COLUMBIA | MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES

DrPH Student Handbook

2025 – 2026 Academic Year

This handbook has been created to ensure EHS DrPH students are familiar with Department and School procedures and protocol.

Important resources:
EHS Department website
Official MSPH handbook
Official School handbook

Questions should be directed to Nina Kulacki, Director of Academic Programs,
Greg Freyer or Marcela Tamayo-Ortiz, Faculty Co-Directors, DrPH EHS
For a detailed academic calendar for 2025-26,
please see the Mailman Academic Calendar.

***Academic Honesty & Honor Code:** All DrPH students/candidates* are expected to adhere to the required standards for academic and scientific integrity,*
which can be found in the Mailman Student Handbook.

**Definitions:*
Student has not yet taken and passed the qualifying exam.
Candidate has completed the qualifying exam and is in the thesis research stage of the program.

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EHS DrPH Program

Our DrPH program is a part-time only program for working professionals. While EHS will continue to have a strong research/thesis requirement for our DrPH students, we are committed to providing the training necessary for individuals to be grounded in the principles of environmental health and to take on a leadership role in public health. Typically, students take 5-6 years to complete the program, but must finish within seven years of their date of matriculation

DrPH curriculum: All DrPH students take School-wide Core courses to fulfill many of the DrPH competencies required for this CEPH-accredited program. Students take additional courses to fulfill Departmental competencies. DrPH students will complete an Applied Practicum Experience (APEx), write up that experience, which will include an implementation plan and a reflection. As part of the plan, there should be an aspect that involves data collection. The Integrative Learning Experience ILE, should include an explanation of surveillance system limitations to consider how national surveys assess, monitor, and evaluate policies and programs, and how they address a population's health. DrPH students are also expected to conduct research. The research project can be developed with a faculty member in the EHS Department working within their area of expertise. It could also be carried out with an appropriate individual from outside of our department or School. Thesis work done with a member outside of the Department requires approval from the EHS DrPH Committee and an EHS faculty mentor.

At the end of the program, DrPH candidates complete a dissertation that meets the criteria for an integrative learning experience (ILE). This culminating experience has two components: 1) the APEx implementation plan and 2) a written thesis, based on their research project. The written products are meant to demonstrate the synthesis of foundational and specific EHS departmental competencies. The thesis should demonstrate that the DrPH candidate did the following: conducted independent studies and can communicate effectively – both orally and in writing, utilizing critical thinking skills.

Career Options

The career paths of our graduates vary and include, among others:

- Senior roles in research, management, or data analysis at governmental regulatory agencies at the local, state, national, and international levels
- Researchers within industries, including pharmaceutical companies
- Leadership/senior roles at government organizations involved in environmental and health protection, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), health departments, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- Consulting firms
- Community-based organizations concerned with health issues related to environmental pollutants
- Non-governmental organizations involved in developing and advocating for sound environmental policy

Competencies

The DrPH degree in EHS is designed to train candidates for careers in public health practice and leadership positions in environmental health sciences. There are multiple learning objectives for the DrPH program, aimed at producing a well-trained academic, researcher, and/or leader.

Foundational Competencies (all DrPH students in Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health (CUMSPH)

<u>Data & Analysis</u>

1. Explain qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and policy analysis research and evaluation methods to address health issues at multiple (individual, group, organization, community, and population) levels.
2. Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis, or evaluation project to address a public health issue.

3. Explain the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring, and evaluating policies and programs and addressing a population's health.

Leadership, Management & Governance

1. Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders, and other partners.
2. Communicate public health science to diverse stakeholders, including individuals at all levels of health literacy, for purposes of influencing behavior and policies.
3. Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values, and potential contributions from multiple professions, sectors, and systems in addressing public health problems.
4. Create a strategic plan.
5. Facilitate shared decision-making through negotiation and consensus-building methods.
6. Create organizational change strategies.
7. Propose strategies to promote inclusion and equity within public health programs, policies, & systems.
8. Assess one's own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities, including cultural proficiency.
9. Propose human, fiscal, and other resources to achieve a strategic goal.
10. Cultivate new resources and revenue streams to achieve a strategic goal.

Policy & Programs

1. Design a system-level intervention to address a public health issue.
2. Integrate knowledge of cultural values and practices in the design of public health policies & programs.
3. Integrate scientific information, legal and regulatory approaches, ethical frameworks, and varied stakeholder interests in policy development and analysis.
4. Propose interprofessional and/or intersectoral team approaches to improving public health.

