presentation is to provide students with the opportunity to present their plans for research, and if appropriate, refine the methods, and gather further information and suggestions from the audience at-large. Following the

proposal presentation, the committee members convene to make final determination of the appropriateness of the research being proposed and to deliberate recommendations for changes in the proposal.

The purpose of this meeting is not to determine if the student's presentation was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Rather the purpose is to decide what, if any, proposal changes are needed before proceeding with the research. Committee members sign the ***Approval of Research Proposal*** only after the corrections, additions or changes have been made in writing and the corrected final copy has been distributed to the committee and Department Chairperson. At their discretion, committee members may sign this form prior to the changes being made with the understanding that the Dissertation Committee Chairperson will supervise the requested revisions. This form is available from the Department's Academic Coordinator or on the CFH Student Resources web page.

Approval of Research Proposal occurs only after the proposal defense and the corrections, additions or changes have been made in writing and the corrected final copy has been distributed to the committee and Department Chairperson. At their discretion, committee members may sign this form prior to the changes being made with the understanding that the Dissertation Committee Chairperson will supervise the requested revisions. This form is available from the Department's Academic Coordinator or on the CFH Student Resources web page.

Acceptance of the proposal in its final form constitutes the following:

1. Traditional format- Chapters 1- 3.
2. Manuscript format-⁵
 - a. If two manuscripts proposed- Sections 1- 3.
 - b. If three manuscripts are proposed- Sections 1-4.
 - c. If four manuscripts are proposed- Sections 1-5.

This acceptance does not preclude the committee from requiring modifications to the data analysis plan or review of literature at a later date. The committee must approve changes in the proposal or the conduct of the study initiated by the student. The committee may require that a proposal be presented for a second time before being approved, if actions after the initial proposal meeting indicate that substantive modifications in the proposal are necessary. Students are advised not to collect data for their dissertation until final approval of the proposal is completed by the doctoral committee. When the committee approves the proposal as an appropriate dissertation study, the major professor sends formal notification (***Approval of Research Proposal*** form) to the Department Chair that the proposal has been presented and approved. The major professor keeps this form in the student's advising file.

• ⁵ Manuscripts will be included up to the point of results (following each manuscript's format).

Format of Proposal Presentation

The proposal presentation is conducted in the following format:

1. Introduction by proposal moderator. *Any credentialed USF faculty member, not on the committee, may serve as moderator.*
2. Oral presentation of the research proposal by student not to exceed 35 minutes.
3. First round of questions by committee members.
4. Second round and subsequent rounds of questions by committee members.
5. One round of questions by attending non-committee faculty members.
6. Questions from non-faculty members in attendance beginning with Ph.D. students, other students, and other attendees.
7. Final round of questions by committee if desired.

CONDUCTING YOUR DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Preparation and distribution of preliminary copies of the dissertation are the responsibility of the student. Students are encouraged to meet individually with doctoral committee members, in addition to the major professor, as needed.

Institutional Review Board Approval (IRB)

All research investigators at USF are responsible for making the initial determination as to whether their research will involve human subjects as defined in the *Quick Start Guide for Investigators* (2004), available online at <http://www.research.usf.edu/cs/quickstart.htm>. When it is not clear whether the research involves human subjects, research investigators must seek assistance from the Division of Sponsored Research. If it is determined that human subjects are involved, the investigator is responsible for applying for review by the appropriate IRB. In most cases, CFH students will apply to the IRB 02 Social/Behavioral Board. This task is accomplished by research investigators preparing a protocol giving a complete description of the proposed research, a detailed application and, when appropriate, a sample of the proposed informed consent form. All forms can be found online at <http://www.research.usf.edu/cs/download02.htm>.

As a part of the application process, the investigator should ensure that the Department Chair certifies on the application form that adequate scientific review of the research study has been performed. Normally in the Department of Community and Family Health, student research contains the student's signature, the major professor's signature, the signature of the Chair of the Department's Research Committee (or representative), and the signature of the Department Chair before the IRB form is forwarded. *All doctoral students must complete the IRB credentialing process and HIPAA training during their first semester following admission.* IRB training courses are available online at <http://www.research.usf.edu/cs/irb.htm>.

