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DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH SERVICES POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Graduate Student Handbook
Ph.D. Program

Revised June 2019

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Arnold School of Public Health

This Handbook of the programs, policies, and practices of the Department of Health Services Policy and Management is not an official University document. If there are discrepancies between this Handbook and the University’s Graduate Studies Bulletin, the Graduate Studies Bulletin supersedes.
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I. The Arnold School of Public Health

The Arnold School of Public Health, of the University of South Carolina, was established in 1974 in response to a mandate from the South Carolina Legislature. The first students were admitted in late 1974. The growing number of students necessitated a reorganization of the School and the permanent formation of a full-time faculty, in July 1977. In 2000, we became the Arnold School of Public Health, in honor of a generous donation to the School by Norman J. Arnold. Presently, the School has a faculty of about 132 members and over 700 graduate students.

Since 1979, the School has been accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the accrediting body for schools of public health in the United States. The mission of the Arnold School of Public Health is to expand, disseminate, and apply the body of knowledge regarding the following: prevention of disease, disability and environmental degradation, promoting health and wellbeing in diverse populations; and providing effective, efficient and equitable health services.

Principal responsibilities of the Arnold School of Public Health are: (1) educational preparation of undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students for academic and professional careers within public health and health services organizations; (2) research on significant public health problems and/or issues; and (3) development and delivery of continuing professional education for health services personnel outside the immediate university community.

There are six departments within the Arnold School of Public Health: Health Services Policy and Management; Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior; Environmental Health Sciences; Epidemiology and Biostatistics; Exercise Science; and Communication Sciences and Disorders.
II. The Department of Health Services Policy and Management

A. Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Mission

The mission of the Department of Health Services Policy and Management is to advance the provision of effective, efficient and equitable health services by preparing individuals for positions in health services management, policy, public health programs, research, and education. The Department serves South Carolina while attracting students from throughout the United States and other countries.

Revised and approved, November 2009

Vision

The Department of Health Services Policy and Management will be a resource for excellence in graduate education and research in South Carolina and in distinct international markets. Through its masters and doctoral programs, it will produce well-trained graduates ready to assume or progress to leadership positions in health services, public health, and research/academic organizations. The Department will serve as a networking/integrating resource for alumni, providers and leaders in health services in South Carolina and beyond. The Department will offer programs that continually seek to improve through new ideas and new technology, and by responding to the changing needs of the dynamic healthcare environment. Through research, teaching, service and consulting, faculty will create a Department on the leading edge of health services management, policy, and research.

Revised and approved November, 2009

Goals and Objectives

The Department will implement its vision by providing students in the Master of Health Administration, Master of Public Health, Doctoral program, and other degree programs with the highest quality graduate education based on excellence in teaching, research, and service.
III. Doctoral Program

The Department of Health Services Policy and Management offers a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Health Services Policy and Management. The requirements of the program are explained in this section.

A. Educational Goals of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program

The educational goal of the PhD Program is to prepare students to make a substantive impact in health services policy and management through teaching, research and policy leadership.

Upon completion of the degree program, students will be able to:

a. Demonstrate proficiency in assessing health care policy development and implementation and its relationship to management of health care organizations.

b. Demonstrate skills in the application of statistical techniques to health services research data through drafting papers for courses as well as creation and defense of the doctoral dissertation.

c. Demonstrate the ability to teach university level courses by successfully completing the teaching requirement of the program.

d. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical and responsible conduct of research.

e. Demonstrate professional written communication and oral presentation skills through the comprehensive examination, doctoral dissertation proposal, submission of the dissertation, and the dissertation defense.

Measurable indicators for each of the objectives/competencies

Objective 1:

(i) More than 80% of total students in the class HSPM 845 receive a grade of B or better in the final health system evaluation framework development
(ii) More than 80% of students in HSPM 846 receive a grade of B or better in the paper on linking management theory with health service management and policy evaluation
(iii) More than 70% of PhD students attempting qualifying examination pass all sections of the exam in their first attempt.

Objective 2:

(i) More than 80% of students in HSPM 717 receive a grade of B or better in the final course paper that demonstrates the ability to apply statistical techniques to health services research.
(ii) More than 80% of students in HSPM 719 receive a grade of B or better in a paper that describes research methodologies applied to health services research and demonstrates the ability to apply statistical and/or qualitative research methods in research.

Objective 3:

(i) More than 90% of PhD students completing TA-training within two years of matriculation.
(ii) More than 80% of PhD students have been a TA for a course and/or offered at least one presentation in the doctoral student seminar and/or completed the training on Preparing Future Faculty (by CTE) by the end of third year after matriculation.
(iii) More than 80% of PhD students beyond their qualifying I and II examinations presented their research findings in local, national and international conferences.

