COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOSTATISTICS

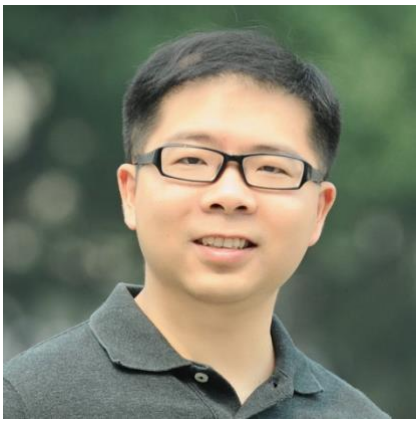
STUDENT HANDBOOK EPIDEMIOLOGY & BIOSTATISTICS

PHD & MS DEGREES

LAST REVISED: September 9, 2024

Table of Contents

From the Department Head



Welcome to the College of Public Health and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. We are pleased that you chose our department as your home for graduate education in Public Health. Our faculty are engaged in world-class research in many various areas of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Data Analysis and Modeling.

Our department has a strong tradition of collaboration with public and private health agencies and institutions including collaborative ties with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Georgia Department of Public Health and its Regional Districts, the Archway Partnership Program, College of Veterinary Medicine-Population Sciences, the Biomedical and Health Sciences Institute and the Faculty of Infectious Disease, and the Center for Global Health.

We are here to foster your success. Our door is always open. Please come by if there are questions or you may need our assistance.

Ye Shen, PhD
Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Institute of Gerontology
Ernest Corn Professor
Department Head

From the Graduate Coordinator and Program Directors

Welcome to the department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at UGA!

The Epidemiology and Biostatistics Department offers MS and PhD degrees. For both degrees, students select one of three areas of emphasis: Epidemiology (EPID), Biostatistics (BIOS), or Data Analysis & Modeling (DAM). The MS and PhD programs are fully housed within and administered by our department. This handbook applies to MS and PhD degrees in Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

The College of Public Health (CPH) offers and manages the MPH degree program. Since the MPH is a college-wide program, there is a separate student handbook for students in the MPH degree. The link to MPH Handbook can be found here.

The department also offers a certificate in Infectious Disease Epidemiology which also has separate handbook. It can be found here.

The Graduate School at UGA is the final decision maker regarding all issues involving graduate education. The departmental graduate coordinator (GC) is the liaison between graduate students and the graduate school. Our department GC is Dr. Allan Tate. He will be your point of contact for all official forms and paperwork that require a signature before sending to the Graduate School. For each area of emphasis, there is a designated program director (PD). The program directors handle issues related to the specific programs they oversee, such as course selection and others.

Our Graduate Coordinator Assistant is Nichole Mccorkle (nmccorkle@uga.edu). She works closely with students and the GC to address student issues. Your first point of contact for most questions related to student issues is Ms. Mccorkle. She handles the majority of paperwork related to graduate education and supports the GC and program directors. Her office is located in Miller Hall Room 107; her telephone number is 706-542-6288.

This handbook covers MS and PhD degrees offered through the department. Some information applies equally to all degrees and programs and some is program-specific. As a graduate student you are expected to be fully informed regarding all parts of this document pertaining to your degree, including the outside sources indicated in this document. If there are any question about degree program that remain unclear after reviewing these documents, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Mccorkle or Dr. Tate. Their contact information is below.

Dr. Allan Tate Graduate Coordinator Epidemiology Program Director allan.tate@uga.edu Miller Hall 202	**Dr. Ye Shen** Biostatistics Program Director yeshen@uga.edu Miller Hall 211	**Dr. Andreas Handel** Data Analysis & Modeling Program Director ahandel@uga.edu Miller Hall 124	**Nichole Mccorkle** Graduate Coordinator Assistant nmccorkle@uga.edu Miller Hall 107

General Information

The following pages contain information that applies to all graduate programs administered by our department.

Departmental Mission Statement

The Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics trains public health professionals and researchers in the use of epidemiological principles, biostatistical methods, and data analysis and modeling approaches with the goal of conducting innovative research to address existing and emerging public health issues.

We are a community of scholars dedicated to integrating research, teaching, and service by collaborating within and across disciplines, including collaborations between faculty, students, and community partners. We are committed to critically evaluating how our program contributes to the greater populations. We are committed to serving, including those who solicit our technical expertise and advocacy and who support our work.

We support the College of Public Health's mission: To advance the health of all. Through research, hands-on learning, and community engagement, we commit to improving the public's health in Georgia, our nation, and the world. In all of our work, we strive to express the College's core values: collaboration, compassion, courage, data-driven, diversity, engagement, equity, excellence, inclusion, innovation, perseverance, respect, and social justice.

Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics By-Laws

The Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics is governed by a set of by-laws that were written and approved by faculty in the department. These by-laws specify internal policies and procedures that apply to faculty and comport with UGA guidelines. The by-laws can be obtained from the departmental staff.

Departmental Personnel

Please visit the department's webpage for the most up-to date information to learn about faculty and staff of our department at https://publichealth.uga.edu/directory/

Graduate School Policies

The University of Georgia Graduate School policies govern the administration of our graduate degrees. Visit https://grad.uga.edu/current-students/ for information on specific academic procedures and regulations. In case of conflicts between departmental policies and those of the graduate school/university, you should consult with your department Grad Coordinator on the interpretation of which policy you should adhere. **Students are expected to know of and abide by all the rules and policies specified by the graduate school. This Departmental handbook and the Graduate School Program Administration Handbook are the two primary**

documents that outline expectations for academic and professional activities.

Graduate School Forms

There are numerous forms that students must fill out and sign throughout their graduate studies. For access to all required forms, consult the Graduate School webpage and ensure they are submitted in a timely manner. You should not rely on your advisor for knowing how and when to submit the necessary paperwork. Rather, it is the responsibility of graduate students to ensure correct and timely submission. If in doubt, ask the graduate coordinator assistant or graduate coordinator.

Calendars and Deadlines

The UGA academic calendar is maintained by the Registrar's office at UGA and can be found here. Please consult the calendar for important dates during the year including the first day of classes, add-drop dates, dates for early registration, examination periods, commencement, etc. The Graduate School also maintains an additional calendar of important dates and deadlines pertaining to specific aspects of graduate education. Consult those as well. It is graduate students' responsibility to initiate required paperwork well in advance to ensure all deadlines can be met.

