

**Department of Epidemiology  
Guidelines for the Doctoral Degree**

**Fall 2008**



**School of Public Health  
University of Michigan**

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## INTRODUCTION

As a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) student in Epidemiology you will need to familiarize yourself with procedures and requirements that are set forth by the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies as well as the Department of Epidemiology. This booklet is meant to serve as an introduction and basic overview of these requirements as well as provide information on communications and logistics to assure your success as a student.

It is highly recommended that you peruse the website for Rackham's Office of Academic Records and Dissertations (OARD) for more detailed information on the guidelines, requirements and deadlines for achieving the various milestones towards obtaining the Ph.D. degree. The website is [www.rackham.umich.edu/OARD/](http://www.rackham.umich.edu/OARD/). All of Rackham's required forms can be found at this site. In completing these forms, indicate Epidemiologic Science Ph.D. as the Academic Program and 00198 as the Code. Rackham's website also provides a very efficient search engine for locating specific information contained in the Rackham Graduate Student Handbook.

### **Communications and Logistics**

While an official student file is kept at the Rackham School of Graduate Studies Office of Academic Records and Dissertation (OARD), a file for each Epidemiology student is also kept by the Student Services Coordinator in the Departmental Student Services Office. If you have any questions about your academic status or Rackham's policies throughout your academic career, please see the Student Services Coordinator.

As a doctoral student, you will automatically be included in an e-mail group called [epidocs@umich.edu](mailto:epidocs@umich.edu). All notification of events, fellowships and deadlines are distributed through this venue. It is very important that you make sure that you are receiving the communications sent to this group. You can identify the email groups you are a member of by logging into the University of Michigan On-line Directory ([www.directory.umich.edu](http://www.directory.umich.edu)) and clicking the "Show Membership" icon. If your name is not included in *epidocs*, please notify the Student Services Office.

### **Student Services Office**

The Student Services Office is located in suite 4640 SPH I (Tower). Your Student Services Representative can assist you with course registration, policy and procedure interpretation, dropping/adding courses, grade changes, substitution or exemption of program requirements, transfer of credit and resource referral.

### **MCard (Student ID Card)**

If you are coming from a U-M program, you don't need to get a new MCard. New students may get their MCards anytime after they have paid the enrollment deposit at the MCard Center in the Student Activities Building. You will need your MCard to access the SPH buildings after business hours, access the computer classrooms in the basement of SPH II, check out books from the library, ride the city-operated AATA buses for free and gain admittance to football games (with student ticket) and other athletic events. For more information on MCard, please visit: <http://www.mcard.umich.edu/>

### **Uniqname**

A unqname and password will be assigned to you upon matriculation. You must have a U-M unqname and password in order to log into Wolverine Access. If you have difficulty activating your

username and password, you should contact the ITCS Accounts Office. More information is available on the ITCS website: <http://www.itd.umich.edu/accounts>

### **Wolverine Access**

Wolverine Access (<http://wolverineaccess.umich.edu>) is a web-based system that provides access to many services throughout the University, including registration for classes, ordering or printing transcripts and updating your current address and personal information. Once you arrive on campus, it is important that you update your profile to reflect your current address. If you do not change it, any correspondence from the university will be mailed to the address you provided on your application.

### **E-Mail**

E-mail is used extensively to get information to you, both from the Department and from the School. The university's web-based email can be accessed by logging in with your username and password at: <http://www.mail.umich.edu/>

### **Student Mailboxes**

Student mailboxes are located in the reception area of the Student Services Office in 4665 SPH I (Tower). Please check your mailbox periodically.

### **Computer Sites**

There are several computer sites throughout the University, the closest being in the basement of SPH II. You will need to use your MCard to access this site. For a complete listing of computer sites, go to the ITD website: [www.umich.edu/~sites](http://www.umich.edu/~sites). There are also a number of computers available for use on the second floor of SPH I (Tower).

### **SPH Library**

Public Health Library and Informatics Division (PHLI), M2030 SPH II, houses one of the most extensive collections of books and journals on public health in the United States. They also offer workshops on a variety of software classes in the beginning of the fall term. For more information on hours and resources, visit their website at <http://www.sph.umich.edu/phisa/library/about.html>

## STAGES IN THE DOCTORAL DEGREE

After admission to the Doctoral Program, there are two major stages in your program to be completed prior to getting the Ph.D. degree. These stages are the *Pre-Candidacy* stage and the *Candidacy* stage.

### Pre-Candidacy

The major tasks of a Pre-Candidate are to accumulate the necessary number of In-Residence credits and successfully complete the competency examination.

### Candidacy

The major tasks of a Candidate are to (1) develop a prospectus that reflects the research program that you hope to undertake and obtain approval for this prospectus from the dissertation committee as part of the Preliminary Examination; and (2) complete the proposed research identified in the prospectus with the ongoing guidance of your dissertation committee whose membership will have been defined prior to the prospectus presentation. This research is then presented and defended in a final “dissertation defense” as the penultimate event in achieving the doctoral degree.

The process of transitioning from Pre-Candidate to Candidate is referred to as “advancing to Candidacy” and is marked by the successful completion of the competency examination. Students classified as non-residents (out-of-state) will see a dramatic reduction in tuition upon advancing to Candidacy.

Typically, a doctoral program takes a total of 2.5-4 years to complete when a Master of Public Health (or other relevant degree) has been obtained. The timeframe depends largely on how soon one can complete the Preliminary Examination. Once the Preliminary Examination has been approved the typical time required to complete the Ph.D. degree is 2-3 years. An optimal timeline might be admission in the fall term with a relevant master’s degree, successful completion of the competency examination the following spring, development and defense of the research prospectus (the Preliminary Examination) within 6-12 months, and completion of the research effort including the final oral defense and written dissertation within the next two years.

In summary, the requirements for a Pre-Candidate to advance to Candidacy involve fulfilling a specific number of credits, taking specific courses, and passing the written competency examination. As a Candidate, the requirements include obtaining the remainder of the required number of credits, preparing a written research prospectus and successfully defending that research prospectus during the Preliminary Examination, completing your research, writing the dissertation and presenting your work in a final oral defense.