ORAL DEFENSE PRESENTATION OF YOUR DISSERTATION

Scheduling of the oral presentation of the dissertation is by mutual agreement of the student and the doctoral committee. This date is approved by the Department Chairperson. Dissertation presentations may only be scheduled during the regular fall semester, spring semester, or summer C session.

Members of the doctoral committee sign the *Request for the Ph.D. Oral Examination* form prior to the oral presentation of the dissertation indicating that they have read the dissertation and approve it for presentation. Copies of the dissertation must be distributed to committee members four and half weeks prior to the anticipated defense date. Committee members are permitted two weeks to read the dissertation and provide feedback prior to signing the form. Approval does not preclude changes in the final form of the dissertation, which may be suggested during or after the oral presentation. The format for the oral presentation is consistent with policies of the College of Public Health and the Graduate School, but as much as possible, is governed by the mutual wishes of the student and the doctoral committee.

The signed *Request for the Ph.D. Oral Examination* and the *Ph.D. Oral Presentation Announcement* must be submitted to the Department Chair for approval **18 days** prior to the defense date. Once approved and at least **14 days** prior to the scheduled date, the Academic Program Coordinator will post and distribute the announcement to the faculty and students.

The student, in consultation with the major professor, selects the moderator of the dissertation meeting. The moderator must be a fully credentialed member of the USF graduate faculty. In accordance with Graduate School policy, the outside chair cannot be a member of the doctoral committee or a faculty member within the Department of Community and Family Health.

The student provides a final copy of the dissertation for each committee member and the moderator at least **7 days** prior to the scheduled oral presentation date. The student also provides a copy of the dissertation to the Department Chairperson. **No changes should be made to the document after this date.**

Successful completion of the oral examination is the culminating step of the doctoral program. This defense is the student's opportunity to present the dissertation in a public forum where faculty, other students, and guests are invited.

Summary of Steps for the Final Oral Presentation of the Dissertation

1. The student has the option of scheduling a final committee meeting prior to distributing the dissertation that will be presented. At this meeting, the student and committee should finalize any changes needed to prepare the dissertation for presentation. After this meeting, the student will make the recommended changes. If a meeting is not scheduled, the draft proposal must be received by committee members at least four and a half weeks prior to the anticipated defense date. Committee members are permitted two weeks to review the proposal and discuss changes prior to signing the *Request for Ph.D. Final Oral Presentation* form.
2. All committee members sign the *Request for Ph.D. Final Oral Presentation* form indicating that they have read the proposal and approve it for presentation. These forms are available from the College of Public Health

Office of Academic and Student Affairs and online (see Resources for current website information).

3. The ***Request for Ph.D. Final Oral Presentation*** and a copy of the announcement (***Ph.D. Oral Presentation Announcement***) must be submitted to the Department Chairperson for approval **at least 18 days prior to the presentation**. Once approved, the Academic Coordinator will post and distribute the announcement to the faculty and to students. Flyers will be posted throughout the College, placed on the COPH listservs and USF-NEWS.
4. A final copy of the dissertation is given to the committee members, Department Chairperson, and moderator at least **7 days** prior to the presentation. **No further changes may be made to the research proposal until after the presentation**. Approval for presentation is not an endorsement of the dissertation as a completed research project.
5. All forms are placed in the student file.

Format of the Final Oral Presentation of the Dissertation

The oral presentation will be conducted in the following format:

1. Introduction by dissertation presentation moderator.
2. An oral presentation of the research by the student (not to exceed 30 minutes).
3. First round of questions by committee members.
4. Second round and subsequent rounds of questions by committee members.
5. One round of questions by attending non-committee faculty members.
6. Questions from non-faculty members in the attendance, beginning with Ph.D. students, other students, and finally, other attendees.
7. Final round of questions by committee if desired.
8. The entire oral examination process normally should not exceed 3 hours in duration.

The student's doctoral committee has final approval of the oral examination and the written product. Following the dissertation presentation, the doctoral committee convenes without the student present to assess the student's performance in presenting the dissertation research. The doctoral committee may require modifications of the dissertation following the examination and before granting its final approval. If the modifications are extensive, the committee may ask the student to undergo another formal presentation.