Helpful Advice for Preparing to Graduate

If you are applying for graduation in fall, spring, or summer, you should minimally review these deadlines at the start of August (fall), end of December (spring), and the end of May (summer) to ensure that you are on track for degree conferral. For theses and dissertations, keep in mind that the full format checks typically correspond with Halloween, spring break, and July 4th holidays. If you are unable to meet that deadline, you should expect to target graduation in the following semester. It is your responsibility to maintain active lines of communication with your chair and advisory committee about your graduation intentions. Planning defense dates about a month prior to format checks is a useful strategy to ensure that you can integrate final committee feedback before the final submission of your manuscript comes due. This is usually 3-4 weeks after format check. Please check the published dates online to confirm (these change annually).

Admissions

The department maintains updated guidance online, each admissions cycle, which opens in late September each year. We only accept students for a fall start date (no spring or summer admissions). All students seeking admission to one of the departmental graduate programs need to satisfy the requirements specified by UGA's Graduate School. Consult the Graduate School webpage for requirements and procedures for admission. Additional requirements for each specific program are described in the program-specific sections of this document.

Advice for Prospective Applicants

Our admissions cycle is competitive, and our acceptance rate ranges between 5-10% of acceptable applications. We generally admit cohorts between 7-12 MS/doctoral students each year to maintain a level of funding support and achieve excellent student to faculty ratio of about 2 per research faculty member. We do not have a tradition of offering assistantships for our MS program. While we openly accept applications through April 15th, 90% of our admitted students

will be from the applicant pool that submits their materials by December 1st of the application cycle. A complete submission of materials includes all required documents, letters of reference, transcripts, research statements of purpose, and application fees have been processed. Your materials will not be reviewed with the initial application group if any of these items are missing. Please plan ahead to ensure that your application materials will be reviewed in the first wave of applications. Initial offers go out on a rolling basis through the month of January. Applicants who have been reviewed favorably may be placed on a waitlist in the event that first round offers are declined. This process is ongoing between February and April 15th. The Department will notify applicants in February if they have been placed on the waitlist. It is not common that we will have updates on admission decisions until after the April 15th final decision date. We are also not able to provide individualized feedback on applications. Instead, we offer the following guidance to enhance the attractiveness of your materials and placement within a research lab:

- Fully submit your materials by December 1st
- Exceed the minimum requirements listed for acceptance with the Graduate School and on our Departmental website. We generally do not admit students to the doctoral program without a prior masters degree (MPH/MS) in the same intended program of study. You should be up front about gaps in your academic training and provide reasonable explanations for how you will fill those gaps in your first year in the program.
- Author a research statement that is professional and that clearly identifies a research area that you intend to pursue. Poorly written statements and vaguely defined research areas will lower your perceived preparation for a research-intensive academic program. It is not sufficient to identify "communicable diseases" or "chronic diseases" as a research area of interest. Be specific and demonstrate your command of the existing science in your area.
- Identify a faculty member who is working in your intended research area and be familiar with their published work. A critical consideration of admissions is that there is a faculty member with capacity to chair your thesis and predoctoral research, who also has expertise to guide you in your academic and professional development. It is your responsibility to market yourself through your application materials and to make faculty aware of your intentions to apply to the program. Scheduling a meeting with a faculty member before submitting your materials does not necessarily increase the likelihood of admission. A thoughtful email that demonstrates your academic fit and final research statement is generally appreciated by faculty. Please do not assume that a lack of response from faculty reflects poorly on your prospects or on them as a suitable advisor and mentor.
- Demonstrate that you have prior training and experience in research through employment or through previous research activities. Research in preparation does not weigh as heavily on admissions decisions as your already-published work. Be clear about your author contributions on scholarly manuscripts especially if you are not in the first author position.
- Convey that you have read the student handbook and that you understand the academic and professional expectations of our program. Our students are generally expected to pursue a program duration of about 4-5 years depending on research topic and data availability.
- Make admissions aware if you will pursue part-time or full-time student status. If you have received an award that will fund your program (eg, Fulbright-Fogarty), please include this information. Admission decisions are contingent on verification and receipt of funding.

The Department is not able to waive application fees or Graduate School requirements for English proficiency. We do not currently offer scholarships at the Department level and tuition waivers are only offered on funded research assistantships. In our program, assistantships are available at the faculty level, and we encourage you to read the advice above to identify a research faculty member who is recruiting in the current cycle. Other helpful links are provided below:

- Application fee waivers are only processed by the Graduate School for published reasons. Please visit this link for assessment of eligibility. Your application will be cancelled if you select a program for which you are not eligible.
- English proficiency standards are managed by the Graduate School and are published here. Graduate School also maintains country-specific guidance for applicants at the site linked here.

Registration

Registration for courses is online via UGA's student management and registration system. For detailed information concerning procedures and timelines for registration, please check the webpage of the Registrar's office. To maintain compliance with Graduate School's Please note that the department requires students to submit their spring annual evaluation and their advising form to be released for fall registration. **For newly admitted MS/PhD students, please plan to be physically on campus for departmental orientation on the Friday before the first week of classes**. The academic calendar is maintained here for reference. Note that the MPH program has separate orientation schedules generally held on the published "Orientation/Advisement" day.

Enrollment Policy

A student who holds an assistantship must register for a minimum of 12 hours of graduate credit during the fall and spring semesters and nine hours of graduate credit during the summer semester. All other graduate students must register for a minimum of three credit hours during any semester in which they use UGA facilities and/or staff time. A full-time course load is nine hours per semester during the academic year and 6 hours during the summer semester. The maximum course load for any student is 18 hours per semester. There are exceptions for some UGA employees. Students who cannot enroll for two of three semesters should seek a leave of absence (how to submit for a leave of absence; policy on LOA). Details regarding enrollment policies are found on UGA's graduate school webpage.

Time Limitations

Masters students have six years to complete all degree requirements beginning with the first registration for graduate courses on the program of study. Doctoral students who matriculated into the program prior to Fall 2024 have 6 years to complete all degree requirements including written and oral comps and their prospectus proposal defense, all of which are the requirements for admittance to candidacy. After admittance to candidacy, doctoral candidates have an additional 5 years to complete their dissertation and defense (11 years total max). Beginning in Fall 2024, **doctoral students will have 8 total calendar years** to complete all degree requirements and be awarded their degree. The Graduate School maintains active webpages for degree-specific policies on MS and PhD requirements.

Graduate Assistantship Expectations (Teaching GTA and Research GRA)

The primary goal of a graduate assistantship is to permit orderly progress, academically and financially, through a graduate degree program. The assistantship may be a component of the total academic program of a student, along with coursework, a project or thesis, a practicum, and examinations. While graduate assistants progress toward an advanced degree, they also receive practical experience and apprenticeship under the supervision of faculty mentors.