Education & Workforce Development

1. Assess an audience's knowledge and learning needs.
2. Deliver training or educational experiences that promote learning in academic, organizational, or community settings.
3. Use best practice modalities in pedagogical practices.

Departmental-Specific Competencies

1. Apply the latest applied science methodologies for testing research hypotheses and solving practical problems in environmental health sciences.
2. Communicate effectively in writing and orally the results of research findings to other professionals.
3. Identify significant gaps in the current applied knowledge in environmental health sciences and develop approaches for filling those gaps.
4. Conceive, develop, and conduct original research leading to practical applications in environmental health sciences.
5. Establish and design an independent applied research program in environmental health sciences.

EHS DrPH Requirements

Course Requirements

The DrPH requires 36 credits of coursework. DrPH students are expected to be continuously enrolled in the program until its completion and are expected to take their courses in a timely fashion. Most of the coursework should be completed in the first two to three years of the program, although a longer timeline is possible. Any coursework taken outside the School and Department required courses should focus on the student's program and career goals. Coursework plans must be approved by the Faculty Mentor and program leadership. Upon approval, and when appropriate, students register for research credits as a part of the 36-credit requirement for graduation. All students must enroll in Journal Club for full 6 semesters while in the program. The culminating experience requirement is described below. The process of selecting a research topic and faculty advisor is also described below. The timeline for completion of the DrPH degree is a maximum of 7 years.

Upon admission to the program, students meet with the Director of Academic Programs Nina Kulacki and the DrPH Faculty Co-Directors Dr. Greg Freyer and Dr. Marcela Tamayo-Ortiz. At that time, information and recommendations will be offered regarding coursework, planning ahead for the Qualifying Exam (QE), and any other academic information in preparation for the student's experience in the program.

All students must register for and take G4010 RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH AND RELATED POLICY ISSUES. The course is typically offered in the spring semester. More information can be found here.

Students are eligible to take their QE once they have completed the majority of their coursework and have a practicum and thesis proposal.

Sample Curriculum for DrPH Program (required courses in bold)

Semester	Courses (36 Credits)
Year 1 Fall 6.0 Credits	• **P9070 Case Studies in PH Leadership I (CORE) (1.5)** • P8307 Molecular Epidemiology (3.0) • P8325 Risk Assessment, Communication, and Management (1.5)
Year 1 Spring 8.5 Credits	• **P9050 DrPH Seminar in Strategic Management (CORE) (1.5)** • **P9040 DrPH Seminar in Management and Organizational Behavior (CORE) (1.5)** • **P9060 Essentials in Teaching and Communication (1.5) (can be taken during Year 1 or Year 2 Spring)** • P6360 Analysis of Environmental Health Data (3.0) • P9370 Journal Club in Environmental Health Sciences (1.0)
Summer	• APEx (this is a requirement of the program, but does not have to take place specifically in Summer)
Year 2 Fall 8.5 Credits	• **P9071 Case Studies in PH Leadership II (CORE) (1.5)** • P9370 Journal Club (1.0) • P8319 Biological Markers of Chemical Exposure (3.0) • P6385 Principles of Genetics and the Environment (3.0) • P8335 Quantitative Methods in Biomarkers Research (1.5) • P8336 Experimental Methods in Biomarkers Research (1.5)
Year 2 Spring 8.5 Credits	• P8332 Advanced Analytic Methods in EHS (3.0) • P8438 Epidemiology II Design and Conduct of Observational Epidemiology (3.0) • P8100 Applied Regression Analysis (3.0) • P9370 Journal Club (1.0)* • QUALIFYING EXAM (QE)
Post Year 2	• P9370 Journal Club, 3 more semesters while in the program for a total of 6.

*Journal Club can be taken for zero credits once students have reached the 36 required credit limit.

Journal Club

All DrPH students must attend Journal Club for a total of 6 semesters (6 total credits) during their time in the program. Journal Club satisfies several core competencies for the DrPH, including:

- Conceive, develop, and conduct original research leading to practical applications in environmental health sciences.