A student is recommended for the doctorate only if ALL members of the committee judge both the dissertation and the performance of the student in oral examination to be satisfactory. Approval of the dissertation is indicated by signature on *the Successful Defense of the Ph.D. Dissertation* form. The student has sole responsibility for assuring that all forms related to the proposal and dissertation are completed, and that all work related to the dissertation conforms to the accepted style and format of the USF Graduate School.

Read the Graduate School website for specific details required by the USF Graduate School regarding dissertation presentation and preparation of the final manuscript.
http://www.grad.usf.edu/thesis_dissertation.asp

After the Successful Presentation of a Dissertation

1. Signed copy of *Successful Defense of the Ph.D. Dissertation* form by Committee members and moderator.
2. *Certificate of Approval Form for Theses and Dissertations* signed by committee members after all corrections and modifications have been completed satisfactorily.
3. Submit your dissertation electronically by the appropriate deadline. See http://www.grad.usf.edu/thesis_dissertation.asp for information on the electronic submission process.

Format of Dissertation Manuscript

The format and content of the dissertation must be in compliance with the guidelines set forth on the Graduate Studies website -

http://www.grad.usf.edu/Thesis_and_Dissertations/format.asp.

It is the responsibility of the student to meet with the Manuscript Editor at the Graduate School. The first meeting will be to drop off the final draft of the dissertation. The second meeting will be to discuss, in detail, any corrections needed for final approval by the Graduate School. It is important that you are aware of all Graduate School deadlines during your final semester. These deadlines are announced at the beginning of each semester. When in doubt, call the Graduate School at (813) 974-2846 or check online at http://www.grad.usf.edu/manuscriptdeadlines_new.asp. Failing to meet the deadlines will delay your graduation. You will then be required to submit a new application for graduation, pay a new manuscript fee, and register for an additional two hours of dissertation during the following semester.

ProQuest Publication and Copyright

Because all dissertations must be submitted to ProQuest for publication via the Graduate School, the student will need to contact ProQuest to request permission for submission to a journal for publication. (ProQuest has indicated they will always give permission). ProQuest publishes, but does not automatically copyright the dissertation. It is best **NOT** to request copyright by ProQuest so that the copyright will not have to be transferred to the publishing journal.

The Graduate School will contact you to verify that all requirements have been met for graduation. The successful completion of this form is a final critical step in meeting the requirements for the Ph.D. degree. Without final approval from the Graduate School, you will not graduate.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE FINAL SEMESTER

Student responsibilities during the final semester:

1. Register for a minimum of two dissertation credit hours the semester of the dissertation final oral presentation
- 2 Obtain a list of important dates from the Graduate School:
 - a) Application for graduation
 - b) Format check and payment of manuscript fee
 - c) Submission of an electronic dissertation to the Graduate School
3. Submit dissertation for a format check. Proceed to the **Format Check Form** (<https://etd.grad.usf.edu/format1.php>) to begin the process. This form will instruct you on exactly what you must include in your format check package, including which pages of your manuscript are required. It will walk you through the additional information needed by the Editorial Office, and then generate a cover page for your submission package and give you directions on where to drop it off. This deadline is usually early in the semester.
4. After defense and approval, submit your dissertation electronically following procedures on the Graduate School website.
5. Provide a bound copy of the final approved dissertation to the major professor. Bound copies for other members of the dissertation committee may be provided at your discretion. Bound copies may be purchased through the USF Bookstore at your own expense.
6. Purchase your cap and gown at the USF Bookstore at least two weeks prior to Commencement
7. Celebrate that you have completed your Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health!

RESOURCES

Resources to Assist you in the Literature Review Process:

Galvan, J. L. (1999). Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences. Los Angeles: Pycszak.

Locke, L., W. Spirduso, & S. J. Silverman (2000). Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals. (4th ed.) Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Manning, T., Algozzine, B., & Antonak, R. (2003). Guide for preparing a thesis or dissertation. Morgantown, WV: PNG Publications.