Objective 4:

(i) More than 80% of students attempting qualifying II examination in a year pass the examination in the first attempt.
(ii) More than 80% of PhD students attempting the dissertation proposal defense successfully pass the defense in the first attempt.
(iii) More than 80% of PhD students attempting the doctoral dissertation defense pass the defense in their first attempt.
B. Program-Related Information: Doctor of Philosophy

Admission Criteria and Application Requirements

1. Students should have a Master's degree in Health Administration, Business Administration, Public Health, Public Administration or a related discipline. Previous graduate-level course work should include public health courses, including introduction to biostatistics/ statistics, and epidemiology. Students with deficiencies may not be able to waive all the 18 credit hours that are allowed in the PhD program. Applicants without a health-related master’s degree will be required to complete the Public Health core (see page pg. 15) of the doctoral program. Courses taken to make up deficiencies do not count towards the doctoral program course requirements. An academically exceptional student may be admitted with only a Bachelor's degree, upon the recommendation of the doctoral admissions committee.

2. An applicant must have earned at least a 3.0 grade point average (based on a 4.0 scale) in previous graduate course work.

3. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores should be submitted (GMAT scores may be substituted for GRE). The GRE/GMAT requirement may be waived for applicants with professional degrees (i.e. JD, MD, or MBBS) on a case-by-case basis. The department, however, uses GRE/GMAT scores in allocating limited amount of financial assistance available and if an applicant wishes to be considered for financial assistance, GRE/GMAT scores must be submitted. It is expected that applicants should have a minimum combined verbal and quantitative GRE scores of at least 295 (or the equivalent GMAT score).

4. Foreign applicants whose native language is not English must submit the results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores or other equivalent English language test. Applicants must submit a satisfactory score on TOEFL, IELTS Intl. Academic Course Type 2 exam, or the PTE Academic. The minimum TOEFL is 80 Internet-based, or 570 paper-based. The minimum acceptable overall band score on the IELTS Intl. Academic Course Type 2 exam is 6.5. The minimum acceptable score on PTE Academic is 53. If prior academic experience in the U.S. illustrates that the student is proficient in English, this requirement may be waived, with the concurrence of the Graduate School.

5. Three letters of recommendation must be submitted from persons who can reflect upon the applicant's prior academic and professional performance.

6. The applicant must provide a career goal statement with a focus on the applicant’s research interests and how the USC program melds with these interests and a current curriculum vita with the application.

7. All short-listed applicants are interviewed by departmental faculty members as part of the admission process. Interview reports are used in admission decisions by the committee.

8. The applicant may submit copies of her/his peer-reviewed publications, if any.

Advice to Students

Students who are working full-time are highly encouraged to enroll as a part-time student (6-7 credit hours maximum per regular semester and if desired, 3 credit hours per summer session) to maximize learning and acquisition of competencies. While full-time employment does not automatically bar the student from carrying a full course load, poor academic performance (one or more grade of less than B) will require the student to enroll for no more than six credit hours per regular semester.
**PhD Curriculum**

PhD in Health Services Policy and Management requires completion of 60 hours of post-baccalaureate course work, including 12 hours of dissertation preparation. With the exception of MPH core courses (EPID 700, BIOS 700, HPEB 700, ENHS 660, HSPM 700 or their equivalents), up to 18 hours may be transferred from previous graduate coursework, with the approval of the student’s advisor and the Graduate Director. Therefore, students in the PhD program must complete a minimum of 42 semester credit hours at USC (including the dissertation research hours). To formalize transfer credits from a prior program, a student will have to submit the Doctoral Program of Study (DPOS) form listing all courses the student plans to take at USC during the doctoral program, including 12 hours of dissertation preparation. The form can be found at [http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/](http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/) and click on Doctoral Program of Study form. The student must also submit a memo to the doctoral program director listing the relevant graduate courses taken elsewhere being used to reduce the credit hour requirement from 60 hours.

Students must complete the departmental core as well as the courses in a concentration area within the first two years of study. The departmental core requirements are essential for passing the qualifying examinations. Students may repeat a core doctoral course of the department only once. Not receiving a grade of B or better in a doctoral core course on the second attempt will lead to automatic termination from the program. Enrollment in all courses require the approval of the academic advisor of the student.

Students are nominated for admission for doctoral candidacy once they have been fully admitted to the HSPM doctoral program and have passed the qualifying I and II examinations. An approved doctoral program of study submitted to the Graduate School is also required. The Graduate School admits students to candidacy status after completion of all three conditions and a written nomination is submitted from HSPM. The Graduate School will notify the student and the HSPM Graduate Director when the student has been admitted to candidacy.