### **Time Limits for Degree**

A student should complete the Preliminary Examination within four years from the date of first enrollment and must complete all requirements within seven years from the date of first enrollment in the doctoral degree program. A student who exceeds the maximum time limit, or who needs additional time beyond the expected term of completion, should:

1. Communicate with the dissertation committee chair and/or the department chair and obtain a written statement indicating strong support for the requested extension.
2. Complete a Petition for Modification or Waiver of Regulation Form (available on

Rackham's website) specifying the amount of work that remains to be completed for the degree and indicating the month and year that the student plans to defend the dissertation.

3. Submit the Petition to the Epidemiology Student Services Office for further processing. Rackham's decision will be communicated to the student, the chair of the dissertation committee, and the Department chair.

### Full-time Enrollment

There is no single definition of full-time enrollment in the Rackham Graduate School. The following summarizes the range of credit hours that may be required for full-time status, depending on your degree level and the purpose for which you are requesting certification. For general certification and financial aid, 8 credits is considered to be full-time in the full term and 4 credits in the half-term. Full-time tuition rates are assessed for up to 9 credits for pre-Candidates and 8 credits for Candidates. Students with appointments as Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) or Graduate Student Research Assistant (GSRA) of .25 or greater must be registered for at least 6 credit hours during the terms of such appointments. International students who wish to be registered less than full-time must obtain permission **in advance** from an International Student and Visiting Scholar Advisor at the International Center or risk compromising their visa status.

### Detached Study

Detached Study is an enrollment status for students actively pursuing a master's or doctoral program who plan to continue their degree work while not enrolled for courses or directed research. International students who are nearing the end of their programs and do not wish to be registered for classes may go on detached study or dissertation research/writing status and still maintain their full-time student status. These forms are available on Rackham's website.

To be eligible for Detached Study, you must:

- Plan to make work toward the degree your primary activity during that period of time
- Not require access to University services beyond library privileges, a computing account, and certain forms of financial aid

You are NOT eligible for Detached Study if you are:

- Using laboratory facilities
- Taking examinations (including competency exams and the oral defense)
- Working at the University of Michigan as a GSI, GSRA, or some other capacity

### Doctoral Candidates Who Are Not Enrolled

Because of the nature of doctoral study, the University extends some additional services to doctoral candidates who would otherwise be ineligible for them. Library services are available to doctoral candidates at no charge for up to two years beyond any term of enrollment. Your computing account is automatically continued for one term beyond your last enrollment. Please consult chapter 1 of Rackham's *Graduate School Academic Policies* for more detailed information.

## STEPS FOR ADVANCING TO CANDIDACY

There are three requirements for advancing to Candidacy in the Doctoral Program: credit requirements; course requirements; and passing the competency examination.

### Coursework-in-Residence

#### Rackham Fee Totals

Rackham Fee Totals (RFTs) is a term used to designate the number of fee credits you earn when you register for coursework. RFTs are not the same as Credits Toward Program (CTP), which are the number of academic credits taken. Each doctoral student is required to accumulate a minimum of 36 RFTs before advancing to Candidacy toward a total of 68 RFTs required for the Ph.D. Eighteen (18) RFTs must be “Coursework-in-Residence” credits. In-Residence simply means that those credits must be earned on the Ann Arbor Campus. Students receive an initial reduction of 18 credits toward the total RFTs if they enter the program with a relevant master’s degree. Pre-Candidates should be aware when registering for research credits that Epid 990 (pre-Candidate Dissertation Research) does not count towards the In-Residence credits, but Epid 970 (Independent Research) and Epid 891 (Advanced Readings in Epidemiology) do. Courses taken for a “visit,” or audit do not count as In-Residence credits. **Students are required to provide an official transcript with the degree date posted to the Student Services Coordinator before they will receive credit for the relevant masters.**

*It is important to note that Rackham will only count up to 9 RFTs per term towards the total for a Pre-Candidate no matter how many academic credits you take in one term.* (i.e., if you take 10 credits your first term and 8 the next, Rackham will count only 17 RFTs for those two terms. That is because Rackham charges tuition for up to 9 credits, after which no additional tuition will be assessed). A deficiency in RFTs at the time of advancement to Candidacy or upon completing the Ph.D. can be remedied by simply paying for the needed credits without actual enrollment. The cost of the credits will be charged at the student’s current rate per credit hour. Please note that you can’t pay for in residence credits; you must earn 18 RFT’s on the Ann Arbor campus. It is also possible to retroactively add credits to a prior-term Epid 970 or 990 enrollment. Any adjustments in tuition will be charged to whoever paid the tuition for that term. Once Candidacy has been achieved, Rackham will count 8 RFTs per term.

**Important:** As an Epidemiology doctoral student, you can advance to candidacy after your first year in the program. In order to advance, you must earn 18 in residence credits during your first year (9 per semester), have a relevant masters degree and pass the competency exam.

### Course Requirements

Currently, there are two required Epidemiology courses (Epid 811 and Epid 812) for which you must register as a pre-Candidate; however, it is likely that your mentor will advise you to take other courses that will either help to prepare you for the competency examination or enhance your research proficiency. You should refer to Table 2 on page 9 for specific course recommendations. You should register for Epid 811 and Epid 812 the winter term before taking the competency examination. Many of your credits as a pre-Candidate will be for independent research with your mentor. You will register for an independent study under Epid 970, Epid 990 or Epid 891, using the section number that is assigned to your mentor or the professor that you are doing the research with. A list of independent study section numbers is included in this handbook on page 23.

### Cognate Requirement

All Ph.D. students are required to earn 4 credits of “cognate course work” (non-epidemiology course work). Graduate level coursework taken at another institution prior to entrance in the Ph.D. program can be used to satisfy the cognate requirement *in spirit* if both the Department chair and Rackham’s OARD approve and if the credits were not required in obtaining a prior degree. Students are required to provide an official transcript to Rackham’s OARD showing the relevant coursework.