Rudestam, K. E. & Newton, R. R. (2001). Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process. (2nd ed.) Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Additional Online Sources:

Dissertation Resources (from Northern Arizona University)

<http://dana.ucc.nau.edu/~ksw8/dissertation.htm>

Writing and Presenting Your Thesis or Dissertation (from Michigan State University)

<http://www.learnerassociates.net/dissthes/>

* Adapted from:

Components of the Research Proposal and Dissertation (from Gallaudet University)

<http://gradschool.gallaudet.edu/dissertation/disspart.html>

CFH Academic Coordinator (813) 396-9103

CFH Student Resources Website <http://publichealth.usf.edu/cfh/student.html>

COPH Academic Affairs Website <http://publichealth.usf.edu/academicaffairs/>

Graduate School Thesis & Dissertation Website

http://www.grad.usf.edu/thesis_dissertation.asp

IRB Website <http://www.research.usf.edu/cs/irb.htm>

CHECKLIST FOR THE Ph.D. PROCESS

Refer to the guideline text for more specific detail of each checklist item and see the list of important dates and deadlines published by the department each semester.

- ✓ Admission (see COPH website)
- ✓ Meet with major professor
- ✓ Overview of program
- ✓ Philosophy of doctoral education
- ✓ Tentative schedule or timetable of tasks to be undertaken including committee selection
- ✓ Formation of Doctoral Committee
- ✓ ***Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Form***
- ✓ Course Requirements (see COPH website)
- ✓ Complete ***Plan of Study Form***
- ✓ Prerequisites
- ✓ Required Department Courses
- ✓ Research Methods
- ✓ Focus Area Courses
- ✓ Tools of Research
- ✓ Dissertation Hours
- ✓ Qualifying Examination
- ✓ Register for at least 2 credit hours
- ✓ Notify major professor 8 weeks prior to scheduled examination date
- ✓ ***Application for Ph.D. Qualifying Exam***
- ✓ Notification of results within 3 weeks
- ✓ Major Professor completes ***Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree***
- ✓ Receive Letter of Candidacy from the Graduate School
- ✓ Evaluation of Doctoral Committee for Dissertation Research

Use ***Changes to the Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Form*** if necessary

Request for Presentation of Research Proposal

4½ weeks before anticipated presentation date
Submit Draft to committee and make revisions _____

18 days before presentation:
Submit signed Request for Presentation of Research Proposal
and announcement to Department Chair for approval _____

14 days before presentation
Announcement will be posted by Coordinator _____

7 days before presentation
Distributed final copies of proposal to committee members,
moderator, and Department Chair (no changes should be made after this date) _____

Approval of Research Proposal _____

Dissertation Research Institutional Review Board signature
form (page 14 of ***Application for Initial Review***)
Student signature
Major Professor Signature _____

Chair of Dept. Research Committee signature _____

Department Chairperson signature _____

Approval from Sponsored Research _____

Apply for graduation _____

Format Check _____

Dissertation Presentation _____

4 ½ weeks before anticipated
presentation date: Distributed copies to committee
members for review and make changes _____

18 days before presentation: ***Request for the Dissertation Defense*** form and
announcement submitted to Department Chair for approval _____

14 days before presentation: Announcement posted by Academic
Program Coordinator _____

7 days before presentation: Submit final draft to

committee members, moderator and department chair _____

Successful Defense of the Ph.D. Dissertation _____

Submit electronic dissertation and additional paperwork to the Graduate School _____

SAMPLE FORMS

The forms outlined below are available online either at the Graduate School or COPH websites.

The following links can be used to obtain the forms as directed below:

COPH forms website: <http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/forms.html>

CFH forms website: <http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/cfh/student.htm>

Graduate School forms website: <http://www.grad.usf.edu/student-forms.asp>

Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Form

After a student is accepted into the doctoral program in the Department of Community and Family Health, a doctoral committee is constituted. Names of the members are to be listed along with the Department and Graduate Faculty Status of each member. After the student obtains the committee signatures, the form is given to the Department Chair for approval. Then the student takes the form to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Public Health. One copy will be placed in the student's file and a second copy will be sent to the Graduate School for final approval. **This form is obtained from the COPH forms website.**

Any changes to the doctoral committee must be documented and approved on the *Changes to the Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Form* (also located on the COPH forms website).