Students may take doctoral dissertation research credit hours (HSPM 899) after successful completion of qualifying I and II examinations. HSPM 899 must be taken under the supervision of a faculty member who would likely be the Chair of the Dissertation Committee. If completion of the qualifying I and II examinations are delayed, students may have to complete more than the required minimum credit hours of course-work in the PhD program. In the first semester with HSPM 899, students start working towards identifying a dissertation research area or topic and the dissertation topic with list of references and potential sources of data (if relevant). A concept note with the research idea, reference list and sources of data should be submitted to the supervisor no later than the second semester of enrolling in HSPM 899. Student must also start discussing formation of the PhD Dissertation Committee with the supervisor in the first semester so that the Committee can officially be formed no later than the second semester of taking HSPM 899. By the end of the third semester, the student must prepare chapter 1 of the proposed dissertation research and submit the chapter to the supervisor for approval in order to receive the continuation grade “T”. Thereafter, a student signing up for HSPM 899 must show consistent and substantial progress towards the completion of proposal and proposal defense, and then towards final dissertation. If a student fails to demonstrate substantial progress in her/his doctoral research, the faculty member in charge of the HSPM 899 section may assign a grade of unsatisfactory (U). Receiving a grade of “U” in more than two semesters (i.e., three semesters) in HSPM 899 will lead to automatic termination from the doctoral program. Note that if the student has received less than a grade of B in other courses, termination may happen whenever four grades of less than B and U has been reached.

When taking HSPM 899, students may elect to become enrolled as “Z-status” students if all other course requirements have already been completed. A Z-status student is considered to be a full-time student working towards dissertation research irrespective of credit hours taken in the semester(s). A student can remain in Z-status no more than six semesters during the program of study.
The required Ph.D. curriculum is:

Public Health Core: 6 hours (students with an MPH are not required to complete the public health core courses)
- Perspectives in Public Health (PUBH 700) 3 hours
- Concepts and methods of Epidemiology or equivalent (EPID 700/701) 3 hours

Departmental Core: 16 hours
- Advanced Topics in Health Policy & Management I & II (HSPM 845 & 846) 6 hours
- Health Services Research Methods I (HSPM 717) 3 hours
- Health Services Research Methods II (HSPM 719) 3 hours
- Doctoral Seminar (HSPM 800, one credit hour each) 4 hours

Concentration (designed by student): 9 hours

Health Services Policy and Management related electives: 17 hours

Dissertation: 12 hours

Total credit hours 60 hours

Doctoral Seminar (HSPM 800 sessions)

Doctoral seminar sessions are offered in a sequence of four seminars and students must take these offerings sequentially, except for seminar 1, which can be taken at any time. The other three HSPM 800 courses must be taken in sequence (Seminar 2, 3 and 4).

1. Seminar 1, Faculty presentations (First half of fall, year 1) – Each week, one faculty member presents a research topic of interest and/or on an area of expertise. The presentation should provide an introductory overview of the research and also details of one (or more) research projects in which the faculty member will present the specific aims, conceptual model and research strategy for the project. Seminar 1 has two goals: i) to introduce students to faculty and their research early in the program, potentially creating connections for research and mentorship ii) to model research concepts and familiarize students with research steps which will be covered in upcoming seminars. The faculty presentations must have all the required sections of a good research proposal/study: (a) Introduction, (b) specific aims, (c) research strategy (significance and methodology/approach), (d) empirical analysis conducted and (e) results/policy implications/conclusions

2. Seminar 2, Specific Aims (Second half of fall, year 1) – Students will spend half of the semester working on how to craft specific aims. This seminar will provide an opportunity for students to begin to formalize their research interests and fellow students will serve as reviewers of their work. The final product by the end of the seminar would be 2-3 well-developed specific aims.

3. Seminar 3, Conceptual Framework (spring, year 1) – Students will focus on conceptual frameworks and how to use a conceptual framework to underpin their research. A few frameworks will be reviewed throughout the course of the seminar and students will continue to develop their aims by selecting a supporting conceptual framework.

4. Seminar 4, Research Strategy (first part of fall, year 2) – The final seminar will cover concepts related to research strategy. Students in this final seminar will explore the statistical approach and methods that could be used to explore their specific aims.
The Doctoral Program Director and the Graduate Director of the department have general oversight over the academic aspects of all students and candidates. At matriculation, the Doctoral Program Director advises all the incoming doctoral students unless the student requests another faculty member to be her/his academic advisor. After the first semester, students may select faculty advisors based on their research interests. Following the successful completion of the qualifying examinations, a Dissertation Committee Chair should be selected by the student and the Doctoral Program Director/Graduate Director of the department should be notified about the selection of the Dissertation Committee Chair (by a memo from the student to the Graduate Director of the department).