### **The Competency Examination**

The competency examination is usually taken after the first year of the doctoral program and is only offered one time during a calendar year in late April or early May. The competency examination is administered in two parts. In general terms, students should demonstrate sufficient competency in the broad areas of epidemiology to justify their pursuit of a specific area of epidemiological research. The broad areas examined will include “Core” areas common to all students consisting of population science concepts, study design concepts, inference approaches, statistical analyses methods, quantitative risk assessment skills, and biological knowledge. These core areas of the competency examination will be assessed through three questions on general epidemiology content, quantitative methods, and pathobiology. In addition, the student is expected to demonstrate understanding and ability to integrate substantive material emphasizing the following areas: chronic disease epidemiology, infectious disease epidemiology, social epidemiology and laboratory methods. These four areas are not meant to represent comprehensive or mutually exclusive areas of epidemiology, but rather to reflect the current range of research where a student may specialize within the Department of Epidemiology. These areas may change over time. The competency examination will not be limited to the recitation of a collection of facts presented in a specific course. The examination will instead probe the individual’s ability to discriminate important issues when presented with a problem, generate a series of arguments relevant to the issues and be able to formulate a well-reasoned approach based on the arguments being presented.

It is recommended that students who plan to take the competency examination consult with their advisor and discuss preparatory coursework and readiness for taking the examination.

### Structure of the Examination

The competency examination is given in two parts: Part I consists of three questions from the core-content area which will be distributed and answered in class. Part II consists of four take-home questions from different research areas which may vary from year to year. Take-home questions will be distributed after Part I has been completed. Students are required to answer all three questions in Part I and answer two of the four questions in Part II.

### Format of the Competency Examination

All competency examination questions will be open-book. Students may use whatever material they can bring with them to the exam. References used should be appropriately cited using any citation format the student chooses. There will be a time limit for the core-content area questions in Part I and a word limit for the take-home questions in Part II.

### Dates, Location and Enrollment

Part I of the competency examination will be administered in late April or early May and usually takes place in Computer Classroom A located in the basement of SPH II commencing at 8:00 am and ending at 5:00 p.m. Students are required to leave the classroom for a one-hour lunch period. Lunch is provided by the Department. Part II questions will be distributed when the students turn in Part I. Part II answers must be turned into the Student Services Office one week after the exam is distributed. Students do not have to be registered for classes at the time they take the exam if they had a previous fall and winter enrollment, but must notify the Student Services Coordinator of their intention to sit for the exam prior to the end of the winter term. An email will be sent to [epidocs@umich.edu](mailto:epidocs@umich.edu) asking those who plan to take the exam to identify themselves. Students will again be emailed in April with specific details of the exact location, times and any other details for the exam. Provisions will be made for students with disabilities or for whom English is not their first language upon request. Requests for additional time must be submitted in writing to the Doctoral Program Committee before their last committee meeting of the winter term.

### Grading Answers

One member of the Doctoral Program Committee and one to two persons not on the Committee will read and grade the answers. Each question will be graded on a 0-100 point scale. The Doctoral Program Committee will assign a final grade for each question for each student and will make a recommendation of pass, conditional pass or fail based on the criteria described in the next section. The full faculty will then meet to review the exams and approve any conditions for students who received a conditional pass. Conditions may include taking courses for credit, completing exercises in addition to the course for credit, tutorials, and retaking exam questions. Any conditions that are imposed must be satisfied before the next competency examination. Failure to meet the deadline will result in retaking the entire examination. The overall exam grade (pass, conditional pass or fail), a list of questions in which the student received a failing score, and the comments of the graders will be made available to each student promptly following the full faculty meeting.

### Criteria for Exam Grades

A grade of unconditional pass requires a mean score (across the 5 questions) of 70 or more (on a 100 point scale) and no score on any question less than 60.

A failing grade requires a mean score of less than 60 or scores less than 60 on two or more questions.

A conditional pass is awarded when scores do not meet the criteria for unconditional pass or fail.

Students who fail the exam for a second time will not be able to continue in the program.

### Appeal Procedure

Students who wish to appeal the decision on the results of their exam should send a formal request to the Doctoral Program Committee within one month of receiving the results of the competency examination.

Preparation for the Competency Examination

The competency examination or its parts should not be regarded as the equivalent of a “final exam” for a specific course, but as a means of integrating the content made available through multiple courses the student may have taken as part of his or her Masters or Doctoral training. Table 1 shows the Exam Schema for Parts I and II of the competency examination. Table 2 shows the specific courses that are relevant to each section of the exam. The list is by no means exhaustive, nor are students expected to have taken all of the courses prior to the competency examination. In Part II of the exam students answer 2 of 4 questions and therefore are not expected to be familiar with the material covered in ALL the courses listed. Students should consult with their advisor to decide on the best strategy to prepare for Part II of the exam.

<b>Table 1: Content Areas for Examination</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Example areas</b>
<b>Core – Part I</b> A single question in each area to be answered by all students.	<b>Epidemiology content</b>	Study design issues, sampling, bias, confounding, joint effect modification, causal inference.
	<b>Quantitative methods</b>	Choice of analysis methods, of significance testing, or parameter estimation approaches, inference from data analysis, execution of analyses and interpretation of analysis results.
	<b>Pathobiology</b>	Integrating pathobiological knowledge into the design, analysis, and interpretation of epidemiological studies.
<b>Content Area Specific – Part II</b> One question will be posed in each of four areas: infectious disease epidemiology, chronic disease epidemiology, social epidemiology, and laboratory methods.	<b>Chronic Disease</b> <b>Infectious Disease</b> <b>Social Epidemiology</b> <b>Laboratory Methods</b>	Demonstrate substantive knowledge in a given area. Identify key issues in formulating research questions and designing research, critical review of published literature, synthesis of data across studies, resolution of conflicting results, drawing of judicious inference, formulation of next research and disease control steps.