Graduate assistants occupy dual roles – they are both students and temporary employees of the university. In the former role, graduate assistants are expected to concentrate on their studies under the direction of faculty mentors as a means of developing knowledge of their field of study and professional skills. As temporary student employees of the university, graduate assistants are expected to meet the obligations assigned, whether they involve teaching, research, or other support work. At all times, graduate assistants are to work under the supervision of faculty who are experienced and knowledgeable in their field. It may be that a student's academic advisor/chair is not the same as their supervisor for their assistantship. Students should gather feedback from both sources as part of annual evaluations to have a comprehensive understanding of their performance and academic standing in the program.

Assistantships are not scholarships and students are expected to engage conscientiously in their assigned duties. Students who are notified of deficiencies in writing will be expected to complete a performance improvement plan (PIP) in partnership with their supervisor and to notify the Graduate Coordinator of the 1) documented PIP and 2) resolution of the PIP. Additional information regarding failure to meet the PIP and early termination is available in the Graduate Program Handbook (Section "Evaluation of Graduate Assistants"). Academic warning and academic probation may limit eligibility for graduate assistantships.

Students employed under an eligible GTA/GRA will receive a reduced tuition fee waiver each semester if they provide at least 13 hours of service per week, are paid at the approved rate by the unit offering employment and are employed 100% of the semester class days under which the waiver is requested. Students who withdraw early from their assistantship are subject to the Withdrawal Policy for Graduate Students on Assistantship.

Teaching assistants (GTAs) are expected to maintain standards of English proficiency as necessary to communicate effectively with students in classroom settings. The language proficiency requirement is:

- International students who are non-native speakers of English must demonstrate proficiency in spoken English before they can be appointed as a teaching assistant (TA).
- At time of application, international students who receive a 23-25 on the TOEFL speaking sub-score or a 7.0-7.5 on the IELTS speaking band score will be placed at Level 3 in the TA Language Proficiency Policy. At Level 3, students are required to enroll in LLED 7769 and can be placed in limited-duty TA positions.
- Proficiency is typically assessed through standardized tests such as the TOEFL iBT (with a minimum speaking score of 26) or the IELTS (with a minimum speaking score of 7.5).

Academic Honesty Policy and Statement on Artificial Intelligence

Every student must agree to abide by UGA's academic honesty policy and procedures known as

"A Culture of Honesty". Details on the honesty policy, including explanations of violations, consequences, and appeals processes can be found at https://honesty.uga.edu/

Representing as one's own intellectual product content otherwise derived from artificial intelligence falls under UGA's academic honesty policy for prohibited conduct. University policy on the use of AI for theses and dissertations applies, and you should never use AI on an assignment unless it is explicitly authorized by your instructor before the assignment is submitted. Possible violations of the academic honesty policy are taken seriously and will be reported. Procedures used to determine if a violation has occurred are documented at Resolving Academic Honesty Issues Process & Consequences. Violations will affect a student's current standing in the program and will be documented in the student's file.

Advising

Upon admission to our programs, students will be assigned an initial advisor who can offer general academic advice in addition to that provided by the graduate coordinator (GC) or the program director (PD) of their selected areas of emphasis. Students who receive an offer of assistantship at the time of acceptance in the program should consider their assistantship supervisor to be their major advisor upon matriculation. It is possible to change advisors as you meet new faculty and further your research interests. It is advisable to finalize determination of your major professor by the end of year 1 to avoid delays in meeting academic milestones. The graduate coordinator will serve as a temporary academic advisor for students who are transitioning between labs to support the student's identification of a permanent advisor.

The faculty member who takes a lead role in advising the student's thesis or dissertation will chair the student's advisory committee. This member of the graduate faculty serves as a student's major professor and chair through graduation. The other faculty members in the advisory committee will provide additional support and mentorship and it is the responsibility of the student, in consultation with their chair, to identify and maintain an active line of communication with all their committee members about their progress. Lack of substantive communication and progress with the advisory committee may affect academic standing in the program.

Grade Average

Students need to maintain an average of 3.0 (B) to be eligible for admission to candidacy and graduation. No grade below C (2.0) will be accepted as part of a program of study for a graduate degree. When a graduate course is repeated, the last grade received will be used in calculating the cumulative graduate average that is used for probation, dismissal, admission to candidacy, and graduation. Grades received in all graduate courses will be included in the graduate cumulative average. The Graduate School independently tracks student performance and places students on warning or probation, with eventual dismissal, with failure to meet the required GPA (see https://grad.uga.edu/current-students/registration-academic-policies-faq/).

Performance Review of Graduate Students

Graduate students are expected to meet with their Major Professor regularly (at least twice per semester) to discuss and review progress toward degree completion. This can be combined with advising. This review will include course grades, performance on exams (including the qualifying

and comprehensive exams), research progress, and participation in other program activities. At the end of every academic year and prior to fall release for registration, the PD or Major Professor will complete a formal evaluation of student's performance to determine whether progress is satisfactory or not satisfactory based on performance. The student should initiate this process by completing their UGA CV materials in Elements (detailed guidance will be provided at the start of the spring semester). If progress is unsatisfactory, the student will plan a course of action with their major advisor, PD and Graduate Coordinator to improve their progress. If a student demonstrates unsatisfactory progress in the subsequent timeframe, they may be withdrawn from the program.

The Department supports the rights of students to appeal grades or any other performance evaluation. Students who wish to make appeals should refer to Appendix 1. Student Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures.

Health Services

UGA has a comprehensive Health Center, which provides a broad range of health services to the UGA community for mental and physical health and wellness. To learn more about available resources, visit the University Health Center website.

Health Insurance

UGA currently has a voluntary and a mandatory health insurance plan. Visit UGA's Human Resources website on student insurance and employment to learn more about these plans and waivers for coverage.

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

The University of Georgia is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work and study. The Equal Opportunity Office is responsible for ensuring such an environment and to follow all laws. To learn more about these issues and available resources, please see https://eoo.uga.edu/

Campus Emergencies – UGA Alert

The UGA Alert Emergency Notification System aims to inform the UGA community of any kind of emergencies in a timely manner. Learn more, sign up or update your information at: https://emergency.uga.edu/ugaalert/

UGA Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. UGA abides by FERPA rules. To learn more about FERPA consult this webpage. **NOTE:** Please use caution when setting certain FERPA restrictions in the system, as these can have consequences that you may not want, such as legally prohibiting your advisor from writing you a letter of recommendation. If you do choose to change your FERPA settings, you will be able to do so using the system you use to manage your records. If you have questions or need general information about FERPA, contact Adam Lawrence, 706-542-6020.

Source for UGA Policies and Procedures

For a comprehensive list of all University policies and procedures, including those not governed by the Departmental student handbook and Graduate School handbook, go to https://policies.uga.edu/.