All graduate students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better during the entire duration of graduate studies. Students facing academic difficulties are strongly advised to discuss their issues with academic advisors. If necessary, students may take a leave of absence for one or two semesters before taking additional courses. A student will be placed under academic probation if the overall GPA becomes less than 3.0 in any semester. In addition, graduate students in the Department of Health Services Policy and Management must maintain a grade of B or better in all graded courses. If a student receives a U or less than B in three courses, the student will be placed under academic probation. A fourth grade of U or less than B will result in automatic termination from the program. Note that if a student receives his/her third and fourth less than B grade (and/or grade of less than B and U) in one semester, the student will be terminated immediately.

Teaching requirements for PhD program

All doctoral students in the PhD program are required to participate in teaching activities of the department. The students are expected to complete the teaching-related requirements without compensation. The requirements must be completed between the time of matriculation and the dissertation defense. The requirements can be fulfilled by completing any three of the following four items:
(a) Teaching Assistant training course offered by Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE),
(b) Participation in the Preparing Future Faculty Program of CTE,
(c) Working as a teaching assistant for at least one course in the department,
(d) Presenting at least once in the doctoral student seminar series arranged by the department

These requirements related to teaching must be satisfied before the student can request a date for the dissertation defense. Student should submit a letter with documentations to the Graduate Director of the department indicating that the requirements have been completed.

Research experience requirement

PhD students are required to work for at least two semesters at 10 hours per week or one semester at 20 hours a week as research assistants in research projects of departmental faculty members. Since not all research initiatives of faculty members are funded, students may not be compensated for the work. This requirement should be completed prior to the dissertation proposal defense date. The student must submit a letter to the Graduate Director from the faculty mentor to indicate successful completion of research involvement requirement. For part-time students, this requirement may be completed by working on a specific research project in collaboration with a faculty member of the department. Doctoral students are also encouraged to submit abstracts to national and international conferences in collaboration with faculty members of the department.

C. Degree Requirements

Students in the PhD program must complete 60 graduate credit hours. With approval of the Graduate Director, eighteen (18) hours of previous graduate credit may be used to address this requirement, for a net of 42 program hours [subject to the restrictions listed above on page 6]. To be acceptable as transfer
credit, previous graduate work must be recent (within 10 years of anticipated date of doctoral graduation), relevant to the student’s doctoral plan of study, and have a grade of B or better. [MPH core courses and their equivalents cannot be used to waive credit hours, excepting the public health core course requirement].

Students should complete the core courses (excluding doctoral seminars) within the first year of study. These courses are essential for passing the qualifying I examination. Registration for all courses requires the approval of the Academic Supervisor of the student and/or Graduate Director of the Department. All students must pass these four departmental core courses before proceeding to the qualifying exam. Students who do not receive a B or better in any core course may repeat the course once and must pass the course on the second attempt with a grade of B or better. Receiving two grades less than a B in any core course will result in automatic termination from the program. Registration for all courses requires the approval of the Academic Supervisor of the student or Graduate Director of the department.

D. Time Limits

Doctoral students must complete their studies within 10 years of matriculation or must repeat course work. Transferred credits must be within the 10-year period as well. Students who do not enroll in at least one course for consecutive academic semesters (summer not included) must apply for readmission to the Graduate School. If a student is accepted after applying for readmission, the academic rules and standards in effect at the time of readmission will supersede those in effect at the time of initial admission.

E. Qualifying Examination I

The qualifying examination must be taken following the completion of core course requirements (excluding doctoral seminars). This qualifying examination is a cumulative exam that tests students on the content areas of four departmental core courses. The examination will be given as four separate sections, one section for each course. The qualifying examination is offered twice per year, in late summer (August) and early spring (January). Specific dates within these periods will be selected each year and the students will be notified at least 30 days prior to the actual dates. The qualifying examination is taken in the Department of Health Services Policy and Management and is closed book, unless indicated otherwise for a specific section. The examination must be completed on a school or departmental computer in Word but one or both sections may require the use of statistical software for the analyses of data. Each section of qualifying examination is graded by a faculty member of the department. Students will be notified of their grades in writing within three weeks of taking the examination. Examination results will be reported as Pass or Fail.