<b>Table 2: Courses Relevant for Competency Examination</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Example courses</b>
<b>Core – Part I</b>	<b>Epidemiology content</b>	Epid 600 <i>Introduction to Epidemiology</i> Epid 601 <i>Principles and Methods of Epidemiology</i> Epid 655 <i>Field Studies in Epidemiology</i> Epid 811 <i>Critical Appraisal of Epidemiologic Studies</i> Epid 814 <i>Topics in Epidemiologic Analysis</i>
	<b>Quantitative methods</b>	Biostat 503 <i>Introduction to Biostatistics</i> Biostat 523 <i>Biostatistical Studies</i> Biostat 560 <i>Statistical Methods in Epidemiology</i> Epid 656 <i>Applied Epidemiologic Data Analysis</i>
	<b>Pathobiology</b>	EHS 513 <i>Pathological Basis of Disease</i> Path 580 <i>General Pathology</i> or Path 581 <i>Tissue, Cellular and Molecular Basis of Disease</i> Epid 812 <i>Critical Appraisal of Pathology</i>
<b>Content Area Specific – Part II</b>	<b>Infectious Disease</b>	Epid 605 <i>Infectious Disease Epidemiology</i> Epid 606 <i>Advanced Infectious Disease Epidemiology</i> Epid 880 <i>The Epidemiological Links between Infectious and Chronic Disease</i>
	<b>Chronic Disease</b>	Epid 552 <i>Epidemiology of Chronic Diseases</i> Epid 880 <i>The Epidemiological Links between Infectious and Chronic Disease</i> , Epid 604 <i>Cardiovascular Disease</i> Epid 621 <i>Cancer Epidemiology</i>
	<b>Laboratory Methods</b>	Epid 543 <i>Virus Diseases</i> Epid 545 <i>Viral and Molecular Techniques Laboratory</i> Epid 560 <i>Mechanisms of Bacterial Pathogenesis</i>
	<b>Social Epidemiology</b>	Epid 514 <i>Social Epidemiology</i> Epid 617 <i>Social Epidemiology II: Social and Economic Determinants of Population Health</i>

## ADVANCING TO CANDIDACY

Upon successfully passing the competency examination, the student should complete a *Recommendation for Advancement to Candidacy* form (available on Rackham's website) and submit it to the Student Services Coordinator for signature by the department chair and submission to Rackham's OARD. Copies are placed in the student's academic file. Students who expect to advance to Candidacy at the beginning of a term should register for Epid 990. Rackham will change that course selection to Epid 995 upon approval of the *Recommendation for Candidacy* and tuition will subsequently be recalculated. Students not registered for Epid 990 will have 995 automatically added to their course selections.

***Please Note:*** Rackham has firm deadlines for completing the requirements to advance to Candidacy. The deadlines listed below are for this academic year and are also available on Rackham's OARD website. These deadlines apply to the completion of the requirements to advance to Candidacy only, not to the submission of the required forms.

### Deadlines for Advancing to Candidacy

Term in which student will be considered a Candidate (Candidacy tuition begins)	<i>Deadline for all requirements to be met</i>
Fall 2008	September 16, 2008
Winter 2009	January 21, 2009
Spring or Spring/Summer 2009	May 5, 2009
Summer 2009	June 29, 2009

## FORMATION OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

**After passing the Competency Examination and prior to the Preliminary Examination (prospectus defense), students should form their dissertation committee in consultation with their advisor.**

The Dissertation Committee Form is found online at Rackham's OARD website. Students must resubmit the same form to revise the dissertation committee if the composition is later changed.

### Composition of the Dissertation Committee

Dissertation committees must have at least **four** members, three of whom are regular members of the Graduate Faculty (see *Eligibility for Service on Dissertation Committees* below) and two of whom are from the doctoral Candidate's home program. Furthermore, each committee:

- Must have a sole Chair or two Co-Chairs
- Must have a Cognate member who is familiar with the standards for doctoral research; holds at least a .50 appointment in a Rackham doctoral program related to the Candidate's field (**not** the Candidate's home program); and does not hold any fraction of an appointment in the Candidate's home program (including joint and adjunct appointments) or serve as a member of the steering committee of the Candidate's interdepartmental degree program
- May include a University faculty member who is not a regular member of the Graduate Faculty, a University staff member, or a qualified individual outside the University to provide expertise in the Candidate's discipline. Special members must be approved by the graduate chair and by Rackham.

***The Epidemiology Department strongly recommends that students have at least five members on their dissertation committee.***

### Role of the Chair (or Co-Chairs)

The Chair (or each Co-Chair) is responsible for guiding and encouraging the Candidate's design and execution of an original, high quality, doctoral-level research project. The end result of this effort is expected to be a dissertation which makes a substantive contribution to the Candidate's discipline.

### Role of the Cognate Member

The Cognate member's role is to broaden the scholarly representation of the dissertation committee beyond the Candidate's home program. The Cognate member also serves the Graduate School and its Faculty by providing a non-specialist's perspective on the quality of the dissertation.

### Eligibility for Service on Dissertation Committees

Nominations for dissertation committee service are made by means of the *Nomination Dissertation Committee* Form, which must be signed by the chair of the doctoral candidate's program and the department Chair. All nominations must be approved by the Graduate School and are subject to the following guidelines:

1. Regular members of the graduate faculty may serve as a member of the committee, or as sole Chair, Co-Chair, or Cognate member. Graduate Faculty are defined as Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors holding a regular or "unmodified" (i.e. not visiting, adjunct, etc.) appointment affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program and who hold an earned doctorate

from an accredited institution.