PhD in Epidemiology & Biostatistics

PhD in Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Goals of the Program

The objective of the PhD program in epidemiology and biostatistics is to provide students with in-depth knowledge of core epidemiological, data analysis, modeling and biostatistical methods. Students are expected to apply their knowledge to design, implement and evaluate research in public health and biomedicine. In addition, students will become subject matter experts in their chosen area of emphasis of Biostatistics (BIOS), Epidemiology (EPID), or Data Analysis & Modeling (DAM). The Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics embraces competency-based education as set forth by the Council of Education of Public Health. We expect students to acquire the following competencies:

General Competencies:

Students receiving a PhD in Epidemiology and Biostatistics should meet the following competencies:

- Evaluate and synthesize primary research literature to appraise the state of knowledge in an area of public health.
- Implement appropriate study designs along with state-of-the-art analysis methodology.
- Apply innovative methods and approaches in Epidemiology & Biostatistics, to improve public health, and to create new knowledge in the field of Epidemiology & Biostatistics.
- Demonstrate ethical practices in human subjects research as pertains to data collection, data management, analysis, interpretation, and publication.
- Communicate methodological concepts and applications in health research to diverse audiences.
- Author research plans and project proposals.

For the biostatistics area of emphasis, the following additional competencies apply:

- Evaluate and critique core biostatistical methods including their inferential properties, computational algorithms, and their strengths and limitations.
- Demonstrate proficiency in the theoretical foundations of biostatistics including probability theory and statistical inference.
- Collaborate with researchers in public health and biomedicine on all aspects of the study design including power analysis, appropriate use and implementation of state-of-the-art biostatistical methods, and publishing results.
- Conduct and publish original research on the theory and application of biostatistics aimed at developing new and innovative methods for the analysis of public health and biomedical data.

For the epidemiology area of emphasis, the following additional competencies apply:

- Articulate research questions in epidemiology that address critical problems in public health and are based on synthesis of scientific literature.

- Choose the appropriate observational and experimental study designs to answer specific epidemiologic questions.
- Collaborate on primary data collection on human health and use key sources of epidemiologic data to inform programmatic and research activities.
- Apply appropriate analytic methods to examine epidemiologic research questions and understand the relevant strengths and limitations.

For the data analysis & modeling area of emphasis, the following additional competencies apply:

- Collect, organize, and manage data to ensure data integrity and reproducibility, and develop skills of identifying appropriate databases for secondary data analysis.
- Propose meaningful data analysis questions and assess the feasibility of answering these questions with the available data.
- Write custom code to efficiently implement and perform modern data analyses.
- Analyze data using valid statistical or mathematical methods and draw appropriate public health inferences from the results.

Pre-Requisites

Applicants must satisfy the requirements specified by the graduate school. In addition, all students entering the program must show strong quantitative skills as evidenced by performance on standardized tests (e.g., GRE if provided by the applicant) or in prior quantitative courses (e.g. math, statistics, physics, engineering etc.). Students are expected to have previous epidemiological and biostatistical knowledge at a level taught in both EPID/BIOS 7010 and EPID 7020 courses. Applicants seeking to complete the area of emphasis in data analysis and modeling or biostatistics must have additional biostatistical knowledge at the level of BIOS 7020. Biostatistics students must have completed courses in differential, integral and multivariate calculus, and linear algebra. Students may be admitted without all of these pre-requisites under the condition that they take any needed pre- requisite courses (e.g. EPID/BIOS 7010, EPID 7020, or BIOS 7020), during their first semester of study. Any needed pre-requisite courses do not count toward the degree.

Curriculum

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Epidemiology & Biostatistics will be awarded in recognition of a mastery of fundamental concepts in Epidemiology & Biostatistics, together with in-depth knowledge in the chosen area of emphasis. All students will demonstrate the ability to perform independent research and to communicate clearly the results of such research.

In this program, all students will acquire foundational knowledge and expertise in epidemiology, data analysis and biostatistics through successful completion of core course series. Students must further demonstrate their mastery of their chosen area of emphasis by taking required and elective courses in that area and by completing an independent research project culminating in the written and oral defense of their dissertation research supervised by direction of a faculty mentor.

The PhD program in Epidemiology & Biostatistics has three areas of emphasis. Biostatistics

(BIOS), Epidemiology (EPID) and Data Analysis & Modeling (DAM). All students are expected to take core courses required for each area of emphasis. Each area of emphasis has additional specific requirements.

Students who can prove mastery of content taught in a required class may be exempt from such a class at the discretion of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Such students must replace exempted courses with qualified electives so as to maintain the total number of course credit hours required for each component of the degree.

Advanced academic knowledge will be demonstrated by meeting the requirements of each required and elective course and by passing both a department-wide written qualifying exam, which covers the general curriculum content, and a comprehensive exam, administered by the student's advisory committee, which focuses on what the student needs to know given their chosen program of study. The exams are described in more detail below.

Research expertise will be demonstrated through successful completion and oral defense of a dissertation research project. As part of this requirement, students will form an advisory committee, write and defend a dissertation proposal (i.e., prospectus), complete the dissertation research project, and write and defend the final dissertation for the committee and other members of the academic community at the University. The student will receive guidance and mentorship through the process by the student's major professor/advisor who chairs the Advisory Committee as well as other Advisory Committee members. The Advisory Committee and dissertation requirements are described in more detail below. A minimum of 12 credits of dissertation research, and at least three credits of dissertation writing, are also required.

Coursework

To complete the PhD the student will complete the following courses. The courses are divided into those that are required to be taken by students of any concentration, courses that are specific to concentrations, and electives.

Required by all concentrations:

- GRSC 7001 1 GradFirst
- BIOS 8010 3 Regression and ANOVA
- BIOS 8020 3 Linear and Generalized Linear Models
- BIOS 8030 3 Longitudinal Data Analysis
- EPID 8010 3 Cohort Study Design
- EPID 8020 3 Case-Control Study Design
- EPID/BIOS 9100 2x1 Graduate Seminar
- EPID 7800 1 Ethics Seminar
- GRSC 7770 3 Teaching Assistantship required class
- EPID/BIOS 9000 >=12 PhD level research
- EPID/BIOS 9300 >=3 PhD dissertation writing

Required for BIOS (18 credits):

- STAT 6810 3 Probability Distributions
- STAT 6820 3 Statistical Inference
- BIOS 8040 3 Advanced Biostatistical Methods
- BIOS 8200 3 Biostatistical consulting project
- BIOS 8310 3 Advanced Biostatistical Inference
- BIOS 8320 3 Asymptotic Biostatistical Inference

Required for EPID (12 credits):

- EPID 8500 3 Infectious Disease Epidemiology
- EPID 8400* 3 Chronic Epidemiology
- EPID 8040 3 Clinical trials
- EPID 8050 3 Causal Inference in Epidemiology

Required for DAM (12 credits):

- BIOS 7400 3 Research Data Management and Computing
- EPID 7500 3 Intro Coding in R for Public Health
- BIOS 8200 2 Biostatistical consulting project
- EPID/BIOS 8060 3 Modern Applied Data Analysis

Electives (9 credits):

- Any EPID or BIOS class or any class within the college of public health at the 7000/8000 level.
- Students are allowed to take classes outside the department/college. In general, classes that are related to the student's program of study and research are permitted. For any class outside our college, it is recommended that students discuss the class they want to take with their advisor or program director to obtain permission.

