GUIDELINES FOR THE MSPH

MSPH students will have the benefit of a committee consisting of a major professor (typically the advisor) and two other members, of which at least one must be from the student’s home department and approved by the department chair, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Persons desiring to serve on a Masters committee who are not defined as Graduate Faculty by the university and the college must submit a curriculum vitae and be approved by the department, college, and graduate studies for each committee. (The Supervisory Committee form is available online at http://www.grad.usf.edu.) Supervisory committees should be appointed as early as possible. The committee will approve the course of study and plan for research, supervise the research and comprehensive exams, and read and approve the thesis for content and format.

Before registering for thesis hours, students must have current documentation of completion of research credentialing process (see http://www.hsc.usf.edu/publichealth/grants.html, accessed 2/26/2003).

Students admitted Fall 2002 or later must submit their thesis in an electronic format. Students admitted before Fall 2002 may submit their thesis in paper copy or using the online format. The thesis must conform to the format guidelines of the University (see Thesis and Dissertation Handbook at http://www.grad.usf.edu. The semester, in which graduation is anticipated, students must:

1. have an approved and accurate Supervisory Committee form on file
2. be enrolled in at least 2 thesis hours
3. have thesis reviewed for compliance with University Format Requirements
4. meet deadline for final copy of thesis to be approved by Graduate Studies
5. apply for graduation by the posted deadline
6. submit thesis approval form with committee signatures, and final approved copy of thesis to the College Academic Affairs office

The Supervisory Committee must approve the thesis topic and proposal before the student may proceed. Each department will have specific written guidelines for approving proposals. Proposals typically include, but not limited to: statement of the problem, literature review, framework, hypotheses or research questions, methods, and IRB forms completed (but not submitted).

After the Major advisor and committee determine the student is ready to defend their thesis, an oral defense is scheduled, allowing adequate time for the student to make any necessary corrections following the defense and still meet the final copy deadline for turning in the thesis to the Office of Graduate Studies. All members of the thesis Committee must be present for the examination unless the department chair approves an absence. No one-on-one examinations are allowed. The presentation should be considered an important function in the department and all graduate students and faculty be urged to attend. The presentation and defense are open to the public and as such, must meet the requirements of the Sunshine Laws for the State of Florida. The voting is not public. Each department determines whether to use an outside chair for the defense and specific oral defense procedures.

Academic Advising
Each student is assigned a faculty advisor/major professor whose responsibility is to guide the student by meeting with him/her at least once a semester. Responsibilities include:

- Approving each semester's course registrations
- Mapping out a plan of study, including recommending appropriate electives
- Monitoring academic progress e.g.
  - GPA
  - Time to completion
  - Readiness for culminating requirements (field, comps, special project)
  - Specific course difficulties
- Responding to advisee's inquiries in a timely manner
- Referring to appropriate parties if advisee is in need of additional academic or personal guidance, e.g. specific ADA requirements, computer skills, writing lab, English Language Institute (international students), financial aid.
- Identifying responsibilities for the student including:
Acquiring guidelines/documents necessary to proceed through their program, e.g. college catalog, graduate school forms, thesis, comprehensive exam, department procedures, and graduation application

- Necessity of communicating to advisor in a timely manner any academic issues

- Providing the advisee with information or guidance related to career opportunities, scholarships, GA positions, and departmental activities.

- Guiding the student about committee member appointments and thesis activities

Students may petition to change advisors/degree/or department any time after admission. Change in program, degree or department will require approval of appropriate individuals/committees and is not automatic.

**Student Responsibilities**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, collegial manner in all activities related to their education. Students are responsible for

1. attending and participating in class;
2. completing assignments;
3. understanding and following policies and procedures related to their program of studies;
4. communicating with their advisor or other appropriate individual about potential or real academic problems;
5. behaving in a reasonable manner that does not distract from the academic matters at hand or presents a danger to the health, safety or well being of the faculty member or students;
6. conducting themselves in an ethical manner at all times including producing one’s own work—whether written, oral or laboratory based—without plagiarizing or inappropriately using another’s work.

**Catalogs/Guidelines**

Several documents are helpful to guide students through their graduate studies:

- Student handbook—describes university wide policies and procedures related to students, e.g. conduct, grievances, student governance
- Graduate Catalog—on line document that describes university policies, procedures, important deadlines, required forms, academic programs, etc. relevant to graduate students
- College Catalog—paper and on line document that describes the college’s departments, programs, policies, procedures, faculty, etc.
- Department Guidelines—guidelines exist in each department for special project, field experience, and comprehensive exams

These documents are subject to change at any time although an admitted student may choose to follow the specific curriculum in place at time of admission or select to follow any future curriculum approved before he/she graduates.

**Note:** All Office of Graduate Studies requirements are to be met in addition to the COPH and department requirements.