2. Regular members of the Graduate Faculty *not* affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program may serve on dissertation committees. They may also serve as Co-Chair with a regular member of the Graduate Faculty affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program, but not as sole Chair or Cognate member.
3. Instructors and Lecturers who have no appointment as members of the regular Graduate Faculty may serve on dissertation committees if they hold an earned doctorate from an accredited institution. They may also serve as Co-Chair with a regular member of the Graduate Faculty affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program, but not as sole Chair or Cognate member.
4. Retired and emeriti Professors who were affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program may serve on dissertation committees. They may also serve as Co-Chair or, by special arrangement (see following section on *additional documentation*), as sole Chair or Cognate member.
5. Regular Primary Research staff (i.e., Research Scientists, Associate and Assistant Research Scientists, and Research Investigators) of the University who are affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program may serve on dissertation committees if they hold an earned doctorate from an accredited institution. They may also serve as Co-Chair or, by special arrangement (see following section on *additional documentation*), as sole Chair, but not as Cognate member. Those not affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program may serve on dissertation committees if they hold an earned doctorate from an accredited institution. They may serve as Co-Chair of a committee with a regular member of the Graduate Faculty affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program, but not as sole Chair or Cognate member.
6. All those who do not have an earned doctorate, whether affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program or not, must be approved for dissertation committee service on a case by case basis. If approved, they may serve as a member of the committee or as sole Chair, Co-Chair, or Cognate member.

University faculty and staff not included in the preceding categories and qualified individuals outside the University whose service is desirable may serve on dissertation committees, subject to review on a case by case basis. They may also serve as Co-Chair with a regular member of the Graduate Faculty affiliated with a Rackham doctoral program, but not as sole Chair or Cognate member.

**Note: No person working toward a doctoral degree may serve on a dissertation committee until all requirements for the degree have been met.**

#### *Additional Documentation Required*

The Dissertation Committee Form must always be accompanied by additional documentation when the following nominations are being made:

- **Retired and Emeriti Professors Nominated to Serve as Sole Chair or Cognate Member:** The completed Dissertation Committee Form must be accompanied by a memorandum, signed by the faculty member's Chair **and** by the Dean of his/her school or college, requesting the appointment and affirming the professor's experience in teaching, advising, and dissertation committee service. Once approved, the appointment is in effect for 3 years and may be renewed with the approval of the faculty member's Chair and

Dean, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

- **Primary Research Staff of the University:**

Nominations of regular primary research staff (i.e., Research Scientists, Associate and Assistant Research Scientists, and Research Investigators) to serve as sole Chair of a dissertation committee must be accompanied by (a) a memorandum from the doctoral Candidate's program Chair describing the nominee's qualifications for dissertation committee service and (b) a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae.

**Note: Primary research staff approved for service as sole Chair of a dissertation committee will receive a letter of recognition from the Dean of the Graduate School.**

- **University Faculty and Staff Not Included in Categories 1-6 of the Preceding Section, and Individuals Outside the University:**

When individuals in this category are nominated for dissertation committee service, the completed Dissertation Committee Form must be accompanied by (a) a memorandum from the doctoral Candidate's program Chair describing the individual's qualifications for dissertation committee service and (b) a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae.

- **Special Members:**

University faculty and staff who are not regular faculty and qualified people from outside the University who may or may not hold academic appointments and whose service on the committee would contribute significantly may be nominated for special membership by submitting: the Special Membership form signed by the graduate chair, a memo detailing the nominee's expertise in the dissertation topic (usually written by the committee chair), a Vita or resume, and the Nomination for Dissertation Committee form (when either creating or revising the committee membership).

- **Emeriti Faculty:**

A retired professor may be nominated to serve as a Chair or Cognate on a dissertation committee by submitting the Special Membership form, the Nomination for Dissertation Committee form, and a memo signed by the student's department chair AND the member's former Dean confirming that the nominee has experience serving on and chairing dissertations committees, has taught formal courses or seminars, and served as an advisor or counselor for graduate students.

## THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

In addition to the written competency examination, doctoral students are required to satisfactorily pass a preliminary examination in which their research prospectus is presented to the dissertation committee. It is expected that students will give their presentation within 6-12 months of successful completion of the competency examination. Failure to do so shall result in intensive scrutiny regarding the reasons for lack of timely progression. Students are required to be registered for at least one credit during the term in which they present their prospectus.

There are three elements involved in presenting the research prospectus:

1. At least 2 weeks prior (preferably 4 weeks) to the research prospectus presentation, students must present a written proposal to the members of their dissertation committee that emulates a proposal submitted to a major funding agency such as NIH.
2. On the day of the presentation, students present an oral summary of their prospectus.
3. As part of this presentation, students are expected to successfully respond to questions posed by their committee.

The oral presentation and submission of a written prospectus of the research protocol implies prior planning and review by the student's mentor and consultation with members of the student's dissertation committee. A related issue is that both the student and mentor have a shared responsibility in informing members of the dissertation committee about progress or modifications in the research protocol.

### The Written Prospectus

The written proposal should include the following elements and must not exceed 30 double-space typed pages using standard font and format:

1. **Summary Abstract** (1 page suggested)
2. **Specific Aims and Hypotheses** (1-2 pages suggested) should make clear the specific questions to be investigated in the dissertation and the long term goal(s) of this type of research.
3. **Background and Public Health Significance** should concisely review relevant literature to provide a rationale for why the proposed research is important or innovative, and explain the significance of the proposed research for public health.
4. **Research Methods** - depending on the nature of the dissertation (whether it is experimental, involves primary data gathering, or secondary data analysis), this section should cover issues such as feasibility and timeline; data sources and management; study design; experimental protocol; reliability and validity of measurement of measurement; plan for statistical analysis and data management; and critical insights into strengths and limitations.
5. **References**

### Optional Elements

1. Preliminary Results - this section is important in situations where students have preliminary results that demonstrate the feasibility and the potential importance of their proposed research. Where relevant, Preliminary Results should be included before the section on Research Methods.
2. Application tables and graphics may be included either directly in the text or as Appendices, but they do not count towards the 30-page limit.

While every prospectus should contain all the required elements, the particular emphases, subject matter and page lengths will depend upon the nature of the proposed research. However, in every case, a prospectus is expected to adhere to the overall limit of 30 pages.

### The Oral Presentation of the Research Prospectus

The Oral presentation of the research prospectus (approximately 2 hours) should include a statement of research questions and/or hypotheses and the following elements. Allow approximately 2 hours for the presentation:

1. A rationale for the questions including a public health significance or implication, the degree to which the research draws upon theoretical or conceptual models of physiologic processes, social and behavioral models, economic models or other appropriate conceptual areas.
2. Adequacy of the study design or experimental protocol (where applicable to address the research questions).
3. Data gathering approaches - the degree to which the data gathering approaches address threats to validity of the research.
4. Data analysis plan including implications for inference and generalizability.
5. Limitations of the project and plans for addressing any anticipated problems.