- Apply the latest applied science methodologies for testing research hypotheses and solving practical problems in environmental health sciences.
- Communicate effectively in writing and orally the results of research findings to the public and other professionals.
- Acquire skills to develop a well-conceived proposal and to create a written proposal aimed at acquiring funding for a project to carry out your proposed studies.
- Compose a research article for submission to a peer-reviewed scientific journal or other high-impact writing, such as on the WHO website.
- Report research findings at professional meetings.
- Summarize research findings for a non-technical audience.
- Identify significant gaps in the current applied knowledge in environmental health sciences and develop approaches to fill those gaps.
- And recognize what is needed to establish, organize, and operate an independent applied research program in environmental health sciences.

As a part of this course, students read primary research papers and present a critical review of their readings. The goal of this course is to teach students to present and debate informative, challenging, and current topics from scientific literature. Each semester, the course topic relates to a specific area of study in environmental sciences. The specific topic is chosen each semester by the course instructor. Some sample topics include the effects of ozone depletion on cells; asthma in the urban environment; recent advances in the use of biomarkers in predicting cancer; health effects of heavy metals in the environment; population epigenetics; waterborne pathogens and disease, and professional development, e.g., leadership and management. Every few years, one semester is devoted to leadership and management training for environmental health scientists.

Academic Honesty & Honor Code:

All Mailman students are expected to adhere to the required standards for academic and scientific integrity. Please review the latest information on “Turnitin” via the link below. These can be found in the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) Student Handbook statement on Academic Honesty: Honor Code of Academic Integrity

Registration

DrPH Continuous Registration Policy:

After completing coursework, and while preparing for the dissertation, a candidate must be continuously enrolled at the University and within the program of study. Students must register for one tuition point in all fall and spring semesters in which they are not otherwise registered for course credits. The one tuition credit point is satisfied in EHS through P9370 Journal Club. In addition, all candidates must also register for a non-credit, no charge continuous registration RSRH P0003 until the final semester.

Registration Policies and Procedures

Please refer to the Mailman Handbook found here for all registration policies and procedures.
To view the most updated course listings, please use this link.

Progress Reporting

All EHS DrPH students are required to submit a brief progress report at the start of the academic year (see Appendix A). Each student must meet with either their advisor or with the DrPH Faculty Co-Directors and Director of Academic Programs if they do not yet have an assigned advisor. Completed reports are to be submitted to the Director of Academic Programs.

Grades and Pass/Fail Policy

Students are expected to obtain a grade of B or higher in every course for which they are registered. If a candidate receives a grade below a B, it will be brought to the attention of the EHS Doctoral Committee, and a review will take place to determine the circumstances behind the grade. If a student receives a second grade

below a B, they will be required to meet with the EHS Doctoral Committee and, if deemed appropriate, could be asked to leave the program.

DrPH candidates in MSPH doctoral programs may take no more than two elective courses for pass/fail, with the prior approval of the department.

Identifying a Faculty Mentor

Upon entering the program, students will meet with the DrPH Faculty Co-Directors to determine a program plan and an area of research. DrPH students can identify a research project that is at their place of work, but outside of their actual job, or work on a project with a faculty member in the department. In the former case, an appropriate faculty member will be identified to serve as the departmental mentor. In the latter case, the advisor will be the faculty member with whom the student is doing research.

Applied Practicum Experience (APEx)

Regardless of the amount or level of prior experience, all DrPH students are required to engage in an Applied Practicum Experience (APEx) in which students are responsible for the completion of at least one project that is meaningful for an organization and to advance public health practice.

The work product may be a single project or a set of related projects that demonstrate a depth of competence. The deliverable must contain a reflective component that includes the student's expression of personal and/or professional reactions to the applied practice experience. This may take the form of a journal or other written product, a professional portfolio, or another deliverable that serves to assess the ability of the student to meet Department and School competencies.

The applied practice experience takes place within an organization external to the student's School or program, so that it is not merely an academic exercise but an application of learning to a "real world" setting. Relevant organizations may include governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial, and for-profit settings. The Office of Field Practice and individual departments identify sites in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of the agencies or organizations involved, and sites should benefit from Mailman students' experiences. The applied practice experience may be completed within a student's own work setting as long as the applied practice experience differs substantially from a student's current job description and meets the required competencies described below. The student will work with their advisor to identify an organization and project.

