



Department of Environmental Health Sciences

Ph.D. Student Handbook



Fall 2025 Edition

Table of Contents

Dept. of Environmental Health Sciences (EHS) Vision and Goals.....	1
Public Health Doctor of Philosophy Degree with Concentration in EHS	2
Grade Requirements.....	4
Active Student Status in the Doctoral Program.....	5
Grievance Procedures	6
Code of Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Procedures	7
EHS Advising and Administrative Resources.....	8
Environmental Health Sciences Association.....	9
University Fellowships and College Awards.....	10
Graduate Assistantships	11
Doctoral Student Timeline.....	13
Online Dissertation Milestones	15
Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan.....	17
Coursework Requirements.....	18
Research Requirements	19
EHS PhD Course Advising Sheet.....	20
Candidacy Examination.....	22
Dissertation Proposal	23
Dissertation and Format Requirements.....	25
Dissertation Defense.....	27
Final Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Approval	27
FIU & UM Exchange Program	28
Agreement for Doctoral Students in EHS	29

Dept. of Environmental Health Sciences (EHS) Vision and Goals

EHS vision: EHS vision is to be a leader in environmental health sciences, nationally- recognized for excellence in researching the relationship between human health and environmental factors, while serving as a hub for educating students from all backgrounds who will become the next generation of public health leaders dedicated to safeguarding both human and environmental health.

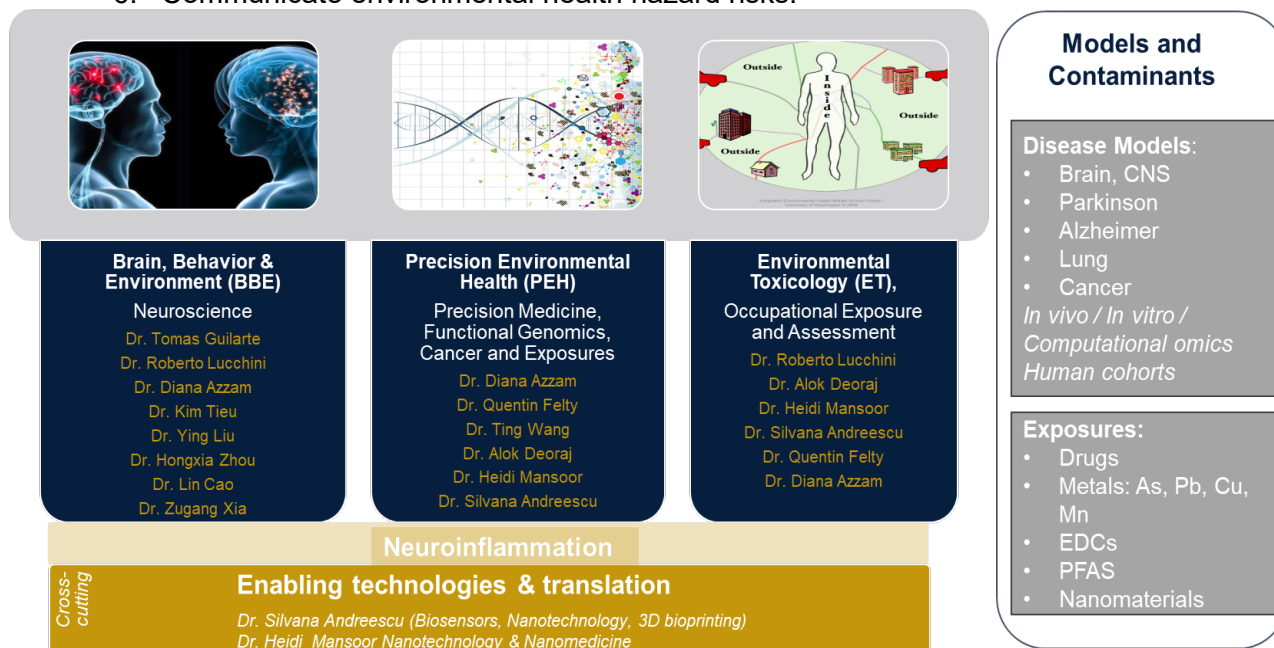
EHS mission is to: (i) improve human health and resilience, across the life course, against environmental stressors, such as environmental chemicals, and pollution, through a better understanding of the molecular mechanisms by which they mediate; and (ii) educate and train the next generation of scientists and environmental public health leaders.

To achieve its mission, the EHS has the following **goals**:

1. Conduct basic and translational research pertinent to the recognition, characterization, and resolution of adverse environmental effects on human health, specifically brain and behavior, and the etiology of various cancers and chronic diseases.
2. Address health effects related to environmental toxicant exposures through research in cancer, stem cell biology, neuroinflammation, mitochondrial dysfunction, gene-environment interactions, and neurodegenerative diseases.
3. Educate and train individuals for professional careers in Public Health through the MPH and doctoral degree programs in signature areas including Brain, Behavior and Environment (BBE), Precision Medicine (PM) and Environmental Toxicology (ET).
4. Train qualified leaders and research professionals who are experts in understanding and investigating the environmental health risks in local South Florida and the global community.