Following the presentation and questions, the student will be asked to leave the room so that members of the dissertation committee can discuss his or her performance. The committee will decide whether the student has passed, passed with conditions, or failed. Following this decision, the committee will invite the student to return in order to discuss their decision and provide comments and constructive feedback on the presentation and proposed research plan. It is expected that no more than two attempts at this stage will be required for the student who expects to achieve a doctoral degree. If the preliminary exam requirements are met, the student should complete the Preliminary Examination Form found on the Student Information and Resources page of the Epidemiology website.

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES

After completing the Preliminary Examination, completion of your doctorate includes specific credit and course requirements. Other requirements include completion and publication of the dissertation, and final administrative issues.

### **Credit Requirements**

The total credits required for completion of the Ph.D. program is 68 Rackham Fee Totals (RFTs). Doctoral Candidates who register in any term must always elect Candidacy enrollment (Epid 995), which is an automatic 8 RFTs for a full term, and 4 RFTs for a half term. All of your research credits are to be registered under your mentor's section number. Once you have achieved Candidacy, you will be assessed additional tuition for additional courses with the exception of Augmented Candidacy Enrollment described below.

*Augmented Candidacy Enrollment:* You may elect one additional course per full term or half term without payment of additional tuition. These "free" courses may be taken for credit or for a "visit."

Candidates who do not elect a "free" course during a term of Candidacy 995 enrollment may "bank" the "free" course, then select two "free" courses during a subsequent term of Candidacy 995 enrollment. This "banked" course must be used concurrently with a Candidacy 995 enrollment, and only one course may be "banked" at any given time (i.e., no more than 2 "free" courses can be taken during any given term). Also, courses may not be elected in anticipation of future "banking" (i.e., you cannot elect two free courses in one term, planning to take none the following term). When you take a "banked" course, you will initially be assessed tuition for that course. This fee will be adjusted after the Registrar's Office reviews your record to ensure that all requirements for "banking" the free course have been met.

With the exception of a "banked" course, if you elect more than one course with Candidacy 995 enrollment you will be assessed the appropriate tuition per credit hour for that and any other course. Students with Graduate Student Research Assistant (GSRA) or Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) appointments should check with the appointing department or program about coverage of fees for any additional courses taken.

**IMPORTANT:** Candidates can accumulate no more than 8 RFTs per term. "Free" and "banked" courses do not count towards Rackham Fee Totals.

### **Guidelines for 890 Requirements**

In addition to the required RFTs all PhD students must meet 890 requirements before being granted their degree.

The Epidemiology 890 requirements were developed to help build a sense of professional affiliation with the Department of Epidemiology and the concepts of epidemiology. Further, these requirements were assembled to provide models and practice in the presentation modalities of the discipline including participation in seminars and poster sessions. The elements of the Epidemiology 890 are identified as follows:

a. Students will enroll in 2 non-concurrent terms of 890 (2 credit hours per term). Students can first register for 890 in any term after passing the competency exam. Enrollment for the second time should occur in the term in which the student undertakes his/her dissertation defense.

b. While the enrollment period for the first 890 is a single term, the requirements for 890 are expected to be met across the time from the successful completion of the competency examination to defense of the dissertation. The requirements are as follows:

1. The student must present a poster in the Doctoral Program Day at least one time.
1. The student must serve as a judge in the Epidemiology MPH Poster Session at least one time.
2. The student must attend at least two of the three named lectures (Blackerby, Gudakunst and Francis) in the Department of Epidemiology for two years (total of 4 named lectures).
3. The student must attend at least 12 seminars. These seminars may include presentations within or beyond the Department or University. Plenary sessions at national/international meetings may count as one of these seminars. Attendance at doctoral dissertation defenses also count.

c. The student will maintain a spreadsheet checklist that cumulatively summarizes their meeting of these requirements. This spreadsheet checklist should be reviewed at the beginning of each term with the advisor. This spreadsheet should be submitted electronically or by hard copy to the Student Services Coordinator when all requirements have been met.

d. The 890 requirement for the second term is the completion of a 50 minute public seminar that represents the final oral defense of the dissertation. Documentation of that public seminar should be reflected by including the poster/flyer announcing the seminar in the student's enrollment files being held in the Student Services Office.

## **COMPLETION AND PUBLICATION OF THE DISSERTATION**

There are several steps students must take in the final stretch towards completing the dissertation and getting it published. It is strongly recommended that students visit Rackham's website for more detailed guidance on the parameters for completing the dissertation. The website can be found at <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/OARD/Doctoral.html>

*Pre-Dissertation Defense Meeting:* You must register online for a Rackham Group Pre-Defense Meeting at the Office of Academic Records and Dissertations. You must schedule this meeting at least 3 days before the meeting occurs. The pre-defense meeting you attend must occur at least 10 working days prior to the oral defense. At this meeting, the *Rackham Dissertation Format Guidelines* will be reviewed along with the requirements for doctoral degree completion. Candidates are encouraged to bring a copy of the dissertation for a format review, or may choose to submit it by mail no later than 3 weeks before the scheduled oral defense.

*Dissertation Evaluation Forms:* You will receive the dissertation evaluation forms at the Pre-Defense Meeting. Distribute the evaluation forms with copies of the dissertation and abstract to all committee members at least 10 days before your oral defense. If the student does not supply each committee member with an evaluation form and a copy of the dissertation and abstract at

least ten working days before the oral defense, the committee member may ask for a postponement of the defense. Remind all committee members that the completed evaluation form is due in OARD three working days before your oral defense. The evaluations can be sent by fax or email. Three days before the oral defense, call OARD to confirm that an evaluation form has been received. All evaluation forms must be reviewed by OARD prior to the oral defense.