Selecting A Major Professor/Advisor

Students who receive an offer of admittance to the program are generally matched with a research faculty mentor who will serve as their major professor upon entrance to the program. This individual is typically the student's assistantship supervisor, but the GC or PD may serve as a temporary faculty advisor based on your research interests and professional background. By the end of the first year, a student should have identified a permanent member of the departmental faculty with whom the student plans to engage with as part of their predoctoral research work. This person must be a member of the department graduate faculty. This will be the student's major professor/advisor for the purposes of advising as well as their advisory committee chair. While a student can choose any faculty from the department as their advisor, it is generally expected that the research focus of the chair will be in the area of the student's chosen area of emphasis. The student's major professor serves to advise and mentor the student throughout the program. Failing to identify a permanent chair in a timely fashion may affect the student's standing in the program. Full time students should identify a chair before the end of year 2.

Doctoral Advisory Committee

Major program milestones are documented with the GS via submission of forms through GradStatus and GradSlate. The first major milestone is the formation of the Advisory Committee (see Appendix 3 for timing expectations and major milestones) that should be completed by the end of the second year of the program. The advisory committee, in consultation with the student, is charged with planning the student's program of study. It is also charged with approving the program of study (G138), arranging the comprehensive written and oral examinations, approving a subject for the dissertation, approving the completed dissertation, and approving the student's defense of his or her research. The committee will advise the student of required research skills among other requirements relevant to the completion of their predoctoral research.

A critical role of the chair is to advise the student about an appropriate composition of content area and methodological expertise on their advisory committee to supervise their predoctoral research. In year 2, the student should bring suggestions for suitable committee members to their advising meetings and consult about appropriate ways to invite members to the committee. Failure to form a committee in a timely fashion may affect the student's standing in the program, and the student should actively seek out faculty with mentoring support to supervise their dissertation work.

Doctoral advisory committees must have:

- At least three UGA grad faculty members, including the committee chair.
- At least two grad faculty members must be from the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.
- The chair must be from within the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.
- At least one member's primary affiliation must be from outside of the Department and can be from outside UGA.
- When nominating a non-UGA committee member, the student will provide the graduate coordinator the information needed, including the nominee's current CV/resume with the appropriate forms and a letter addressed to the dean of the Graduate School explaining why the services of the non-UGA committee member are requested. The non-affiliated member must attend meetings associated with the appointment.
- No more than one committee member can be a non-UGA faculty, and they must hold a terminal degree in their field of study.
- A student may have two UGA grad faculty members as co-chairs, including one within the Department.
- Persons employed by UGA who hold one of the following graduate program faculty ranks may serve on doctoral committees: assistant professor, associate professor, professor, academic professional, senior academic professional, public service assistant, public service associate, senior public service associate, assistant research scientist, associate research scientist, and senior research scientist. The student may include graduate program faculty instructors and lecturers ranks.

Once the student has selected committee members, the student should submit the Advisory Committee form (G130).

Changing Major Professor or Committee Members

It is possible for a student to change their major professor and/or members of their advisory committee. The GC will consult with all involved parties (previous and new committee members),

and if the GC considers the request for a change appropriate, the GC will ask the student to submit a revised committee form for approval. **The persons on file with the Graduate School as being the student's committee must match those individuals who sign other forms at the time, such as comprehensive exam (written and oral), admission to candidacy and dissertation approval. Therefore, students should always ensure the information regarding their committee is up-to-date with the graduate school.** It is the student's responsibility to maintain active lines of communication with all of their committee members at least annually to ensure consistent oversight of their research activities.

Program of Study

A final Program of Study (G138) form is required be submitted to the Graduate School prior to notification of the comprehensive examination (see Appendix 3). This is generally completed at the end of year 2 after establishing the advisory committee. **The final program of study must show all graduate courses relevant to the doctoral program and not just courses satisfying the minimum degree requirement, including those that the student intends to take over the remainder of their time in the program through their final dissertation defense**. Courses from the master's degree and courses taken at other universities should be listed in the "Relevant Master's or Other Graduate Degree Courses" section of the program of study form. The program of study must carry a minimum of 30 hours of coursework, three hours of which must be dissertation writing (9300). No grade below C will be accepted on the program of study. To be eligible for graduation, a student must maintain a 3.0 (B) average on the graduate transcript and a 3.0 (B) average on the program of study. See the Graduate School webpage for additional information (section 10. Programs of Study).

Exams

Qualifying exam

The qualifying exam is developed and administered by the Student Affairs Committee. At the end of the first year (usually held in May), students are expected to take a written exam which covers the core general areas of study. Passing the qualifying exam is a pre-requisite for continuing in the program and taking the written and oral comprehensive exams. See Appendix 2 for additional details related to the departmental qualifying exam.

Comprehensive exam

The comprehensive exam is administered by the student's advisory committee and is expected to be taken between the end of the second year and the start of the third year (see Appendix 3 for timeline). The comprehensive exam consists of a written, take-home portion, followed by a public, oral examination by the student's committee. The written comprehensive examination is prepared, administered, and graded by members of the advisory committee. The oral comprehensive examination will be an inclusive examination within the student's field of study. The student should consult with their chair about the format, timeline, and preparation strategies prior to beginning writing of the written exam. After receiving the written exam, the student should independently author responses without assistance of AI or others. Students should only have correspondence with their chair while responding to the written exam. An examination of the student's dissertation prospectus (proposal) must follow the oral comprehensive examination and may not take the place of the oral comprehensive examination. All members of the student's

advisory committee must be present simultaneously for the oral comprehensive exam and prospectus (proposal) presentation.

The oral comprehensive examination is open to all members of the faculty and shall be publicly announced by the Graduate School. **It is the student's responsibility to inform the graduate coordinator and graduate coordinator assistant in writing at least three weeks in advance of the date of the scheduled examination date and location.** Students should complete their oral examination between 3-6 weeks after receiving their passing grade on the written portion of the exam to ensure timely progress.

Students are allowed to retake either exam once. If the student fails a part of the examination more than once, the department will excuse the student from the PhD program.