The APEx must meet a minimum of five (5) foundational and/or concentration-specific competencies that are reinforced and/or assessed through application. One of these competencies must be a School-wide or Department-specific competency in leadership, management, and governance. Competencies for the applied practical experience must be agreed upon by the student, advisor, and applied learning experience preceptor, as specified in the statement of work form.

While there is no minimum number of hours for the applied practice experience, it does require substantive, quality opportunities that address the identified competencies.

The APEx is a part of the required culminating ILE, which is described below. A requirement of the program is to pass a Qualifying Exam (QE), which is taken after coursework is completed and once a student has planned the APEx and developed a plan for a research project. An interim report will be presented and defended by the student as part of the QE. More details here:

Deliverables:

- Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis, or evaluation project to address a public health issue.
- Explain the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring, and evaluating policies and programs and addressing a population's health.

- Initial practicum proposal, 1-2 pages, with a plan that is submitted for approval for the QE.
- Full proposal QE, 5-7 pages.
- Practicum report, ten pages at the time of the Integrated Learning Experience.
- Practicum presentation at a weekly Departmental Seminar the semester following completion.

Qualifying Examination (QE)

Becoming a qualified/trained scientific writer is a major goal of the DrPH program. It is also essential that students be able to orally defend a proposal. To this end, the QE is composed of the written proposal and an oral defense and is to be completed and defended no later than May of year three in the program.

The QE meets the following CEPH competencies, which will be assessed by the QE Committee through the writing assignment and questions during the exam.

DrPH Foundational Competency

- Explain the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring, and evaluating policies and programs to address a population's health.

DrPH EHS Competencies

- Communicate effectively in writing and orally the results of research findings to other professionals.
- Identify significant gaps in the current applied knowledge in environmental health sciences and develop approaches for filling those gaps.
- Conceive, develop and conduct original research leading to practical applications in environmental health sciences.
- Establish and design an independent applied research program in Environmental Health Sciences.

Written Proposal

The QE is composed of two writing exercises:

The first is a summary of the practicum with a description of how it fits into public health, particularly the field of environmental health sciences. This must include the mentor(s) name, review the development of the project, the way it contributes to the development of the student's career, make clear that it is distinct from any of the student's employment duties, and outline how the project contributed to deepening exposure to, or mastery of, specific competencies and skills required by the EHS Department. This report should be 5-7 pages.

The second is a grant proposal that follows the format of the NIH F31 (or equivalent format). Students only need to include a Project Summary, Project Narrative, Specific Aims, Significance, Innovation, and Approach. The proposal should be written by the student, in consultation with the faculty advisor, and should reflect the work that the candidate will carry out with the faculty advisor. A one-page abstract or summary of the proposal must be submitted to the Chair of the DrPH QE Committee for approval prior to developing the full proposal. In designing the research grant proposal, students must address the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring, and evaluating policies and programs to address a population's health as it relates to their proposal. They must also identify significant gaps in the current applied knowledge in environmental health sciences and demonstrate how their proposal will fill those gaps.

Following the submission of the required documents, the Co-Directors of the DrPH program, in consultation with the student and mentor, will schedule an oral defense. The Committee is made up of 3 EHS faculty members and an additional member who can contribute expertise to either the practicum or thesis work. The Co-Directors of the DrPH program must approve any outside members. As the QE will test the knowledge base of students within the overall field of EHS and Public Health and, more specifically, on their thesis topic area and coursework, students should anticipate a wide range of relevant questions from the committee members.

Students are encouraged to seek out a peer to get feedback while writing the proposal.

Format of the Oral Exam

At the Examination, the student will give a formal presentation of the practicum and thesis proposals, which is followed by a question-and-answer period. During this time the student defends the validity of their proposal and answers questions related to the proposed area. The student should be prepared to answer questions related to environmental health sciences and their coursework, where it pertains to the subject. The oral presentation should last approximately 15 minutes, with 30-45 minutes of question time to follow. Students can prepare extra slides used to respond to questions they might anticipate, or that contain details that were not in the initial presentation

After the defense, the Committee will vote to either:

1) **Pass** – the student will move forward to thesis work as a candidate.
2) **Conditional Pass** – the student will make minor revisions to the proposals that will then be addressed with the thesis advisor.
3) **Does Not Pass** – The student is required to undergo another exam within three months to move forward with thesis work. If the student fails the second exam, then the second failure is final, and the student is not permitted to continue in the program and will not receive the DrPH degree.