*Oral Defense Packet:* As soon as all dissertation evaluations have been received and reviewed by OARD, your oral defense packet will be prepared. Take the packet to your oral defense and hand it to your chair before the oral defense begins. *The Final Oral Examination Report* must be hand-carried or faxed to Rackham by you or your committee chair within 48 hours of the defense.

*Formatting and Publishing Your Dissertation:* It is required that your dissertation be published. Most students publish in University Microfilm format. You can get templates for formatting your work correctly by visiting the OARD website. In order to get the dissertation authorized for the final defense and publication you must have the format authorized at Rackham. This is done at the Pre-Defense Meeting.

## FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Many students fail to remember that an abstract is an integral part of a dissertation and complete it hurriedly at the last minute. This is the document whereby the research effort will be most frequently evaluated, so be sure to complete it in a thoughtful and timely fashion. Students should register for a post-defense meeting with Rackham to take place before the appropriate degree deadline.

After your dissertation format has been approved and your committee has signed off on the oral examination form, you must submit the final paperwork to receive your degree. This paperwork includes the following: a receipt indicating payment of thesis publication fee; a completed diploma application; a bindery receipt; a signed report from your committee indicating successful completion of the oral exam; a Proquest/UMI contract; NORC and Rackham surveys; two copies of the abstract, and; one extra copy of the title page.

### Deadlines for Completion

Rackham has firm deadlines for each term by which you must have completed all of your final requirements. A doctoral student must be enrolled for eight hours of candidacy during the term in which he/she defends. The defense must take place no later than the last day of exams in that term unless you have been granted an extension. To be granted an extension you must submit, before the oral defense, a note or email message from the chair of your committee stating that you will have all revisions, corrections and other requirements completed by the deadline for all requirements to be completed. It is advisable that this note or email message be submitted to OARD at the time of your pre-dissertation defense meeting. The Chair should send the email message to [OARD.staff@umich.edu](mailto:OARD.staff@umich.edu)

A grace period is also provided to accommodate students who are unable to complete all requirements by the deadline for that term. Please note, however, that students who fail to meet the original deadline and instead complete the degree requirements during the Grace Period will not receive the degree until the following term. All degree requirements must be met by the Grace Period deadline, or an additional eight-hour Candidacy enrollment is required in the term the final degree requirements are met.

## GSI AND GSRA APPOINTMENTS

The Department of Epidemiology has limited resources with respect to student support. Many of our doctoral students are supported as Graduate Student Research Assistants (GSRA) or Graduate Student Instructors (GSI), positions which pay a monthly stipend, health insurance and tuition waiver. GSRA positions may be provided by a student's advisor for some terms, but it is rare that a student will receive such appointments throughout his or her program.

The Department itself has only a few GSI positions to offer each year, but many of our students are successful in finding GSI positions in other departments such as biology, chemistry, statistics, astronomy and others, depending on the student's undergraduate and graduate training. Students should contact the Student Services Offices of each department for specific details on how and when to apply. One particular website that offers postings from various departments throughout the University can be found at: <http://www.umich.edu/~hrra/acadhr/grads/postings.html>

## FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The Rackham School of Graduate Studies administers several grants and fellowships for which our students are eligible. **Nominations for these fellowships are determined by the Doctoral Program Committee upon recommendations by the faculty.** A list of Rackham-administered fellowships and grants can be found under Funding Resources on Rackham's homepage: <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/index.html>.

Here are descriptions of some of Rackham's fellowships. For more detailed information and deadlines to apply, please visit the Rackham website.

***Barbour Scholarship:*** These scholarships were established for women of the highest academic and professional caliber who are citizens of countries in the area once called the "Orient" (Eastern countries in the region extending from Turkey on the west to Japan and the Philippines on the east. Awards cover full tuition and registration fees plus a stipend of \$15,600 for an academic year. In addition, awardees will be eligible for GradCare health insurance during the tenure of the fellowship.

***Rackham International Students Fellowship:*** This fellowship assists outstanding international students who are in their second or third term. One time awards of \$7,500 will be made.

***Rackham International Research Awards:*** International research awards to support students conducting degree-related research outside North America. Preference will be given to doctoral students who have reached Candidacy by September 2008 and have an approved dissertation topic. Students of any citizenship may apply. Up to fifteen awards of \$7,500 will be made.

***Rackham Non-Traditional Fellowship:*** For Michigan residents who wish to return to graduate school after an extended absence (at least 5 years). The award is in the amount of \$15,200 to be used as a stipend or towards tuition and may include GradCare health insurance coverage for 12 months.

***Rackham Debt Management Award:*** Students enrolled full-time in a Rackham doctoral program in Social Work/Social Science, Public Policy, Public Health or Nursing may be nominated for

these awards (regardless of citizenship). At least four awards of \$10,000 each will be issued as a stipend after July 1. Each participating unit may nominate up to three students. Eligible students will have achieved Candidacy at the time of application; will have spend at least 2 years in community service prior to beginning graduate school; must intend to return to public service careers in the United States upon graduation; and will be carrying student-related debt accrued during the undergraduate and/or graduate years.

***Rackham One-Term Dissertation Grant/Fellowship:*** One-Term Dissertations Fellowships are intended to speed the process of completing the dissertation. Except in unusual cases, they should be awarded to students who are at the writing stage of the dissertation. Awards consist of candidacy tuition and registration fees plus a stipend of \$7,600 for one term and students are eligible for GradCare health insurance. Students must be registered or on Detached Study during the tenure of the award. These fellowships are now processed within the Department upon nomination by the student's advisor. Nominations for the 2009-2010 academic year will be solicited from faculty by the Doctoral Program Committee sometime during the winter term.

***Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship:*** The appointment is for three terms and may begin with Spring, Summer or Fall Term. Students are expected to be involved full-time in the completion of degree requirements. Awards consist of a monthly stipend of \$2,100 for 12 months plus Candidacy tuition and eligibility for GradCare. Approximately 240 students are nominated each year.