Each member of the advisory committee will cast a written vote of pass or fail on the written and oral parts of the examination. To pass each part of the examination, the agreement of the advisory committee is achieved with no more than one dissenting vote. An abstention is not an appropriate vote for the comprehensive examination. The student should work with the committee to present results of both examinations to the GC, GCA, and Graduate School within two weeks following the oral examination.

Dissertation Proposal Defense

Doctoral students must present a dissertation proposal on a subject connected with their major field of study and completed in the semester following completion of the comprehensive oral exam and by the start of their fourth program year. The dissertation must represent originality in research, independent thinking, scholarly ability, and technical mastery of a field of study. The conclusions must be logical, the literary form acceptable, and the contribution to knowledge meriting publication. The proposal will include research goals and aims, background and rationale, literature review, detailed description of methods proposed, and an analytic strategy. **The student will present and defend their proposal to the advisory committee and the public. No forms regarding the proposal need to be submitted to the Graduate School. The writing and public defense of the proposal is a department-internal requirement.** Approval of the dissertation proposal signifies that members of the advisory committee believe that it proposes a satisfactory research study.

The proposal defense is separate from and may not take the place of the comprehensive oral examination. If needed and if the student is ready, the comprehensive oral exam and the proposal defense can be scheduled on the same day, and the proposal defense may follow the comprehensive oral exam, provided the student passed the oral exam. Upon committee approval of the dissertation proposal, the student may proceed to file admission to candidacy with the Graduate School.

Admission to Candidacy

Students are responsible for initiating the Application for Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degrees (G162) form to be filed with the graduate school (see Appendix 3). This should be done as soon as the student has completed all requirements for admission to candidacy which include

successful completion of all required coursework, passing comprehensive written and oral exam, and defense of the thesis proposal. Students should refer to the admission to candidacy information on the graduate school website and make sure they meet all requirements. Application for candidacy should be submitted at least one full semester before the date of graduation.

Dissertation Research

Once the student has been admitted to candidacy, the student should complete the research described in the proposal under the supervision of their chair. The chair is responsible for mentoring the student through the steps and procedures of the research project. Other members of the Dissertation Committee should be engaged by the student as needs arises. The student should arrange to communicate regularly with all members of the committee, at least annually.

After admission to candidacy, students must take at least ten credit hours of dissertation research (EPID/BIOS 9000) AND at least three credit hours of dissertation writing (EPID/BIOS 9300) in the semester of graduation. A student must register for a minimum of three hours of credit in any semester when using University facilities, and/or faculty or staff time. **NOTE:** It is likely that substantially more than ten hours of Dissertation Research may be needed to complete the research project.

Dissertation Writing

After completing their proposed research projects, students must write and submit the PhD dissertation to their major professor/advisors for approval. Students are expected to write a dissertation that represents a significant contribution of new knowledge to the field. Specific dissertation requirements may be dictated by the Advisory Committee and the Graduate School, including format and content. Whether the dissertation is formatted as a single document or multiple journal-style manuscripts will be left to the discretion of the Advisory Committee, subject to the rules of the Graduate School. At least a portion of the dissertation must be suitable for publication. Students are advised to review the 2024 dissertation style guide prior to writing (located here and updated annually). Students should ensure they are using the current version. Students should not use previously published dissertation formats as a basis for their own writing strategy. Details on UGA Graduate School dissertation requirements and styles can be found at https://grad.uga.edu/graduate-bulletin/theses-dissertations-overview/.

When the chair is satisfied with the completed dissertation, the student should distribute copies of the dissertation to the remaining members of the Advisory Committee. The committee members must have three weeks to read and evaluate the completed dissertation. The dissertation must be of sufficient scope and depth to meet the expectations of the Advisory Committee members. With agreement of the committee, the student should schedule the final oral defense of the dissertation. Students should make note of the three time periods for planning graduation dates in consultation with their committee chair using the guidance provided for fall, spring, and summer linked here.

Dissertation Final Defense

Once the committee deems the student ready to defend, a date and time for the oral defense

should be set. The student must register for at least three credits of EPID or BIOS 9300 in the semester of the final defense, according to University procedures. **The student must notify the GCA/GC at least three weeks prior to the defense date;** the graduate coordinator will inform the graduate school. Subsequently, the Graduate School will announce the time and place of the defense of the dissertation to the University community. **Failure to adhere to this timeline imposed by the graduate school might lead to the need to postpone a scheduled defense date.** To ensure there is sufficient time to integrate committee feedback following the defense and meet the Graduate School timeline for final electronic transmission, it is recommended to schedule the final defense at least 2 weeks prior to the published format check that semester.

Students must give an oral presentation that summarizes the major findings of the research project and respond to questions from the public audience and the committee members. The defense of the dissertation will be chaired by the student's major professor/advisor and attended by all members of the advisory committee simultaneously for the entire defense period. The defense will consist of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance. The public presentation is open to anyone who wishes to attend. The defense can be held completely remotely if approved by the graduate coordinator and the unit/department head. The advisory committee must approve the student's dissertation and defense with no more than one dissenting vote and must certify their approval in writing. An abstention is not allowable for the final defense. The results of the defense of the dissertation must be reported to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to graduation for the current semester.

To pass the dissertation defense, the advisory committee must approve the student's defense with no more than one dissenting vote and must certify their approval in writing. The committee will indicate approval in writing with signatures on all appropriate forms provided by the University.

Students should ensure the needed form for dissertation defense approval is available for signing by the committee the day of the defense.

Once the written dissertation has been approved by the Advisory Committee, the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School for final approval no later than two weeks prior to graduation. Dissertations which are not submitted by this deadline must be defended again and approved by the advisory committee before they will be considered by the Graduate School for final approval.

Dissertation Submission

Once a student has successfully defended their dissertation and made any changes requested by the committee, a complete formatted copy of the dissertation must be electronically submitted to the Graduate School (Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) Submission Approval (G129)) for a format check no later than four weeks prior to graduation. See specific graduate school deadlines at https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/important-dates- deadlines/

The Graduate School must receive the Final Defense Approval form and an electronic submission of the corrected dissertation no later than two weeks prior to graduation. This official copy of the dissertation will be electronically submitted by the Graduate School to the main library for archiving.

A graduate student may not submit a dissertation to the Graduate School for format checking or the dean's approval between the last day of classes and late registration of the following term.

Graduation

An application for graduation must be filed with the Graduate School no later than Friday of the second full week (the first full week for summer) of classes in the semester of the anticipated graduation date. Instructions for applying for graduation can be found here. See https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/important-dates-deadlines/ for specific dates.