A student may request re-evaluation of their grades in any or all of the sections of qualifying examination in writing (to the Graduate Director of the department) within two weeks after the reporting of the grades. Once the re-evaluation request is received, the examination section(s) being contested will be sent to a new examiner(s) and if the grade assigned by the new examiner matches (Pass or Fail) the grade assigned in the examination before evaluation, the original grade will be considered final. If the grades assigned by the new examiner is different from the original grade, a third examiner will review the exam section. The grade assigned by the third grader will be considered final. The Graduate Director of the department will notify the student(s) in writing of the final grades for each of the sections after the re-evaluations. All the re-evaluations will be completed within two weeks of receipt of the formal request for re-evaluation.

If a student fails one or more areas of the qualifying examination, the examinations must be repeated the next time they are offered. If the student fails one section of the examination in the first try, that section must be taken the next time it is offered. If the student fails more than one section in the first try, all sections must be repeated the next time the examinations are offered. Students are not allowed to delay taking the qualifying examinations. It must be retaken in the next offering. Failure to do so, without
documentation of any extenuating circumstances, will be assigned a grade of “F” on all qualifying sections the student was supposed to retake. A grade of “Fail” in any one section of the qualifying examination in the second try will mean automatic termination from the program.

F. Qualifying Examination II
The qualifying examination II (based on concentration area) is arranged in consultation with the major professor of the concentration area, Doctoral Program Director and the Graduate Director of the department. Students must pass the qualifying examination I and complete the four sections of the doctoral seminar course prior to taking the qualifying examination II. The examination is a take home examination in which the student is required to write an NIH R03 type proposal on a specific research topic (see instructions in Annex A). Students should choose two faculty members from the department based on student’s concentration area to write the qualifying II questions. Students taking the examination must submit the research proposal based on the questions within 10 working days after receiving the questions. The faculty members writing the questions will grade the student’s work independently and will assign a grade of pass or fail or “revise and resubmit” (see grading rubric in Annex B). If both graders agree on the grade, the student will receive that grade as the final grade on the examination. If at least one of the faculty members assign a grade of “revise and resubmit”, the student must revise the research proposal based on the comments received. If one of the graders assigns a grade of “pass” and the other grader assigns a grade of “fail”, the Graduate Director of the department will arrange a meeting between the two graders to come up with a consensus grade (pass, fail or revise). If the student is asked to revise and resubmit the proposal, the revised version must be submitted no later than 10 working days after the receipt of the grade and the comments. A student can only be assigned a grade of pass or fail on the revised research proposal.

In case of failure in qualifying examination II, the student will be allowed to retake the examination in the immediate next semester (after the semester of first attempt) with a new examination question. Failure to pass the examination on the second try will lead to automatic termination from the doctoral program.

G. Dissertation Proposal Defense and Comprehensive Examination
Steps in this process include development of a dissertation concept paper, appointment of a doctoral Dissertation Committee, submission of the dissertation proposal, and defense of the dissertation proposal. Successful defense of the proposal, both written and oral parts, is considered passing of the comprehensive examination. Details on the requirements for a doctoral dissertation in the Department of Health Services Policy and Management are provided in Section J, below.

After completing the qualifying examinations, students should identify the principal dissertation advisor to direct their dissertation research. The student must prepare a short concept paper outlining his or her intended research project. The concept paper is then submitted to a faculty member within the Department of Health Services Policy and Management, with the request that the faculty member serve as the Dissertation Committee Chair. The Dissertation Committee Chair, who must be a tenured or tenure-track or clinical track faculty member of the University affiliated with the Department of Health Services Policy and Management will guide the student in selecting three additional Committee members. The Committee must consist of at least four members, of whom 50% or more must be from the department of Health Services Policy and Management and at least one member from another academic department of the University but in the same research area of the student’s dissertation topic. Selection of the outside faculty member(s) must be consistent with the Graduate School policy on academic qualifications for Committee membership.

It is the student’s responsibility to consult with the dissertation advisor in selecting the remaining Committee members and requesting them to serve on the Dissertation Committee. Once the members have informally agreed to serve, the student must complete Dissertation Committee appointment form and submit
it to the Graduate Director through the Chair of the Dissertation Committee. Policies related to the formation of the Committee and the form to request appointment of the Committee can be found in [http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/] under “Doctoral Committee Appointment Request”.

Thirty days prior to the scheduled proposal defense, the dissertation proposal must be given to each member of the Committee. The dissertation proposal has three chapters: an introduction, which briefly outlines the importance of the topic and the questions to be examined (chapter 1) a detailed literature review (chapter 2), and a detailed specification of the methods to be used in testing the research hypotheses (chapter 3). After the Dissertation Committee (or Chair) has reviewed the proposal and determined that the proposal is ready to be presented, the proposal defense may proceed. The student should be prepared to give a 30-45 minute presentation of the proposal to the Committee. The proposal defense generally takes two hours.