The EHS concentration will impart training and education to:

1. Gather information related to environmental hazards and health assessment.
2. Analyze and interpret environmental hazards and health risk assessment data.
3. Evaluate environmental hazards and health assessment data.
4. Develop and monitor environmental health risk management/intervention plans and policies.
5. Perceive risks of environmental hazards.
6. Communicate environmental health hazard risks.



Public Health Doctor of Philosophy Degree with Concentration in EHS

The *Department of Environmental Health Sciences* (EHS) offers a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Public Health in two concentrations: **Brain, Behavior, and the Environment (BBE)** and **Environmental Toxicology (ET)**. The Ph.D. program in EHS discipline focuses on graduate training in Environmental Health/Toxicology. The PhD program provides experiential learning opportunities to examine interactions between people and their surroundings, identifying how environmental factors such as toxic substances, pollutants, and other hazards contribute to adverse health outcomes.

The Ph.D. Program is designed to prepare students for academic or research careers. To complete the program a student must make an original and significant contribution to the field of environmental health science and this contribution must be described in a doctoral dissertation. In addition to the thesis, there are course and examination requirements for the completion of the program. The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Public Health with a concentration in BBE or ET requires students to demonstrate significant research capacity by completing 60 course credits beyond the Master's degree and through the writing of an original dissertation. Students will be allowed only two attempts to pass the candidacy examination. Students should keep in mind that these formal requirements are actually only a small part of a Ph.D. degree. The main component of a Ph.D. program is the intangible process by which the student learns to do research and become part of the academic community. To learn more about the programs please visit the links:

- [Explore the Ph.D. in Public Health with a Concentration in BBE](#)
- [Explore the Ph.D. in Public Health with a Concentration in ET](#)

This document, "EHS PhD Handbook," serves as a resource for PhD students in the EHS doctoral program. The Public Health PhD operates under the FIU University Graduate School (UGS) and thus adheres to all University Graduate School procedures. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he/she not only is in compliance with the requirements of the department, but is also in compliance with the requirements of the University Graduate School. In cases of discrepancies between this handbook and University Graduate School policies, University Graduate School policies will supersede.

The Policies and Procedures of the University Graduate School are available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#gradpolicies> and in the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.fiu.edu>). Students should read all the material at these links carefully.

The Graduate Catalog is the final authority in case of conflicts. Failure to follow University Graduate School guidelines and deadlines could result in a delay in graduation. Furthermore, you should allow ample time for committee members and administrators to complete their role in the review and approval of your work.

Graduation Requirements

The University will confer the doctoral degree when the student has met the following conditions:

1. Earned an overall average GPA of 3.0 in all courses in the graduate degree program.
2. Completed and defended satisfactorily a doctoral dissertation.
3. Recommended by the faculty of the College or the School.
4. Submission of the final approved dissertation via ETD.
5. Certified by the Academic Dean of the College or the School that all requirements of the degree being sought have been completed.

Doctoral students must have completed all requirements for the degree in order to participate in the commencement ceremonies.

Time Limits

All requirements, including the successful defense of a dissertation, must be completed within nine years of first enrollment in the doctoral program. No courses used in a program of study that are beyond these time limits at the time of graduation can be used toward degree completion with the exception of credits that are part of an earned graduate degree.

Grade Requirements

Grade Point Average

The University Graduate School policy regarding grade point average (GPA) can be found here: <https://policies.fiu.edu/files/758.pdf>. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 for courses attempted in the graduate program. For additional requirements for the Public Health PhD, see the Graduate Catalog: <http://catalog.fiu.edu>.

A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on warning. If the cumulative GPA remains below 3.0 for a second semester, the student will be placed on probation. If the student fails to earn a *semester* GPA greater than 3.0 while he/she is on probation (i.e., the third semester), the student will be dismissed from the graduate program.

The University Graduate School policy regarding incomplete grades can be found here: <https://policies.fiu.edu/files/767.pdf>

An incomplete grade is a temporary designation given at the discretion of the instructor for work not completed because of a serious interruption not caused by the student's own negligence. An incomplete grade must be made up within two semesters or it will automatically default to the grade that the student earned in the course. There is no extension of the two-semester deadline.

Dissertation credits are assigned a grade of In Progress (IP), Unsatisfactory (U), or Fail (F). When the dissertation is completed the IP grades will automatically convert to a grade of Pass (P).

Active Student Status in the Doctoral Program

Full-time status (FIU policy # [380.0441](#)) requires students to be registered in nine (9) graduate credit hours Fall and Spring Semesters and six (6) credit hours for Summer Semester.

Once a doctoral student is admitted to candidacy, continuous enrollment for at least 3 dissertation credit hours each term (including the summer term) is required until the dissertation requirement is fulfilled as stated in FIU policy# [380.008](#).

Lapses in enrollment for three or more consecutive semesters require that the student apply for readmission subject to the admission procedures, criteria, and policies in effect at the time the reapplication is made. A student who finds it necessary to be excused from registration for three or more consecutive semesters should formally request a leave of absence from the Doctoral Program Director. Leaves of absence will be granted only under exceptional circumstances.

All requirements for completion of the PhD, including the successful defense of a dissertation, must be completed within nine years of initial enrollment in the doctoral program.

Grievance Procedures

The University Graduate School has a specific procedure regarding student grievances. Details about the grievance procedures can be found here: <http://integrity.fiu.edu/grievances.html>

Code of Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Procedures

The FIU Code of Academic Integrity is as follows:

Introduction

This Code of Academic Integrity was adopted by the Student Government Association on November 28, 2001, and it reflects the values articulated in the Student Code of Standards. Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of Florida International University.