Integrative Learning Experience (ILE)

The combination of the thesis and practicum work is referred to as the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE). After completing the QE, the candidate's focus is to carry out their research project and complete the APEx requirement. One of the first steps is to choose an Advisory/Thesis Committee in consultation with their advisor within two (2) months of completing the QE.

Thesis projects should comprise original research. Therefore, candidates are obligated to perform studies that collect data and complete appropriate analyses of said data. The best measure of the candidate's work is whether the research is deemed worthy of publication in peer-reviewed journals. While publishing is not required, the candidate's goal should be to have at least one publication as the primary author.

Work on the APEx can be carried out simultaneously with the thesis work or in a separate block of time. Ideally, the thesis work and APEx will have overlapping themes. Both will be evaluated separately.

Advisory and Thesis Committee

Within three (3) months of completing the QE, candidates should choose an Advisory/Thesis Committee in consultation with their faculty advisor. It is required that all Thesis Committees have at least two members from EHS. Thus, candidates should consider the guidelines for the composition of the Dissertation Committee when choosing the members of the Thesis Committee.

The Thesis Committee serves as a resource to the candidate during their thesis work. The candidate meets with the committee regularly (no less than twice a year) to review the candidate's progress and make recommendations. With the assistance of their faculty mentor, candidates must initiate the scheduling of these meetings. The candidate must also complete a Thesis Committee Form (Appendix B) for each meeting, which requires approval from all Committee members and must be submitted to the Academic Director at the completion of the meeting. The Dissertation Defense Committee design is based on the requirements of the Mailman School of Public Health (see Dissertation Committee Composition section). This committee's role is to oversee the final dissertation defense and then to vote on its acceptability as worthy of a DrPH degree.

Dissertation Committee Composition

The Dissertation Committee can be the same as the Thesis Committee. Three members must be senior faculty; at least one should be a senior member from the Department, while two members can be from outside the Department. One senior faculty member, who is not the candidate's dissertation sponsor, is designated the impartial chair of the ad hoc dissertation committee. Any or all the members can come from the Advisory

Committee, but the makeup must include the advisor, two members from within the Department, and two from outside of the Department.

Dissertation Structure

Several formats are acceptable for a written thesis. There are some standards, however, that are expected, and the format below is a typical representation of the final dissertation. Those elements that are required by the department are indicated with an (R). There is no specific page requirement, but a typical DrPH thesis is usually 150-200 pages in length, including tables, figures, and references.

One option is to follow the required guidelines, including an extensive Literature Review, and then use publications (including submitted and accepted) as the middle chapters, followed by a Conclusions and Future Directions Section.

(R) Title Page
This contains the thesis title, candidate's name, and a statement submitted in partial fulfillment of the Doctoral of Philosophy degree.

(R) Abstract
This is usually a one- to three-page summary of the candidate's thesis work, where the question/hypothesis of the thesis is specified along with a brief outline of their data, results, and conclusions.

(R) Table of Contents
This should state each chapter's title and delineate the subtopics in each. Figures should be listed here as well, preferably in a separate table.

(R) Acknowledgements
This is a brief statement (<1 page) where the candidate often acknowledges the contributions of his/her mentor, committee members, colleagues, other advisors, peers, and family members who assisted in the candidate's ability to successfully conduct his/her research.

(R) Introduction/Literature Review*
This section is an exhaustive review of relevant literature that should build toward the formulation of a hypothesis. It usually begins with a broader perspective of the field of study and subsequently narrows its focus on those topics most relevant to the candidate's thesis work.

Methods*
A comprehensive Methods section is essential to a well-presented and cohesive thesis, particularly since the thesis is often used as a template for instruction by the project's successors. Methods can be included in individual chapters and need not be presented in a separate chapter, especially if the thesis has multiple chapters on different aspects of the research.

Results*
This section should contain multiple chapters. Ideally, each chapter is a publication relative to the thesis for which the candidate is the first author. These can be papers that are already published, in the press, or submitted. If the candidate was a secondary author, then there will need to be a separate write-up that only includes the parts of the paper that represent the candidate's work. Unpublished work should also be included in the thesis as a separate chapter(s), one for each topic. Even if papers make up the thesis, they must still contain separate chapters for an extensive literature review, overall conclusions, and future directions.