The student will be notified of the outcome of proposal defense after the presentation of the proposal. The student may receive a “pass” on the proposal defense (which is also considered the comprehensive examination), which allows the student to pursue the dissertation research as a doctoral candidate; a “qualified pass” which results in the student being given some additional remedial work to complete that is supervised by the Dissertation Committee Chair before being allowed to pursue the dissertation research; or a “fail”. If the student fails the exam, he or she must start the comprehensive examination process over. The Dissertation Chair, Doctoral Program Director, and other Committee members will determine if a new Committee is to be formed and whether a new dissertation topic must be selected or if the current topic needs major revision. A student may only be allowed to take comprehensive examination (proposal defense) twice. Failure in the comprehensive examination twice will result in automatic termination from the program.

The Chair of the Dissertation Committee will notify the Graduate Director of the date and time of the proposal defense at least 10 working days prior to the defense. The proposal defense announcement will then be posted on notice boards and/or on departmental website. The dissertation proposal defense is open to all (students, faculty and community members), although the Doctoral Committee members will deliberate in private to evaluate the performance of the student and to decide whether to pass or fail the dissertation proposal, or recommend revisions.

H. Dissertation Defense

Doctoral candidates are required to prepare and successfully defend a dissertation based on original research. When the research is completed, the student and Committee members meet, and the dissertation is defended. The dissertation and its defense must be approved by a majority (> 50%; i.e. 3 of 4 of a 4-member Committee) of Committee members. The process of arranging the dissertation defense is similar to the process of organizing the proposal defense. The dissertation defense is also open to all students, faculty and community members. After the oral presentation of the dissertation there will be a question and answer session. Committee members will ask questions first and then the floor will be open to others in the audience. At the end of the Q&A session, the Chair of the Dissertation Committee will excuse others to meet as a committee and evaluate the student’s performance. At this stage, the Committee can choose one of the following four options: (a) Dissertation accepted as drafted without any changes (b) Dissertation accepted with minor changes (c) Dissertation to be accepted with major changes (d) Dissertation not accepted as submitted. If the dissertation is accepted with major changes, all Committee members should be provided a revised version of dissertation and the Committee may decide whether to accept the revised version with or without another defense. The student will be automatically terminated from the program after failing the dissertation defense twice. The Chair of the Committee will notify the student and the Graduate School in writing of the outcome of the dissertation defense. The dissertation defense must be completed at least 30 days prior to graduation.
I. Doctoral Residency Requirement

The granting of a doctoral degree by the University of South Carolina requires a minimum of three full years of graduate study. At least one year of full-time study (or the equivalent) must be spent in residence at the University of South Carolina in Columbia as described in the next paragraph.

The doctoral residence requirement may be satisfied only after admission to a doctoral degree program. The year of residence on the Columbia campus can be fulfilled by successful completion of two consecutive semesters of 9 or more graduate credits per semester, or three consecutive semesters of six or more graduate credits per semester. Enrollment in a summer term (both sessions) may be counted as equivalent to a semester, but enrollment in summer is not required to maintain continuity. Dissertation preparation (899), independent study, or directed readings may not be used to satisfy the doctoral residence requirement.

The intent of the residency requirement is to ensure that doctoral students benefit from and contribute to the complete spectrum of educational and professional opportunities provided on the campus of a comprehensive university. When establishing residency, the student must interact with faculty and peers by regularly attending courses, conferences, and seminars, and may benefit from utilizing the library and laboratory facilities provided for graduate education.

IV. Student Responsibilities and Code of Ethics

Students enrolled in any educational program within the Department of Health Services Policy and Management, including the PhD program, are required to demonstrate the highest ethical standards. These requirements pertain to both academic and professional behavior.

A. Academic Progression

The Department sets a high standard of performance for students in all of our master and doctoral programs. Students earning a grade less than “B” in one or more courses in any given semester will be asked to reduce their graduate assistantship hours, if any, to increase their focus on coursework during the following semester. In the doctoral program, students must earn a minimum GPA of 3.0 (or B average) in the core courses to be eligible to appear in the qualifying examination and to continue in the doctoral program. If a student receives a grade of less than B in any of the core PhD courses, the course(s) must be repeated. For all graduate students in the department, a minimum GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation. Any student who earns a grade of U or less than “B” in three courses will be under departmental academic probation requiring development of a written plan by the student, academic advisor and the Graduate Director to overcome the academic challenges and improve the GPA. Students who receive their third and fourth of U or less than B concurrently in the same semester will be automatically terminated without the remedial plan given the temporal impossibility to address the issue after the third U or less than B.