***Susan Lipschutz, Margaret Ayers Host and Anna Olcott Smith Awards for Women Graduate Students:*** At least three \$5,000 awards will be made for Spring/Summer Support. Women graduate students actively pursuing a doctoral degree in any Rackham program, and who have achieved Candidacy by the application deadline are eligible to be nominated. Nominees must have a GPA of 7.6 or higher. Award recipients will have demonstrated exceptional scholarly achievement, a sense of social responsibility and an interest in her academic community.

## GRANTS

***Rackham Graduate Student Emergency Funds:*** This fund is intended to help meet financial needs of students who encounter an emergency situation or one-time, unusual, or unforeseen expenses during their degree program. Situations eligible for funding include such events as: Personal or family medical emergencies, major accidents and events such as fire and natural disasters, and expenses related to the illness or death of an immediate relative. Normal living expenses such as rent, car repairs, child care and utilities are not generally considered emergency situations. Exceptions may be made for extraordinary circumstances. For students who qualify for need-based financial aid, an emergency award may reduce original award amounts. Students must be in good academic standing. Awards may be up to \$2,500 and students are limited to no more than two emergency awards. Students may apply to Rackham at any time.

***Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant:*** This grant is designed to support Rackham graduate students who need assistance to carry out research that advances their progress toward their degree. The grant is intended to defray costs of conducting clearly defined research projects. Pre-Candidates are eligible for an award up to \$1,500. Candidates are eligible for an award up to \$3,000. Doctoral students are eligible for two Graduate Student Research Grants during his or her graduate program, one before Candidacy and one as a Candidate. Applications are accepted at any time, and reviewed monthly. Students may apply directly to Rackham at anytime for this

grant.

***Rackham Conference Travel Grant and Rackham/International Institute Conference Travel Grant:*** Graduate students are eligible to apply for a Rackham Conference Travel Grant if the student is in good academic standing in a Rackham degree program and has been accepted to present a poster or paper at a conference. Students are eligible for one travel grant award (either domestic or international, but not both) during a fiscal year from July 1 – June 30. Awards are granted up to \$500 for the continental US, up to \$750 for Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Canada, Mexico, Caribbean and Europe, up to \$1,000 for Africa, Asia, South America and Australia. Students may apply directly to Rackham at any time PRIOR to the conference.

***Department of Epidemiology Travel Grant:*** The Department of Epidemiology has set aside a small budget to assist students presenting a poster or paper at a conference. Students may receive up to \$500 for airfare and ground transportation (to and from the airport). Rackham students should first apply for a Rackham Travel Grant before requesting Department funds. Students should submit their entire budget and letter of acceptance or abstract and indicate the amounts and sources of any supplemental funding they have received including support from their advisors or grants from the conference to which they are traveling. Applications are available on the Department website under Student Information and Resources.

***Department Administered Rackham Block Grant:*** Throughout the year, the Doctoral Program Committee will call for applications from doctoral students requesting Block Grant funds which have been given to the Department to administer. The timing varies, but usually the first call is in the middle of the fall term. Students may request funds in addition to other awards received from Rackham or other sources for travel to conferences in which they are presenting and research-related expenses. Students will be notified by email as to the deadline to apply for Block Grant funds. Applications should be submitted in the form of a cover letter explaining the expenses, an itemized budget indicating the total expenses, and a disclosure of any supplemental funds for which the student has applied or received. Students traveling to conferences or requesting funds for research-related expenses should first apply for a Rackham Travel, Research Grant and/or a Department Travel Grant before requesting funds from the Block Grant. The Doctoral Program Committee makes every effort to help cover as much of the student's expenses as possible and can extend that help further if students make an effort to explore all funding options available to them. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.sph.umich.edu/epid/information/BlockGrantFundingGuidelines.pdf>

## WEBSITE QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

There are many helpful websites that you can visit, not the least of which is our own Department of Epidemiology homepage where, under *Information and Resources*, you can find links to various sections of our website and other websites such as Rackham School for Graduate Studies, the Registrar's Office and Wolverine Access, some of which are repeated here:

### Department of Epidemiology

Epidemiology Website: <http://www.sph.umich.edu/epid/>  
Epidemiology Faculty: <http://www.sph.umich.edu/iscr/faculty/>  
Epidemiology Student Information & Resources: <http://www.sph.umich.edu/epid/information/>

### School of Public Health

SPH Website: <http://www.sph.umich.edu/>  
SPH Research: [http://www.sph.umich.edu/faculty\\_research/faculty\\_research.html](http://www.sph.umich.edu/faculty_research/faculty_research.html)  
Course Descriptions: <http://www.sph.umich.edu/iscr/caid/>  
SPH Events: [http://www.sph.umich.edu/iscr/news\\_events/](http://www.sph.umich.edu/iscr/news_events/)

### University of Michigan

Central Gateway to U of M: <http://www.umich.edu/>  
U of M Web-based Email: <http://directory.umich.edu/>  
U of M Online Directory: <http://directory.umich.edu/>  
University Events: <http://www.umich.edu/news.php>  
Parking and Transportation: <http://pts.umich.edu/>  
Housing: <http://www.housing.umich.edu/>  
Registrar's Office: <http://www.umich.edu/~regoff>  
Time Schedule: <http://www.umich.edu/~regoff/schedule/>  
Wolverine Access (web-based registration): <http://wolverineaccess.umich.edu/>

## INDEPENDENT STUDY INSTRUCTORS AND SECTION NUMBERS

Allison Aiello	067
Matthew Boulton	034
Sarah Burgard	073
Ana Diez-Roux	056
Joe Eisenberg	051
Chris Erdmann	061
Betsy Foxman	006
Sandro Galea	068
Sonja Gerrard	062
Janet Gilsdorf	046
Steve Gruber	040
Mary Haan	003
Sioban Harlow	018
Katherine Hoggatt	023
Amid Ismail	065
George Kaplan	004
Sharon Kardia	042
Jim Koopman	016
Lynda Lisabeth	009
Carl Marrs	021
Arnold Monto	022
Hal Morgenstern	063
Marie O'Neill	070
Pat Peyser	025
Julia Richards	027
Amr Soliman	059
MaryFran Sowers	008
Mark Wilson	039
Zhenhua Yang	030