All requirements for the degree must be completed and reported to the Graduate School no later than one week prior to graduation. A student must enroll for a minimum of three hours of credit the semester in which graduation requirements are completed unless additional stipulations are required by other units of the university.

In the course of completing the requirements for the doctoral degree in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, the student will fulfill the requirements as stipulated by the Graduate School. http://www.uga.edu/gradschool/academics/PhD_req.html

Sample Program of Study

To assist in planning, an example timeline is provided below. Most students will follow this plan closely. Any deviations should be discussed with the GC, PD and/or major professor as soon as possible. The following sample program applies to students who fulfill the prerequisites outlined above. If students need to take remedial classes, those should be taken in year 1.

The example plan of study assumes a student makes good progress on all aspects of their program of study. It is understood that the PhD degree will be granted in recognition of proficiency in research, breadth and soundness of scholarship, and thorough knowledge of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, as assessed by the faculty of the Department and not upon completion of any definite amount of work prescribed in advance, or any specific duration. Variation among students regarding the degree duration, especially concerning the thesis research, should be expected.

Full time students (12+ credits) are encouraged to sign up for the maximum of 18 credits each semester. Any credits beyond those taken by classes can be filled with research credits under the mentorship of faculty (which usually will be but is not required to be the student's main advisor).

Time	BIOS	EPID	DAM
Year 1 Fall	BIOS 8010, EPID 8010, STAT 6810, GRSC 7770, EPID 7800, EPID 9100, GRSC 7001	BIOS 8010, EPID 8010, EPID 8500, GRSC 7770, EPID 7800, EPID 9100, GRSC 7001	BIOS 8010, EPID 8010, EPID 7500, GRSC 7770, EPID 7800, EPID 9100, GRSC 7001
Year 1 Spring	BIOS 8020, EPID 8020, STAT 6820, EPID 9100	BIOS 8020, EPID 8020, EPID 8040, EPID 8400, EPID 9100	BIOS 8020, EPID 8020, BIOS 7400, EPID 9100
Year 1 Summer	During summer, all students take the qualifying, written in-class exam that covers core content up to and including EPID/BIOS 8010/8020 & EPID 7800. Successful completion of this exam is required before students can take the comprehensive exam and advance to candidacy.		
Year 2 Fall	BIOS 8030, BIOS 8200, BIOS 8040, electives, research	BIOS 8030, EPID 8050, electives, research	BIOS 8030, BIOS 8200, EPID/BIOS 8060, electives, research
Year 2 Spring	concentration courses, electives, research		
Year 2 Summer	Take Comprehensive Exam. The comprehensive exam is administered by the student's committee. Students need to have formed a committee and submitted the "Doctoral Advisory Committee" and "Final Program of Study" forms. Proposal defense should follow successful completion of comprehensive exam as soon as the student is ready. EPID/BIOS 9000 (research) as applicable		
Yr 3 Fall	EPID/BIOS 9000, further electives		
Yr 3 Spring	EPID/BIOS 9000, further electives		
By the end of the 3rd year, students should have fulfilled all requirements need to be admitted to candidacy, including having passed their qualifying exam, defended their thesis proposal, and submitted the 'admission to candidacy" form.			
Yr 3 Summer	EPID/BIOS 9000 as applicable		
Yr 4 Fall	EPID/BIOS 9000, further electives		
Yr 4 Spring	EPID/BIOS 9000, EPID/BIOS 9300		
In general, by the end of the 4th year the student should have finished their dissertation, passed their PhD defense, and submitted all forms and documents required for graduation to the GC and graduate school.			

Non-standard Courses

Under certain circumstances, students might want or need to deviate from the usual required and elective courses. This requires prior approval of the GC/PD and major professor. Any course replacing one of the required courses needs to be an advanced graduate level course and the total minimum number of credits needs to be maintained.

APPENDIX 1. Student Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures

The Department supports the rights of students to appeal grades or any other performance evaluation. Appeals must be based on one or more of the following issues:

1. **Inaccurate Evaluation or Grade Calculation**. Such appeals must demonstrate that the instructor inaccurately graded one or more assignments and/or made a clerical error in calculating the graded work.
2. **Discrimination**. Appeals based on discrimination must demonstrate that the instructor treated a student differently in assigning grades than he/she treated other students in a similar circumstance. The different treatment must have resulted in the student being assigned a lower grade than would have been assigned if the student were treated similarly.
3. **Failure to Follow Course Policies**. Such appeals must demonstrate that the instructor failed to follow policies that are written in the course syllabus or course assignment, or orally communicated during the course. The student must demonstrate that the instructor's failure to follow one or more course policies was detrimental to their performance in the class, such as a lower grade than would have been assigned had policies been followed.
4. **Failure to Follow Published University Policies**. Such appeals must demonstrate that the instructor failed to follow published University policies related to instruction and/or grading and that the instructor's failure adversely affected the student's grade.

The appeal must be initiated by the student but only after having made every effort to resolve the complaint by working directly with the instructor. If the course has a coordinator other than the instructor (for example a class taught by a graduate student) then the course coordinator should also be involved at this stage. Appeals of any type must be initiated in a timely way by the student, to allow for the early resolution of the appeal.

The next step is to seek review by the Department Chair or his/her designee (generally the Graduate Coordinator). This appeal should be in writing. The Department Chair will meet with all involved parties and render a decision in writing within 5 days of this meeting. For further details about the process beyond review by the department chair, please see the college policy: http://publichealth.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CPH_academic_appeals_policy_2008.pdf.

APPENDIX 2. Departmental Qualifying Exam, Logistics and Procedures

The College of Public Health's Epidemiology and Biostatistics requires a qualifying exam as indicated in the **Student Handbook.** This is a departmental exam which covers the core areas of study in the department which are Epidemiology, Data Analysis and Modeling, and Biostatistics. As stated in the Handbook, passing the exam is a pre-requisite for being allowed to continue in the program and to take the comprehensive and oral exams offered by your chosen committee. The statements in this document expound the Handbook but are not intended to supersede the information in the handbook.

The qualifying exam will be administered after the first year of required courses have been successfully completed. The point-of-contact for the test is the departmental Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will liaise with the Student Affairs Committee of the Department who will be responsible for writing and administering the exam. To write the exam, the Student Affairs committee will request and vet questions written by one or more tenure track faculty members at different ranks in each of the department's tracks: Epidemiology, Data Analytics and Modeling, and Biostatistics. In particular, the Committee will request questions from the instructors of each of the required courses in the first year.