Pledge

As a student of this university:

- I will be honest in my academic endeavors.
- I will not represent someone else's work as my own.
- I will not cheat, nor will I aid in another's cheating.

All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook. The procedures with regard to academic misconduct are explained at <http://integrity.fiu.edu/misconducts.html>

EHS Advising and Administrative Resources

Academic Affairs in EHS

The Department Chair and Doctoral Program Director serve as the primary contacts for administrative matters within the department that cannot be resolved by a student's Major Professor, dissertation committee members, or faculty advisor. If an advisor is unavailable or if any administrative issues arise, students should contact either the Department Chair or the Doctoral Program Director. The EHS Office Manager is available to assist with scheduling appointments with the Chair or Program Director.



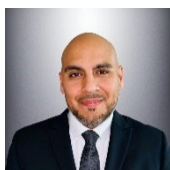
Quentin Felty, Ph.D.

Interim Chair & Doctoral Program Director

Office: AHC5 – 351

Tel: 305-348-7785

Email: feltyq@fiu.edu



Javier Choque

EHS Office Manager

Tel: 305-348-7778

Email: jchoque@fiu.edu

Key Contacts- Stempel College

For course credit transfer inquiries, please contact the coordinator in the Office of Student and Alumni Affairs. For college-level matters, the primary contacts are the Associate Dean of Graduate Education and/or the Assistant Dean of the Office of Student and Alumni Affairs.



Zoraya Arguello

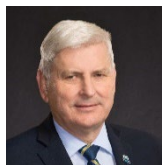
Office of Student & Alumni Affairs

Coordinator of Student and Alumni Affairs

Office: AHC 5 – 145

Tel: 305-348-7777

Email: arguello@fiu.edu



Stan Wnuk, Ph.D.

Associate Dean of Graduate Education

Office: AHC 5 – 517

Tel: 305-348-6195

Email: wnuk@fiu.edu



Susy Gomez, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean

Office of Student & Alumni Affairs

Office: AHC5-137

Tel: 305-348-5938

Email: sugomez@fiu.edu

EHS Faculty and Research Personnel Contacts

To learn more about EHS faculty research or research personnel, please find their biography and/or contact information here: <https://stempel.fiu.edu/academics/public-health/disciplines/environmental-health-sciences/faculty/index.html>

Environmental Health Sciences Association

The Environmental Health Sciences Association (EHSA) provides a space for students, faculty, and professionals in environmental health to connect, collaborate, and exchange ideas through activities held during the academic year. The association is dedicated to fostering mentorship and professional growth for both current and prospective Environmental Health Sciences (EHS) students at the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work, Florida International University.

Because public health is inherently multidisciplinary, the EHSA emphasizes advancing the field of environmental health through engagement, service, and collaboration. Members are encouraged to participate regularly in departmental seminar series, volunteer in outreach efforts, and work alongside campus and community organizations that share public health goals.

Environmental factors play a major role in the origins of many diseases, yet this connection is often overlooked by the public. EHSA takes on the responsibility of raising awareness by supporting educational initiatives and community events both on and off campus. These activities not only strengthen community understanding but also deepen the connections among students, faculty, and professionals in environmental health.

The success of the EHSA relies on student involvement and leadership. Its mission is to serve as a hub for research, networking, and professional development for students and alumni. We welcome you to the department and encourage you to use EHSA as a platform to exchange ideas, pursue your goals, and contribute to advancing the field of environmental health.

EHSA Website: <https://fiu.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/environmental-health-graduate-student-association>

University Fellowships and College Awards

Stempel College Awards

[Funding Your Education | FIU Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work](#)

FIU University Graduate School Fellowships

All of the UGS fellowships can be found at the following UGS link:

[UGS Fellowships - University Graduate School](#)

Graduate Assistantships

Types of Graduate Assistants

Graduate Research Assistant: A Graduate Research Assistant shall be a degree seeking graduate student who performs research duties related to his or her academic program. The Graduate Research Assistant will perform general duties related to research, documentation, experimentation, interviews and other activities that support the academic endeavor of the supervising faculty.

Graduate Teaching Assistant: A Graduate Teaching Assistant shall be a degree seeking graduate student who assists a faculty member with a teaching assignment. The duties may include, but are not limited to, preparing lectures, grading assignments, researching class topics and substituting for Faculty of Record on select class days. A Graduate Teaching Assistant who is the Instructor of Record must have completed 18 graduate credit hours in the subject area and perform teaching duties related to his or her academic program.

Graduate Assistant: Graduate Assistants shall be degree seeking graduate students who assist in the teaching and/or research function, but do not have primary responsibility for teaching and/or research. The duties may include those outlined in either the teaching or research classifications as well as other duties assigned that relate to his or her academic program.