Discussion*
In this section, the interpretation of the candidate's results is considered, along with an explanation of how these results can be incorporated into an increased understanding of the field.

(R) Conclusions/Future Directions
In this section, the candidate summarizes his/her findings and draws final conclusions. Future directions and related studies are also proposed.

(R) References
Full references with titles are specified in this section.
*This format can be used for each chapter if papers are published.

Dissertation Proposal and Defense

The DrPH dissertation has two parts:

1) the final implementation plan and any data from it if appropriate
2) the research thesis

Doctoral dissertations should rigorously examine or test hypotheses or concepts that can significantly advance the field of public health. Original data, either from a laboratory, field, or epidemiologic study, is used as evidence supporting the thesis, and the quality of writing must be thoroughly professional.

Scheduling and Completing the Defense

Once all chapters and supporting documents have been completed and both the sponsor and second reader agree that the dissertation is ready to defend, the candidate distributes the thesis to all committee members. No less than four weeks should be allowed for committee members to read the manuscript. The Director of Academic Programs should be notified when the dissertation is in its final state so that a time, date, and place of defense may be arranged. The candidate is responsible for identifying a day and time that works for all dissertation defense committee members while the Director of Academic Programs secures a room and advertises the seminar day and time. Candidates should remember that faculty maintain busy schedules, and confirming a day and time that works for all committee members can sometimes take a few weeks. Please anticipate such considerations when determining a realistic defense date/time frame.

The Dissertation Defense Form is provided electronically to the advisor prior to the defense and signed by the Dissertation Committee members. This form is submitted to the School by the EHS Director of Academic Programs.

The Defense is comprised of two parts:

1) a one-hour public portion that is typically in seminar format and is advertised to all department members and, immediately following,
2) a closed-door portion typically lasting approximately two hours, during which the defense questions the candidate on his/her thesis or related areas of study.

The chair of the committee runs the defense, which begins with a short discussion (without the candidate present) to determine the general focus of the defense. Next, the candidate makes a brief presentation of the dissertation research and major findings. Following the presentation, committee members ask questions about the research and its implications. After the questioning is completed, the candidate and sponsor are asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates. Committee members discuss whether the dissertation is adequate and what revisions are required. The candidate and sponsor return, and the committee communicates any required revisions and an expected timeline. For the final dissertation document - depending on the level of revision needed - the sponsor and/or additional members of the committee will review the revised portions and determine whether the revisions are acceptable. For minor revisions, it is sufficient for the sponsor to review and finalize the thesis.

Evaluation of Dissertation

The committee must decide on one of four possible assessments: Pass, Incomplete, and Fail. The evaluation of the committee is recorded on a standard form and saved on a file in the department.

Pass – A unanimous vote or a vote with only one dissent constitutes a pass. The dissertation is deemed acceptable, subject to minor revisions. Supervised by his/her sponsor, the candidate corrects the dissertation considering the committee's comments. Upon completion of the required revisions, the candidate is recommended for the degree. All revisions should be completed, and the final dissertation deposited no later than six months from the date of the dissertation defense unless a shorter timeline is agreed upon by the committee and the candidate.

In case of a split vote, the voting sheet and dissertation are submitted to the Mailman Director of Doctoral Studies and the OSA for review and final decision.

Incomplete – The dissertation is deemed acceptable, subject to major revisions. All revisions must be completed no sooner than three months and no later than one year from the date of the dissertation defense. Upon completion and acceptance of the required revision, the defense is considered successful.

Under this scenario, the committee chair shall delegate responsibility for the outcome of the revision to a subcommittee of from one to three members of the original committee. When completed, the major revisions must be submitted to each of the members of the revision subcommittee. If and when each member states in writing that the new text is satisfactory, letters are sent to the Dean's office to change the vote record from "Incomplete" to "Pass."

Fail – The dissertation is deemed unacceptable, and the candidate is not recommended for the degree.

In addition to applying for degree conferral on Student Services Online (SSOL), conferral of the DrPH degree requires confirmation of a completed ILE. DrPH candidates should follow the steps outlined below for defending and depositing their ILE, unless instructed by their department to follow a different process.