Exam Content: The qualifying exam is designed to test knowledge about a subset of required courses, usually taken during the first year of the program, and their pre-requisite courses. Content tested will be derived from the following courses that should be taken during the first year of the doctoral degree program:

- EPID 8010
- EPID 8020
- BIOS 8010
- BIOS 8020

There is an ethics requirement as part of the doctoral and master's program. If a student has not yet taken an ethics course, they are advised to review the Belmont Report, or similar sources, as questions will be based on this document.

Exam Date: The qualifying exam will be offered in person in May of each year following the completion of Spring Semester finals. The exam date will be announced to the department by mid-January of each academic year. Students must notify the department graduate coordinator in writing that they plan to take the exam by the end of March of the that year.

Exam Logistics: All students must take the exam on the day it is offered. It is not possible to offer the exam at different times or on different days. The exam will be given out at 9 AM and must be returned by 5 PM that day. No extensions will be granted.

Exam Structure: The qualifying exam will be an open-book and note, take-home exam covering the core required areas of study. Students will be given 8 hours to complete the exam. It will include 8 – 10 open-ended questions with multiple parts. These questions will require fundamental knowledge of the topic, ability to synthesize with other core topics, critical thinking, quantitative analysis, and ability to communicate clearly. Students may use the Internet to inform their answers but must not seek help from any individual in real-time (regardless of mode of communication). Tests must be submitted electronically by email to the exam proctor by 5 PM on the day of the exam.

Exam Grading: Each question on the exam will be graded by two independent readers who are graduate faculty in the department. Each reader will give a grade of pass, conditional pass (indicating the presence of deficiencies), or fail and a list of strengths and weaknesses of the response. If both readers concur (either both Fail or both Pass/Conditional Pass), the student will receive that grade. If

the two primary readers disagree, a third reader will grade the question and act as a tie-breaker. The student must pass the majority of questions to pass the exam as a whole. Students should answer all questions on the exam. Any question graded CP/CP, CP/F or F/F will require remediation as described below. The Student Affairs Committee will assign the final grade of pass or fail for the entire exam. Grading of the exam will be completed by August in the year the exam was administered, approximately 3 months after the date of the exam.

Students who pass the exam as a whole but who have either a Conditional Pass from both readers, Conditional Pass/Fail, or Fail/Fail require remediation for that question only. Details of this grading and remediation are shown below:

Assigning a grade and need for remediation for each question.

- P/P or CP/P = **Pass**
  - No remediation is required.
- CP/CP = **Conditional pass**
  - Requires a written plan for remediation that is guided by their advisor and approved by the Student Affairs Committee (SAC). This is to be followed by re-evaluation on that question in a format determined by their advisor and could include a written essay, preparation of a lecture, or a question similar to that in the qualifying exam. This must be completed at least one month prior to the scheduled date of the next year's qualifying exam.
- CP/F or F/F = **Fail**
  - Requires a written plan for remediation that is guided by their advisor and approved by the SAC. This is to be followed by re-evaluation on that question in a format determined by their advisor and could include a written essay, preparation of a lecture, or a question similar to that in the qualifying exam. This must be completed at least one month prior to the scheduled date of the next year's qualifying exam.

The chair of the Student Affairs Committee will notify each faculty member of their student's performance and whether any questions require remediation. The department head, assistant head, and graduate coordinator will be cc'd on these emails. The faculty will notify their students of the exam results and provide feedback about the responses. Students who pass the exam will be allowed to continue to take the comprehensive and oral exams offered by the student's dissertation committee, as described in the Handbook. Students who require remediation on specific question as noted above will work with their advisor on a remediation plan to be shared with the committee and the graduate coordinator. For students who do not pass, they will be allowed to re-take the qualifying exam once. The Student Affairs Committee, the student's advisor, and the student will meet to discuss the timing of the re-take exam and recommendations for remedial instruction and preparation.

Exam Support: Committee members will organize an informational session with students by the end of March each year. During this session, one or more Student Affair Committee members will present the details about the exam for that year, advise how best to prepare, and address questions. The date and time for this session will be announced by email.

A description of competencies, learning objectives, and skillsets that will be tested on the exam will be made available on the Departmental website. The Student Affairs Committee will publish 2-3 representative practice questions with answers in March. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their exam preparation with the major advisor who can provide advice about how best to prepare.

APPENDIX 3. Checklist for Graduate School Submission Documents

Timeline to Submit

Graduate School (GS) Forms Submitted through Gradstatus	Form Number GXXX	MS	PhD	Required Communication	Comments
Advisory Committee	G130	End of Yr 1	Before end of Yr 2	Notify GC and GCA by email	Must have 3 UGA grad faculty. One of these must be an external member to Epi/Bio. If you have a non-UGA committee member, the minimum committee size is 4.
Program of Study	G138	End of Yr 1	Before end of Yr 2	Notify GC and GCA by email	Enter all coursework you expect to complete by the time of graduation, including those courses not yet taken.
Written Comprehensive Exam	No Form	--	End of Year 2 / Start of Year 3	No Grad School form required. Notify GC and GCA by email of the start date for the exam	Partner with your chair to understand format and time allotment. Advisory committees are responsible for administering the exam. You cannot schedule this exam until passing the Department qualifying exam (QE). There are no forms required for the QE.
Oral Comprehensive Exam Announcement	G118	--	End of Year 2 / Start of Year 3	Notify GC and GCA for date/time and room scheduling	The oral exam is public to grad faculty and must be announced 3 weeks prior to the scheduled date. Oral exams should plan to be held between 3-6 weeks after the committee returns written exam results.
Prospectus Proposal Defense	No Form	--	End of Year 3 / Start of Year 4	No Grad School form required; Notify GC and GCA by email	Completion of this milestone advances you to candidacy from the perspective of the Department. You should submit G162 after completing this step to start the process with the Graduate School (GS). See below.
Application for Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degrees	G162	--	After Prospectus Defense	Notify GC and GCA by email	Filing this document generates acknowledgment of candidacy from the GS. When you receive an email response congratulating you from GS, you can change your email signature to convey the new program status, "PhD Candidate." Congratulations!
Dissertation Defense Announcement	G119	--	Minimum 3 weeks before defense	Notify GC and GCA for date/time and room scheduling. Please work with your chair to provide a one-paragraph abstract that describes the dissertation objectives and findings for departmental announcement.	Notify your friends and family of the public session if you would like them to attend. A private defense session with only your committee will be held after the public portion.
Thesis and Dissertation Defense Results	MS: G140 PhD: G164	Post-Defense	Post-Defense	None needed. Congratulations!	Review and complete all important GS submissions on time (see link below in the note). Plan with your chair to attend graduation and order your regalia.

Important Note: The timing of final ETD submission to ProQuest (G129) varies in timeline depending on your defense date and the graduation semester. Other important dates and links required for graduation are located at https://grad.uga.edu/current-students/important-dates-deadlines/

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