Graduate Assistant Expectations

- Graduate assistants agree not to accept employment outside of FIU.
- Graduate assistants must not accept an appointment which individually or collectively exceeds 0.50 FTE (20 hours per week) without prior petition approval by the Dean of the University Graduate School.
- Appointment as a graduate assistant is contingent upon full-time enrollment (9 graduate credits in Fall and Spring; 6 graduate credits in Summer) and satisfactory academic and work performance (GPA of 3.0 or higher).
- Graduate assistantship is terminated at the end of session. No further notice of cessation of employment is required. Employment may be terminated at any time if performance is unsatisfactory.
- In addition to sick leave and institutional holidays, if a graduate assistant wishes to take time off, he or she must request written approval from the graduate assistant supervisor or the department chair.

Insurance Coverage: Any graduate assistants/employee holding an appointment of 20 hours per week for the full term will be automatically enrolled in the University's subsidized health insurance program. The employee portion (25%) of the total premium will be deducted from his/her paycheck as detailed in the chart below.

Tuition Waiver: Any graduate assistants/employee holding an appointment of 20 hours per week (0.5 FTE) for the full term will have the tuition matriculation fee paid by the University as part of this employment agreement. The tuition waiver covers 9 graduate level credits in the Fall and Spring semesters and 6 graduate level credits in the Summer semester. If the student has advanced to candidacy (Application for Candidacy or Application for Candidacy/Dissertation Proposal depending on program's requirements approved by UGS) the tuition waiver will cover 3 dissertation credits.

The GA is financially responsible for the per credit fees, semester fees, online and lab fees. Please refer to the [Graduate Assistantship Program Summary Chart](#) listed on the UGS website for more information regarding your charges for the academic year. Below is an example for a typical semester. Tuition waiver total amount for Graduate Enrollment (\$379.95 per credit).

9 credits =	\$3419.55
6 credits =	\$2279.70
3 credits=	\$1139.85
1 credit (<i>thesis-bound who have completed coursework and an approved proposal</i>) =	\$379.95

General information about graduate assistantships can be found here:

[Graduate Assistantships - University Graduate School](#)

The Graduate Assistantship Handbook can be found here:

[GA-Handbook-2025-2026.pdf](#)

Doctoral Student Timeline

Date/Deadline	Milestone/Requirement	Rationale
End of 1 st Year (3 rd Semester).	Dissertation Committee Milestone Must meet the University's minimum composition requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 faculty members from the department offering degree • 1 faculty member from outside the department • 1 external member, or faculty member from in/outside department 	Notify UGS who is student's Major Professor and dissertation committee
Every Fall and Spring Semester	Semi-Annual and Annual evaluations, respectively.	Track timely progression to graduation
Beginning of Year 3 (7 th Semester).	Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy Milestone Candidacy Exam: The candidacy exam must be completed prior to the end of the seventh semester and can be taken while the student is completing the last of their <i>required</i> courses. However, in order to submit the Milestone form <i>all</i> required coursework must be <i>completed</i> (and graded); the student must have a GPA ≥ 3.0 ; and be enrolled in ≥ 3 credits.	The candidacy exam needs to be completed to register for dissertation credits.
Year 3 (7 th or 8 th Semester)	Dissertation Proposal Milestone Due at UGS three semesters before the anticipated graduation term. Must include RCR training. Must include IRB/IACUC/IBC approval (if applicable).	The dissertation proposal defines the PhD project (although work towards this research topic begins in year 1 and some preliminary data is expected).

End of 5 th Year (15 th Semester)	Preliminary Approval & Request for Oral Defense Milestone Due at UGS: by no later than three weeks prior to the proposed defense date or by the defense deadline as set in the UGS calendar (whichever date is the earliest).	
Anytime	<u>Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee form</u>	Notify UGS of changes to dissertation committee

Information for **Dissertation Milestones for Doctoral Programs** can be found [here](#)
 Important calendar deadlines for Milestones can be found here <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>

Milestone and Annual Evaluation Deadlines

Milestone and Annual Evaluation forms are routed to the following before reaching UGS:

- Major Professor and Committee Members
- Program Director/Chair
- Associate Dean of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Dean

Therefore, students should **add 10 business days** to the UGS Milestone deadlines to account for these approvals that must occur before the forms are routed to UGS.

Deadlines for Milestone forms by expected graduation terms can be found here: [Calendar & Deadlines - University Graduate School](#).

Online Dissertation Milestones

Below are brief descriptions of Online Dissertation Milestones. Milestones track a doctoral student's progress toward completing the dissertation. All information must be entered on these online forms. Detailed information about the Milestones can be found here:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/#toggle-id-1>

Appointment of Dissertation Committee

A student's dissertation committee should be appointed as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the first year (third semester) of study. The Dissertation Committee Milestone should be set up according to current UGS requirements and guidelines. The dissertation committee composition, must meet the University's minimum requirements that can be found here:

<https://policies.fiu.edu/files/780.pdf>.

- 2 faculty from the department offering the degree
- 1 faculty member from outside the department
- 1 external member or can be from in/outside department or external

The Major Professor holding Graduate Faculty Status (GFS) and is an expert in the subject of the dissertation, two committee members with GFS from within the Public Health program, and one external member from a different doctoral program within FIU who also holds at least GFS. More on the GFS policy for faculty can be found here: <https://policies.fiu.edu/files/766.pdf>. In case the dissertation committee is not established in the first year, the Doctoral Program Director will mentor and advise such students in consultation with their faculty advisor until they form their committees.

Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee Form

The University Graduate School requires notification of any changes to the composition of the dissertation committee. The [Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee form](#) is to be completed as soon as a revised committee is formed.

Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy

The candidacy examination is to be taken by students upon completion of all required coursework with a GPA ≥ 3.0 , which should be completed no later than the end of the second year (sixth semester) of study. Students who pass the candidacy exam will complete the Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy Milestone to be approved by UGS to qualify as a PhD candidate in the program.

Dissertation Proposal

Students should demonstrate their knowledge of the proposed research as soon as possible in their pursuit of a doctoral degree. Therefore, the Dissertation Proposal Milestone should be completed simultaneously or within one semester of completing the candidacy exam. Students complete the dissertation proposal according to their department/program requirements. UGS requires students to complete an online form addressing the following: Title, Introduction/Statement of Problem and Aims, Research Question(s)/Objectives/Hypothesis, Methods/Experimental Design to test hypothesis, and Timeline to degree/schedule of work. Additionally, students are required to complete Responsible Conduct of Research Certification (RCR), and if the proposal involves human or animal research, approval memos such as IRB/IACUC/IBC, respectively, are required.

Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense

It is recommended that full-time doctoral students submit their Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense Milestone and officially defend their dissertation no later than the end of the fifth year (15th

semester) of study. Students must have completed a minimum of 75 credit hours. The following documents are required on the online form: a pdf copy of the entire Dissertation in standard UGS format, a pdf copy of the Dissertation Defense Announcement in standard UGS format, and a pdf copy of the iThenticate Report. More information on how to submit your Request for Oral Defense can be found [here](#).

Final Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Form

This form acts as a license that grants FIU non-exclusive rights to the student's dissertation for preservation in the university's digital commons. Students, the copyright holders, retain all rights. More information on how to complete the final ETD submission process can be found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/the-final-etd-process/>

Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan

Annual Evaluation

An Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan is required of all PhD students throughout their studies, until they successfully complete their program.

Each academic year (at the end of Spring semester), the University Graduate School requires that each student develop SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed-upon, Results-focused and Timed) goals with the guidance from the Major Professor and the dissertation committee (or the Doctoral Program Director if the Dissertation Committee Milestone has not been completed).

Students are evaluated based on the proposed SMART goals, progress in the program and any accomplishments including publications, professional presentations, awards/recognitions, and timely progress with respect to field, laboratory, and dissertation work. Student evaluations are conducted by the Major Professor and dissertation committee (or the Doctoral Program Director if a Dissertation Committee Milestone has not been completed). If the student is not making satisfactory progress, a “performance improvement plan” will be developed by the student along with the guidance of the Major Professor or the Doctoral Program Director.

Students who do not complete an evaluation and mentoring plan will be blocked from enrolling in the following semester.

The Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan will be available via my.fiu.edu Student Portal, under your To Do List. UGS will notify students when they can begin their Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan and the deadline for completion.

Students who have an approved Milestone- Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense form on file and are expected to graduate during the spring term prior to the May 30 deadline are exempted from filing an Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan.

Students with 17 or less graduate credits at the end of spring term are also exempt from completing the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan. More details about the UGS Doctoral Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan can be found here: [Doctoral Annual Student Evaluation - University Graduate School](#)

Semi-Annual Evaluation

In addition to the UGS Doctoral Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan, the Stempel College requires that progress towards the SMART goals be evaluated by the Major Professor and the dissertation committee (or the Doctoral Program Director if a -Dissertation Committee Milestone has not been completed) at the end of the Fall semester. However, this evaluation will not be submitted to UGS. This internal process is an additional measure to assess, and if necessary, to adjust student's performance (timeline to graduation) in addition to the university-wide Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan. If the student is not making satisfactory progress, a “performance improvement plan” will be developed by the student along with the guidance of the Major Professor or the Doctoral Program Director.

Coursework Requirements

Required Coursework:

There are five components to the Ph.D. curriculum. The first is a core curriculum shared across all public health majors (12 credit hours). The second component is specific to the major (9 credit hours). The third component is specific to the concentration (12 credit hours), followed by content and secondary field courses (to total a minimum of 18 required credit hours). The fourth component consists of pre-doctoral research (9 credit hours). The fifth component consists of the dissertation, including a minimum of 15 dissertation credit hours.

The Doctoral Degree in Public Health with a concentration in BBE or ET requires 75 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree. These shall include a minimum of:

1. 60 credit hours earned in academic courses which are part of the doctoral program with a minimum overall GPA 3.0. Doctoral programs normally include courses at the 5000 level and above.
 - Consisting of the Public health core (12 credits), EHS core (9 credits), BBE or ET major courses (12 credits), EHS content electives (9 credits), Secondary field courses (9 credits), and Pre-Doctoral research (9 credits).
 - Environmental Health Sciences Seminar (1 credit): Students register for this course for only one semester but are **required** to attend seminars and present each year as instructed by the seminar course director.
 - Timeline to complete coursework ~2 academic years. Fall (12 credits) Spring (12 credits) Summer (6 credits) x 2 yr
2. 15 credit hours of dissertation. A student may enroll for dissertation credits after completing all coursework, passing the candidacy examination and being advanced to candidacy. Enrollment in dissertation credits is not allowed before advancement to candidacy.