Finalizing the Defense

1. The Defense of Dissertation form (located here) must be submitted to the Office of Enrollment Services by the Director of Academic Programs, indicating a successful defense of the Integrative Learning Experience (ILE).
2. The Office of Enrollment Services must receive confirmation of successful completion of any required revisions (Minor or Major) to the ILE by the department academic director or chairperson of the committee.
3. Candidates must complete the Deposit of ILE to ProQuest.

Deposit of the ILE to ProQuest

The ILE deposit, not the defense, is the final requirement. *Candidates may only deposit when all revisions are complete and with approval from their academic department.*

There are two steps to completing the deposit - these steps can be done in any order, but the deposit is only considered finalized when both steps are complete:

- Complete the required Survey of Earned Doctorates
- Upload and submit a PDF copy of your ILE to ProQuest ETD Administrator
    - There are specific formatting requirements for the ILE following the same guidelines placed on PhD dissertations. Visit the GSAS website to view the guide to formatting.

Faculty do their best to provide feedback regarding formatting and other matters as quickly as possible, but it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that all steps of the deposit are completed in time for degree conferral, including a correctly formatted Integrative Learning Experience.

Time Limit and Monitoring Candidate Progress on Dissertation Research

Candidates should expect the research component to take at least the equivalent of one year of full-time effort. An overall time limit of seven (7) years for completion of degree requirements and the dissertation is set from the date of first registration following admission into the doctoral program. Candidates may request a leave of absence from their department. Leaves of absence must be approved by both the department and the Dean of Students. Periods during which the candidate is formally granted a leave of absence will not be counted in the seven-year limit.

The candidate, with support from his or her sponsor, may request from the Director of Doctoral Studies and the Dean of Students an annual extension of the seven-year time limit. Such extensions will not automatically be granted but will be looked upon favorably if the candidate can demonstrate that progress is being made towards completing the dissertation: Time Limit and Monitoring Progress of Dissertation.

Time limit for Final Submission of Dissertation

As stated above, dissertations approved as pass (with only minor revisions required) must be deposited within six months of the defense date. Dissertations voted as incomplete (approved with major revisions required) must be deposited within one year of the defense date.

Timeline

Detailed EHS DrPH Timeline*

Approximate Time in Program	Action	Outcome
Fall Semester Year 1	Meet with Director of Academic Programs and DrPH Co-Directors to map out first semester course plan	• Attend classes
Fall Semester Year 1	Register for Journal Club and attend Seminar.	• Attendance of Journal Club. A total of 6 semesters while in the program.
Spring Semester Year 1	Meet with DrPH Co-Directors to confirm spring semester.	• Spring courses confirmed.
Spring Semester Year 1	Meet with DrPH Co-Directors and Director of Academic Programs to review an academic progress report at beginning of spring semester.	• Academic Progress Report is completed and submitted to the Director of Academic Programs.
End of Spring Semester Year 1	The process of selecting a research topic and faculty advisor should begin towards the end of the first year in the program.	• Researching topic areas and meeting with potential faculty advisors as appropriate.
Fall Semester Year 2	Meet with DrPH Co-Directors or official faculty advisor early fall to plan for the academic year.	• Academic Progress Report is completed and submitted to the Director of Academic Programs.
Fall Semester Year 2	Choose a faculty advisor in preparation for the QE.	• Faculty advisor selected.
Fall Semester Year 2	Select a thesis project topic.	• Topic selected.
Spring Semester Year 2	Actively working on QE.	• QEmay be taken as early as end of this semester but must be completed no later than end of the summer.**

Spring Semester Year 2	Meet with Advisor and/or DrPH Co-Directors to review academic progress report at start of spring semester.	• Bi-Annual Academic Progress Report is completed by mid-Feb, accepted and kept on file.
Post Year 2	Within 3 months of completion of the QE, the candidate must set up a meeting with the thesis committee.	• Established thesis committee. • This information is submitted via email to the Director of Academic Programs. • First meeting scheduled and completed. • Thesis Committee Form completed and submitted to the Director of Academic Programs.
Post Year 2	Complete thesis work and meet with thesis committee.	• Meet with committee two times in the calendar year. • Submit a Thesis Committee Form to the Director of Academic Programs.
Post Year 2	Yearly seminar presentation followed up with a bi-annual Thesis Committee Meeting. This occurs up until dissertation defense.	• Meet with committee two times in the calendar year. • Submit a Thesis Committee Form to the Director of Academic Programs.
End of Year Until Program Completed	Academic Progress Report is reviewed with primary advisor.	• Academic Progress Report is completed by mid-October and mid-February and submitted to Meet with committee two times in the calendar year. • Submit a Thesis Committee Form to the Director of Academic Programs.
Upon Completion of Thesis Work	Finalize Dissertation committee membership (see Dissertation Committee Formation section of this handbook).	• Thesis writing begins. • Feedback received from thesis advisor. • Identify a thesis reader who is a dissertation committee member who is on faculty at Columbia.
Thesis Writing Completed	Schedule dissertation defense with the assistance of the Director of Academic Programs.	• Defend
Post Defense	Make corrections to thesis and deposit.	• See OSA rules for dissertation deposit.***