B. Academic termination

Any student enrolled in the HSPM doctoral program faces academic termination if any of the following academic standards is not met:
1. Student receives four course grades less than B or combinations of four grades of U and less than B.
2. Student receives less than a grade of B in a core course twice.
3. Student fails any part of the qualifying examination I, qualifying examination II, comprehensive examination, or final dissertation defense twice.
4. Student receives a grade of U in three semesters of dissertation research HSPM 899, irrespective of credit hours taken in each semester.
C. Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to all requirements of the Carolinian Creed (www.sa.sc.edu/creed/). Please especially note: you are held accountable to this Creed even if you violate it inadvertently. Any episode of dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism in any form is cause for failure of an assignment, an examination, or a course. In addition, the department will report the case to the Office of Academic Integrity of the University. Students may want to refresh their understanding of the appropriate use of citations when drafting papers and other assignments to prevent inadvertent plagiarism stemming from lack of information. A second episode of violation of academic honesty is grounds for dismissal from the program.

D. Professional Responsibility

Graduate assistantships and residencies are intended to serve as an extension of the teaching mission of the Department of Health Services Policy and Management, by giving students work experience in the public health, health services, or research environments in which they will eventually pursue careers. While serving in on- or off-campus graduate assistantships or residencies, students are representatives of the Department. As such, they will comport themselves with total professionalism at all times.

Students participating in assistantships or residencies will follow the dress standards of their work environment. All students will comply with the work hours associated with their assistantship or residency. While at work, all students will ensure that their level of effort, deportment, and contribution to the work environment meet and, preferably, exceed sponsor expectations.

All students are expected to follow professional code of conduct at all times, in or outside the classroom.
V. INFORMATION ON DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Definition of a HSPM Doctoral Dissertation

As the culminating experience in a doctoral program, a successful dissertation is the report of an original and significant contribution to health services research and/or public health practice as initially judged by the candidate's doctoral Dissertation Committee. Clarification of these terms are provided below as they apply to HSPM PhD students:

1. "Original" means that, although the candidate will have made use of the contributions of others' research, the research question addressed, body of work undertaken, and intellectual contribution made are clearly the candidate's own. Thus, candidates may not employ other individuals to create any part of the dissertation, regardless of whether the candidate supervises the work.

2. "Significant contribution" means that the end result of the research advances knowledge of a demonstrably important aspect of health services research or public health practice as judged by peer scholars. The contribution may stem from new research, new analysis of secondary data, or evaluation of a new policy or public health program. One criterion of worthiness is that the research and its results are deemed by the Committee to have sufficient merit warranting serious consideration for publication in one or more peer-reviewed journals.

3. It is expected that doctoral candidates will demonstrate competent application of research methods and statistical tools relevant to the research undertaken. As noted, the services of others may not be hired for this purpose.

4. Dissertation proposals will be approved if the Committee members judge the proposed research to be original, clearly capable of being a significant contribution to research or public health, and feasible.

5. All dissertation proposals, questionnaires, and related documents must comply with ethics review guidelines current at the time of review. With the advice of the Dissertation Committee Chair, each student is responsible for submitting all required documentation in the manner requested. The dissertation proposal must present clear evidence of formal approval from Institutional Review Board BEFORE any research is undertaken.

Concept Paper development

To expedite effective proposal development and review, candidates are advised to use the following structured guide when developing the concept paper for their proposals:

1. **Importance of Research Proposed:** Explain how the proposed research meets the requirements for originality in producing what is expected to be a significant contribution to health services research.

2. **Objective(s):** Describe the general nature of expected or possible outcomes in measurable terms.

3. **Setting/Participants:** Describe site(s) of research with all relevant detail. Then identify the subjects and other participants who are the object of the research, likely to be affected by its outcome, or connected with it.

4. **Research Design, Statistical Applications, & Main Outcome Measures:** Explain the relevance of the research design and statistical applications and packages to the conduct of the research. Then
identify the proposed outcome measure with an appropriate rationale.

5. **Ethical Procedures Approval, Institutional Review Board (IRB):** While IRB clearance must be obtained only after final approval of the research proposal, students should indicate knowledge of ethical issues that may affect their planned research (subject protection, data protection, etc.) at the concept stage.

**Dissertation Formats**

HSPM dissertations may take one of two formats, the traditional dissertation monograph or a series of related publication-ready manuscripts. The choice of format lies with the student and his or her dissertation advisor. **All students must prepare the first three chapters in the outline below; this content forms the basis for the oral proposal defense.** Following the completion of the proposed research, the student will either complete the remainder of the monograph or prepare the agreed-upon manuscripts.