Transfer of Graduate Credits:

Students may transfer up to 29 graduate level credits toward the doctoral program, counting towards content electives or secondary field courses. To begin the process, submit a Degree Audit Course Substitution Request Form to the Office of Student and Alumni Affairs signed by the major advisor, doctoral program director, or the chair of the department. Students are recommended to schedule an advising appointment with the Doctoral Program Director (DPD) and bring the following: your official transcript and course syllabi for any Public Health Core or EHS course substitutions. For Secondary Field Course substitutions, be sure to consult with your major advisor. Since the program requires 60 total credits, transferring 29 credits means you will complete 31 credits of required coursework at FIU.

Research Requirements

Research is the cornerstone of the EHS doctoral concentrations. While completing the required coursework and before completion of the Dissertation Committee Milestone, students are required to participate in EHS affiliated research with a mentoring faculty member. Students will meet the requirements and/or expectations set by the faculty you will be working with, including required contact hours. Students are also required to attend the departmental seminar and report (i.e., attend regularly scheduled research/lab meetings) consistently for the timely progress to graduation.

EHS PhD Course Advising Sheet



Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health with a concentration in ET or BBE.

College Website: <http://stempel.fiu.edu/> • Careers in Public Health: www.asph.org • For Course

Registration: <http://myfiu.edu>

NAME:	PID:	DATE ADMITTED:
--------------	-------------	-----------------------

I. Public Health Core Courses – 12 credits of required coursework. Students must earn a grade of B or better.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	HOURS	TERM	GRADE
PHC 6091	Biostatistics II (or other approved Quantitative Methods course)	3		
PHC 6601	Emerging Issues in Public Health	3		
PHC 7705	Methods in Evidence based Public Health	3		
PHC 7981	Research Concepts and Proposal Development	3	Fall	
DIE 7566	Or Research Concepts Development			

II. Environmental Health Sciences Core Courses - 9 credits of required coursework.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	HOURS	TERM	GRADE
PHC 6921	Environmental Health Sciences Seminar	1	Spring	
PHC 7732C	Research Ethics & Scientific Integrity	1	Spring	
PHC 6328	Molecular & Cellular Toxicology	4	Fall	
PHC 6329	Biomarkers	3	Spring	

III. Brain, Behavior, & the Environment (BBE) Major: 12 credits of required coursework for the BBE track.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	HOURS	TERM	GRADE
PHC 7381C	Neuroscience (This course to be taken 1 st year)	4	Spring	
PHC 7731C	Advanced Neurotoxicology Research Methods	2	Spring	
PHC 7384	Advanced Neurotoxicology	4	Fall	
PHC 7385C	Emerging Issues in Neurotoxicology	2	Fall	

Or,

Environmental Toxicology (ET) Major: 12 credits of required coursework for the ETOX track.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	HOURS	TERM	GRADE
PHC 7300	Biological Basis of Environmental Diseases	4	Spring	
PHC 7327	Emerging Issues in the Environmental Health Sciences	2	Fall	
PHC 7374	Organ-specific Toxicology	4	Fall	
PHC 7713	Advanced Environmental Toxicology Research Methods	2	Spring	

IV. Environmental Health Science Content Courses – a minimum of 9 credits of coursework is required.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	HOURS	TERM	GRADE
PHC 6310	Environmental Toxicology	3	Spring	

PHC 6311	Environmental Health Risk Assessment	3	Spring	
PHC 6312C	Health Impacts of Air, Water, and Land Pollution	3	Spring	
PHC 6355	Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety	3	Fall	
PHC 6374	Environmental Disasters & Human Health	3	Summer	
PHC 6422	Regulatory Aspects of the Environmental Health Sciences	3		
PHC 6662	Global One Health	3	Fall	
PHC 6538	Gene & Environment Interactions	3	Spring	
PHC 6380	Introduction to Neurotoxicology	3	Summer	
PHC 6730C	Neurotoxicology Research Methods	3	Spring	
PHC 6382	Neuropharmacology	3	Fall	
PHC 6383C	Neurobehavioral Techniques	3	Spring	
PHC 6907	Independent Study in Environmental Health	3		
PHC 6914L	Current Topics in Environmental Health Research (Lab)	3		
PHC 7917	Pre-doctoral research	3		
PHC 6920	Special Topics in Environmental Health	3		
PHC 7300	Biological Basis of Environmental Diseases	4	Spring	
PHC 7327	Emerging Issues in the Environmental Health Sciences	2	Fall	
PHC 7374	Organ-specific Toxicology	4	Fall	
PHC 7713	Advanced Environmental Toxicology Research Methods	2	Spring	
PHC 7381C	Neuroscience	4	Spring	
PHC 7731C	Advanced Neurotoxicology Research Methods	2	Spring	
PHC 7384	Advanced Neurotoxicology	4	Fall	
PHC 7385C	Emerging Issues in Neurotoxicology	2	Fall	

Courses should be identified in consultation with Major Professor, and/or Committee.

V. Secondary Field Courses - a minimum of 9 credits of approved secondary field courses are required. Secondary field courses must be selected from the approved graduate school courses in consultation with major professor.

VI. Pre-Doctoral Research Requirement- a minimum of 9 credits are required.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	HOURS	TERM	GRADE
PHC 7917	Pre-doctoral research	9		

VII. Dissertation – a minimum of 15 credits are required, as recommended by major professor.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	HOURS	TERM	GRADE
PHC 7980	Dissertation	15		

Note: Schedule of course offerings in a semester is subject to change. Please check PantherSoft to ensure the availability of your selected course in a semester. 7000 level courses are for doctoral students.