Plan of Study and Doctoral Committee

After a student is accepted into the doctoral program and a doctoral committee is constituted, a plan of study is formulated. The list of required and recommended courses is created. After the student obtains the committee signatures, the form is given to the Department Chair for approval. Then the student takes the form to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Public Health. One copy will be placed in the student's file and a second copy will be sent to the Graduate School for final approval. **This form is obtained from the COPH forms website.**

Program Change Form

This form is used for any change in coursework from the student's program. Two copies are required each time a change is made. The student and major professor must sign the form. The form is then sent to the Department Chair for approval. One copy is returned to the student and the other copy is kept in the student's file by the major professor. **This**

form is obtained from the Department of Community and Family Health forms website.

Application for Ph.D. Qualifying Exam

All students planning to take the qualifying exam must submit this form to the College of Public Health Office of Academic and Student Affairs by the appropriate deadline. The form will enable the staff to check the student's grade point average and assure that there are no unfilled requirements. Students and their advisors will be notified of approval to proceed with conducting the exam. **This form is obtained from the COPH forms website.**

Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree

This form is submitted to the Department Chair after the student has passed the qualifying examination. Send four copies to the Graduate School (FAO 126). Copies will be returned when all signatures are obtained. **This form is obtained from the COPH forms website.**

Request for Presentation of Research Proposal

After the doctoral committee has reviewed the research proposal and agreed to its presentation, all committee members must sign this form. Two copies are required. The form is sent to the Department Chair for approval. One copy will be returned to the student and one copy will be placed in the student's file. This form must be filed with the Department Chair **at least 18 days before the presentation of the proposal**. Failure to meet this deadline will delay the presentation. **This form is obtained from the Department of Community and Family Health forms website.**

Research Proposal Announcement

After the doctoral committee has approved the research proposal for presentation, the student creates the announcement and submits it electronically to the Department Chair for approval (18 days before the presentation). Once approved, the Academic Coordinator will distribute notices of the presentation to all faculty and students. The announcement must be distributed **at least 14 days before the date of the presentation**. Flyers will be posted around the College of Public Health and announcements may be made via the COPH listservs. **A template may be obtained from the from the COPH forms website.**

Approval of Research Proposal

This form is submitted in duplicate to the Department Chair with one copy of the approved research proposal. The research proposal and one of the approval forms are then forwarded to the Dean's office. The second copy of the approval form is filed in the candidate's folder. **This form is obtained from the Department of Community and Family Health forms website.**

IRB Application for Initial Review

This form is required of all researchers who will be using human subjects. The Quick Start Guide for Investigators and your major professor will help you determine whether IRB approval is necessary. The Application is available on the IRB website: http://www.research.usf.edu/cs/irb_forms.htm. The signature form must be complete before the application will be accepted by IRB. IRB approval **MUST** be obtained prior to conducting any research.

Request for the Ph.D. Final Oral Examination

After the doctoral committee has reviewed the final draft of the dissertation and agreed to its presentation, all committee members must sign this form. Two copies are required. Both copies are to be forwarded to the Department Chair. One copy will be returned to the student and one copy will be placed in the student's permanent file. This form must be completed and submitted with the Department Chair **at least 18 days before the dissertation**. **This form is obtained from the COPH forms website.**

Ph.D. Dissertation Defense (Final Oral Presentation) Announcement.

After the doctoral committee has approved the research proposal for presentation, the student creates the announcement and submits it electronically to the Department Chair for approval (18 days before the presentation). Once approved, the Academic Coordinator will distribute notices of the presentation to all faculty and students. The announcement must be distributed **at least 14 days before the date of the presentation**. Flyers will be posted around the College of Public Health and announcements may be made via the COPH listservs. **A template may be obtained from the COPH forms website.**

This form is to be completed by the student prior to the oral presentation and given to the major professor. Once the final presentation has been completed, each member of the candidate's committee must sign the form. The major professor forwards the form to the Graduate School. **This form is obtained from the COPH forms website.**

Certificate of Approval Form for Theses and Dissertations

This form is signed by committee members after all corrections and modifications have been completed satisfactorily. It is submitted with the final copy. **This form is available from the COPH forms website.** Be sure to consult the final submission checklist on the same site for additional information.