**Dissertation monograph:**

The dissertation monograph submitted by HSPM students has a five-chapter format:

- **Chapter One:** Introduction. A brief statement of the topic to be examined and its importance.
- **Chapter Two:** Literature Review. A thorough review of all literature pertinent to the topic in question. The literature should be focused on developing the specific hypotheses to be tested through the student’s research, and the chapter should end by stating those hypotheses in testable form.
- **Chapter Three:** Methods. A complete outline of all methods to be used in carrying out the proposed research including study design and data sources. At a minimum, variables must be defined, and analytic techniques specified for each hypothesis.
- **Chapter Four:** Results. A presentation of the results of the research. Ideally, this presentation is organized by hypothesis.
- **Chapter Five:** Conclusions and Recommendations. A summary of the implications of the research, and recommendations for continuation of the research by future investigators.

**Publication option:**

Ph.D. students are encouraged, with the concurrence of their advisor, to choose the publication option. As noted, students choosing this option will be required to complete the first three chapters of the dissertation, as part of the research presentation for defending their dissertation proposal. When submitting the final draft, the usual concluding chapters (“Results” and “Conclusions and Recommendations”) will be replaced by two or more manuscripts. Following Graduate School guidelines for a manuscript format dissertation, a final chapter (Chapter Six) will be added that ties together the findings and implications of the two papers. Manuscript topics will have been agreed upon as part of the proposal defense. All materials must be reviewed and approved by the student’s Dissertation Committee and the Dissertation Chair, as with a formally structured dissertation.
Annex A: R03 Proposal Instructions for Comprehensive Examination

1. **Title of proposal**: Limited to 81 characters (includes spaces and punctuation marks).

2. **Project Summary (Abstract)**:
   - No longer than 30 lines of text.
   - Summary of the proposed activity suitable for dissemination to the public.
   - Briefly state the specific aims and research design.
   - Provide info on the significance (i.e., the gap the study is addressing and the public health significance).

3. **Project Narrative**:
   - No more than 2 or 3 sentences.
   - Describe the relevance to public health.
   - Be succinct and use plain language appropriate for a lay audience.

4. **Specific Aims**: 1-page limit. The Specific Aims do NOT count toward your Research Strategy, which has a 6-page limit. Concisely state the goals of the proposed research. Summarize the expected outcomes, including impact of research on fields involved. Succinctly list objectives of proposed research (e.g., to test a hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, etc.).

5. **Research Strategy**: Cannot exceed 6 pages (for R03s). This section includes the following new headings: Significance, Innovation, Approach.

   A. **Significance**: (i) Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses, (ii) Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields, (iii) Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

   B. **Innovation**: (i) Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms, (ii) Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s). (iii) Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions.

   C. **Approach**: (i) Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted, (ii) Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
## Annex B: R03 Grading Rubric for Evaluating Qualifying Examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of proposal: Limited to 81 characters including spaces and punctuation marks (-1 point if not in compliance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Summary (Abstract):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No longer than 30 lines of text. (-1 point if not in compliance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize the proposed activity suitable for dissemination to the public. (0-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefly state the specific aims and research design. (0-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide info on the significance (literature gap study and the public health significance). (0-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Narrative:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No more than 2 or 3 sentences. (minus 2 if not in compliance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the relevance to public health. (0-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write succinctly and use plain language appropriate for a lay audience. (0-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biographical Sketch- (NOT NEEDED FOR QUALIFYING EXAM)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Aims:</strong> 1 page limit. (-2 if not in compliance with page limit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concisely state the larger purpose that the proposed research will serve. (0-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summarize the expected outcomes including impact of research on fields involved (0-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Succinctly list the specific aims/objectives of the proposed research (0-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Strategy:</strong> Cannot exceed 6 pages. (-10 if not in compliance with page limit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significance:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses, (0-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields, (0-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved. (0-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation:</strong> At least one of the 3 items addressed in the innovation section. (0-10):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe the overall strategy (0-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Detail proposed methodology including data source, collection method and variables (0-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Propose analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project and interpretation (0-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims (0-10)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Recommendation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise and resubmit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex C: Qualifying Examination II for PhD Students, Department of Health Services Policy and Management University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Name of student: 
Date of written exam: 
Names of faculty members grading written exam: 

Written exam grade (Pass=P, Fail=F)  First grader  

Second grader  Third grader  

Exam question (summarize if needed)

Title of the written document submitted by the student:

Signature of faculty members: ___________________________ Date: __________
Signature of faculty members: ___________________________ Date: __________
Signature of faculty members: ___________________________ Date: __________