Graduation Requirements:

1. Satisfy all requirements for Ph.D. of Public Health in Environmental Health Sciences.
2. Complete a minimum of 75 credit hours of graduate level coursework in approved program.
3. Earn a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 in all coursework completed.
4. Complete Online Dissertation Milestones as per University Graduate School guidelines and deadlines.
Forms can be accessed at <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>
5. Meet with Major Professor to receive Graduation Check prior to final semester.
6. Apply for graduation at the Registrar's Office during registration of final semester. (See University Catalog for most current deadlines).

Candidacy Examination

After completing all required coursework with a minimum GPA of 3.0, students must contact the Doctoral Program Director (DPD) no later than the beginning of the semester in which they plan to take the candidacy exam. At this stage, students are required to provide a synopsis of their doctoral research area with relevant citations, after which the DPD will arrange a meeting with the student and their major professor.

The DPD then assembles the examination committee, which develops the exam questions. The candidacy exam assesses knowledge across several areas, including public health, the EHS concentration, the student's major concentration (BBE or ET), and experimental design and methods. The exam consists of two parts: a **written portion** with approximately four to five questions to be completed within one week, followed by an **oral portion** where the committee asks follow-up questions, typically lasting two hours. The exam is usually taken at the beginning of the student's third academic year, and a unanimous decision by all committee members is required to pass the candidacy exam.

Dissertation Proposal

The students will be required to prepare a detailed dissertation proposal for the college. The Stempel College version of the dissertation proposal should include:

1. An introduction to the research problem, with a statement of the research questions or hypotheses.
2. A full review of relevant literature sufficient to provide context for the research problem as well as a review of literature focused on the specific question to be examined.
3. A description of the research methods to be utilized in answering the research questions or hypotheses.

In general, these three parts will form the substance for the first three chapters of the dissertation. The proposal must be sufficient for the dissertation committee and the college to determine the significance of the research question within the context of the existing state of knowledge and the likelihood that the proposed methods are adequate and appropriate to answer that question. The dissertation proposal can only be approved by the dissertation committee after reviewing the written proposal and a successful oral defense attended by all committee members. After the student's committee has approved the proposal, the student will complete the Dissertation Proposal Milestone form for approval by UGS.

Suggested Dissertation Proposal Timeline:

1. The Major Professor and student should refer to the University Graduate School calendar for deadlines for submission of dissertation proposals <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>.
2. The student will likely have to submit several revisions of the proposal before the student is ready to present it orally. Students should expect that faculty will take up to, but no more than 14, business days for each draft during the academic year to review it. Additional days may be needed around the final exam periods
3. The proposal consists of the three sections indicated above: Introduction, Review of Literature (these two may be combined), and Methodology plus the Dissertation Proposal Milestone to be submitted to University Graduate School. Students will use their approved program proposal to complete the following in the Milestone form: Title, Introduction / Statement of Problem and Aims, Research Question(s) / Objectives / Hypothesis; and Methods / Experimental Design to test hypothesis, and Proposed Timeline.
4. It is recommended that the proposal defense be publicly advertised one to two weeks in advance.
5. Following the proposal defense, the student must complete all changes required by the dissertation committee before submitting to the Stempel College Office of the Dean for approval. These changes may require substantial work and may delay meeting the University deadlines if ample time in the schedule do not account for this possibility.
6. Final approval by the Stempel College Office of the Dean can take two to three weeks. Thus, when scheduling, in order to meet the University Graduate School Deadlines, the student should allow ample time to make the changes required by the committee (several weeks) and for the process of approval by administration (an additional two to three weeks).

Approval for Human and Vertebrate Animal Subjects Research

If proposal project involves human or animal research, approval memos such as IRB/IACUC/IBC, respectively, are required. Approval for human subjects through the FIU Institutional Review Board

or vertebrate animal subjects (if applicable), through IACUC must be obtained prior to the submission of the Milestone Dissertation Proposal form. Information about the application processes for these approvals are available online: <http://research.fiu.edu/iacuc/> and <http://research.fiu.edu/irb/>

Responsible Conduct of Research

The [RCR CITI Online Training](#) is required for all graduate students filing a Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Milestone. If you are unsure of which RCR course to take, then please review the following UGS web page for helpful information: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/rcr/>

Dissertation and Format Requirements

Dissertation

After a student has completed a research project and written a dissertation, the dissertation must be approved by the dissertation committee. The research dissertation must be of sufficient caliber to be published, as a whole or in part, in the scientific literature. The candidate should realize that multiple revisions may be necessary before the document is ready for the defense. Students should expect that faculty will take up to, but no more than, 14 business days for each draft during the academic year to review it. Additional days may be needed around final exam week of the semester. Because most faculty in the college are on nine-month appointments (fall and spring semesters), faculty may be unavailable for periods of time during the summer term, and students should plan accordingly.

In order to ensure that dissertations meet the appropriate standards of originality, UGS now requests that Major Professors create an originality report in *iThenticate* of the dissertation documents that are sent in the Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense Milestone. Major Professors can visit the following FIU webpage for access to *iThenticate*: [iThenticate - Research](#). Major professors are asked to include a written statement that Chapters X, Y, and Z of the Dissertation or Thesis were previously published, include the citations of those publications. This written statement should be attached to the beginning of the *iThenticate* report.