* This timeline was created as an outline for a full-time student. Part-time students will need to adjust this schedule as needed with the assistance of Dr. Freyer, Dr. Tamayo-Ortiz and Nina Kulacki and/or their primary advisor.
** The QE currently represents a committee of EHS Faculty Members: including one of the two co-Chairs Drs. Freyer and Dr. Tamayo-Ortiz plus 3 other faculty members. If appropriate one of the EHS faculty members can be replaced by an outside member to lend expertise on the topic of the thesis proposal or practicum.
*** Upon completion of the QE DrPH candidate must register for DrPH Continuous Registration and/or Journal Club. Please see the Continuous Registration information for more details.

Appendix A: DrPH PROGRESS REPORT:

DrPH Progress Report

Student Information: **(*This form must be completed by early fall and spring every year in the program*)**			
Student Name:			
CUID:			
Advisor (*Primary*):			
Co-Advisor (*if applicable*):			
Matriculation Date:			
Current/anticipated members of the dissertation committee: **(*5 in total – 3 internal to EHS, including sponsor, chair, and second reader, then 2 external.*)**			
Print names in this column	*Email confirmation date for each in this column*		
Semester and Year completing this form:			
Qualifying Exam Completed:	If yes, date: _____	If no, anticipated date: _____	
Is your thesis committee different than your above stated anticipated dissertation committee?	Yes No	If you responded yes, please explain the rationale for the difference in committee members:	

Have you met with your thesis committee since your last bi-annual review? (*Reminder – Dissertation committee meetings should take place twice a calendar year*):	Yes No	If you responded no, please explain the rationale:
What progress have you made toward your degree over the past semester? (*Do not include progress recorded in last semester's report.*) Please explain any departures from last semester/year's goals.		
Itemize the remaining requirements for your DrPH degree, particularly including your dissertation, and include your timetable for completion of each requirement. Indicate which requirements you expect to complete during the next semester.		
Please give the projected date for completion of your dissertation for defense:		
Please list any peer-reviewed publications you had this semester/year (*including those in progress*).		
Please list any domestic or international conferences you attended this year and your role at the conference (*e.g. did you present?*). Please list any other presentation opportunities you have had since your last review.		

List any external fellowships you applied for in this past academic	
semester. Indicate which ones were successful and provide the award amount.	
Section II to be completed by the dissertation sponsor.	
Comments on student's progress on the dissertation during the last semester (*if not at that point, then address progress on courses and research*).	
Comments on student's objectives for the next semester.	
Is the timetable for milestones (*e.g. qualifying exam and/or dissertation*) reasonable? Is the student's projected date of completion realistic?	
I have met with the student to discuss his or her progress.	Yes No
We have also discussed possible external funding sources.	Yes No

Affirmed (Sponsor): _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix B: Dissertation Committee Form

Dissertation Committee Form

Student Information	
Student Name:	
Advisor (*Primary*):	
Co-Advisor (*if applicable*):	
Matriculation Date:	
Committee Members: **(IMPORTANT: *List names here & confirm approval of form via email after meeting.*)**	
Print names in this column	*Email confirmation date for each in this column*
Meeting details: (*Please use as much space as needed to include specific details.*)	
Meeting Date:	
Anticipated Defense Date:	
Were goals from previous meetings met? **If changes/other details, list here.**	
List specific goals for next meeting:	
Next meeting planned for date or estimated date here: (*Meetings should be held in Oct and Apr unless committee specifies earlier meeting here*)	

Advisor signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Co-Advisor signature (*if applicable*): _____ **Date:** _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix C: Dissertation Defense Form

This form may be found here.