The first page of the report with the name of the professor (when submitting the document to *iThenticate*, professors need to use their names as authors) and the page indicating the similarity index need to be submitted with the Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense Milestone. UGS will not accept a Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense Milestone without these two pages from the report. The originality report is now part of the checklist on these forms.

The Major Professor and dissertation committee will also review the dissertation for content and style before submitting it to the Stempel College Office of the Dean. The student should plan on both the Major Professor, dissertation committee, and the designated official at the dean's office needing up to 14 business days to review the dissertation. A dissertation that does not meet Stempel College standards of research excellence or one with a significant number of uncorrected errors will be returned without approval for scheduling the defense.

It is the responsibility of the dissertation committee to approve the entire content of the dissertation. By their approval on Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense Milestone, the committee members certify that the dissertation is ready for defense.

UGS Guidelines and Formatting Requirements

The FIU Graduate School has specific guidelines on the preparation of the dissertation as well as its format that the student is required to follow. The UGS guidelines and formatting requirements can be found here: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/>

Approved Formats for Public Health Dissertations

Traditional Format and Required Sections

- Title Page
- Dedication (optional)
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Chapter 1
 - Introduction
- Chapter 2
 - Literature Review
 - Specific Aims and Hypotheses
- Chapter 3
 - Methods
 - Procedures
 - Data Source
 - Participants
 - Measures
 - Data Analysis Plan
 - Study Power
- Chapter 4
 - Results
- Chapter 5
 - Discussion
 - Limitations
 - Conclusions
 - Future Research
- References
- Vitae
- Appendices

Manuscript Format

As an alternative to the traditional format, students may choose to write three cohesive manuscripts related to the dissertation project. Students should refer to their departmental policies and procedures for specific instructions and requirements regarding the manuscript format.

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense is a public seminar that describes the dissertation research, which is followed by an oral examination of the student by the dissertation committee on the content of the dissertation. The dissertation defense cannot be scheduled until after the dissertation has been reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee and the Stempel College Office of the Dean (Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense Milestone).

Public Presentation of the dissertation to the University Community is to be held on a business day during the regular term. The date of the dissertation defense must be approved by all members of the dissertation committee and the University Graduate School. The standard UGS format for the defense announcement can be found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/#top>.

All of the University community including students and faculty will be invited to the presentation portion of the dissertation defense. Additionally, the student may invite members of the public to attend. Following the public presentation and question-and-answer session, all non-committee members will be asked to leave the room. After the guests have left the room, the student will be examined by the dissertation committee and required to defend his/her analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

The student should refer to the University Graduate School for deadlines for submission of Dissertation in order to graduate (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>). After all the changes are made and approved by the dissertation committee, the final corrected version should be submitted to Stempel College Office of the Dean for approval.

Final Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Approval

After the dissertation defense the student must submit a Final Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Approval form the can be found here:

http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Final_ETD_Approval_Form01022019.pdf

FIU & UM Exchange Program

FIU Doctoral students can complete up to six credit hours of coursework at the University of Miami (UM) as members of the exchange program between FIU and UM. The exchange program at UM and FIU allows students to take advantage of the broad educational and research opportunities at both institutions. All students who are fully admitted into a doctoral program and in good academic standing may participate in this program.

In consultation with the major advisor, students can choose from any course at UM provided the course is not already offered at FIU, is not a limited access course and/or does not have additional fees (i.e. many online courses).

A listing of some public health courses offered at the University of Miami can be found here: <http://publichealth.med.miami.edu/graduate/academic-programs/course-descriptions>

The application form for the FIU/UM Exchange Program can be found here: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/WritableFIU-UM-Exchange-Application-2018.pdf>

Agreement for Doctoral Students in EHS

By signing this student agreement, I acknowledge that I was provided a copy of the “EHS PhD Handbook.” I also acknowledge that I understand the Florida International University policy number [380.044](#) which states the following:

Academic Dismissal:

1. Failure to maintain good academic standing will result in placement on academic warning, probation or dismissal.

Warning:

1. A graduate student whose cumulative graduate GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on warning, indicating academic difficulty.

Probation:

1. A graduate student on warning whose cumulative graduate GPA remains below 3.0 in the following semester will be placed on probation, indicating serious academic difficulty. The College or School of the student on probation may indicate the conditions which must be met in order to continue enrollment.

Dismissal:

1. A graduate student on probation whose cumulative and semester GPA's fall below a 3.0 will be automatically dismissed from his or her program and the University. A graduate student will not be dismissed prior to attempting a minimum of 12 hours of coursework as a graduate student. The student has ten working days to appeal the dismissal decision.
2. A student may be dismissed for failure to make satisfactory progress toward degree completion or failure to complete all the requirements for a graduate degree within the time limits for degree completion.
3. A student may be dismissed for non-compliance with the continuous enrollment policy for doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy.

Examples of unsatisfactory progress toward degree completion include: not completing a Fall or Spring student evaluation, not achieving the SMART goals on two consecutive semesters. Please note that letters of dismissal originate with the Department Chair.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

Doctoral Program Director

Date

Department Chair

Date