Epidemiology Department Graduate Program Handbook

Academic Year 2020-2021

“This Handbook is intended to give an overview of the Epidemiology Department’s master’s and doctoral programs at Brown University and to answer some of the commonly raised questions about policies and procedures. However, the authoritative source for Graduate School policies is the Brown Graduate School Handbook which can be found on the Graduate School website.
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1. **Mission Statement**

The primary mission of the Department of Epidemiology is to provide excellence in teaching and training in the field of epidemiology. The graduate program offers master’s and doctoral degrees to prepare students for careers in research or professions in public health which require knowledge of advanced epidemiologic methods.

2. **Department of Epidemiology Leadership**

   David A. Savitz, PhD, Department Chair

   Stephen Buka, ScD, Doctoral Program Director

   Chanelle Howe, PhD, Master’s Program Director

   Vickie S. Beaulieu, Department Manager (All student business excluding Journal Club, Seminars and Student Reimbursements)

   Kathleen Graham, Administrative Coordinator (Journal Club, Seminars and Student Reimbursements)
3. **ScM Program Guide**

**Program Description**

The graduate program offers a two-year Master of Science degree in Epidemiology. The master’s program is designed to provide advanced training in the underlying principles and practice of epidemiology for students with little or no prior graduate-level training. Candidates for the Master of Science degree follow an integrated program of study comprising a minimum of 12 credits and a master’s thesis. There is no written examination requirement.

Upon completion of the ScM program, students are expected to have proficiency in the following areas:

1. conceptualization of different epidemiologic approaches to the understanding of the causes of health and disease in population-based research;
2. synthesis of existing literature in epidemiology; experience in the design and conduct of epidemiologic studies;
3. sample size estimation for basic epidemiologic study designs;
4. analysis of data from epidemiologic studies using appropriate statistical methods; and
5. effective communication of scientific findings. The training is provided through coursework and the completion of a written thesis.

ScM students who would like to obtain experience teaching can discuss Teaching Assistantship opportunities with the Graduate Program Director (GPD). [The Sheridan Center](#) offers a variety of resources for students, including support for teaching and English language learning. ScM students can also explore the possibility of Research Assistantships with the Master’s Program Director and department faculty.
Coursework

The Master’s program requires 12 courses to complete. Students must complete at least 8 credits of didactic coursework. The remaining 4 credits may be fulfilled through a combination of didactic coursework or independent studies. Of the 8 classroom courses required, at least 4 will be epidemiology courses with substantial methodological focus and at least 2 others will be in biostatistics.

The program expects students to enroll in 3 courses per semester, unless they have written approval by their advisor and the Master’s Program Director. Occasionally, and with written permission from the Graduate Program Director, students may opt to take additional courses and, in some instances, complete the degree in 3 semesters.

NOTE: For course descriptions visit the University Bulletin
In addition, master’s students are required to participate in the Journal Club series and to take the following non-credit courses:

**Public Health 1001**

The School of Public Health has developed an on-line, non-credit, modular course covering the scope of public health to meet the requirements of the accrediting organization for the School of Public Health (i.e., The Council on Education for Public Health).

Students are required to receive instruction in the breadth of public health. There is no charge for the on-line course. The course presents one module at a time; three in the fall and three in the spring semester. Each module is made up of 3-5 sessions, each created by a Brown faculty member. Modules are set up to run for one scheduled week per session, during which the faculty member for that session will be available for questions using an online discussion. However, students can complete the module at their own pace, though faculty will not be available outside of their scheduled week.

**Online SAS Training**

Two online courses offered by the SAS Institute will be required.

**SAS Programming 1: Essentials** - this course is designed as a basic introduction to SAS and must be completed by the end of the first term by all students unless a waiver is obtained from the GPD. The emphasis is on data management (including how to read in different types of data, formatting, and creating variables) and, programming univariable comparisons.

**SAS Programming 2: Data Management** - This course must be completed by the second semester, includes more advanced data management, including do loops and arrays, as well as summarizing, reading, and writing different types of
data. The online learning is self-paced, but students are encouraged to start the training early in the first semester. Epidemiology courses offered during the second term will assume the online SAS courses have been completed and that the students understand the material in the training.

**Research Ethics Training in the School of Public Health (RCR Training)** All first-year master’s Epidemiology students are required to successfully complete “Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) Training.” This five-week introduction to the scope and complexity of ethical situations that confront modern public health practitioners is led by the School’s Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Melissa Clark). Training covers multiple topics including: the context and history of ethical research practices within public health; research misconduct; the peer review process and its purpose; publication practices and responsible authorship; practical and ethical issues in human-subjects research; data acquisition, storage, and privacy; use of electronic resources; recognizing and navigating conflicts of interest; the mentoring relationship and associated responsibilities of mentors and trainees; and societal impact of public health research. Discussion of the ethics of diversity is incorporated to convey an appreciation for the fact that differences of race, culture, age, gender, disability, and religion can affect the conduct and interpretation of research. The training includes presentations, short illustrative films specific to public health research issues, and small group discussion of hypothetical and real scenarios drawn from current literature and the news media. Supplemental materials and homework assignments are provided through the Collaborative Institutional Review Board Training Initiative (CITI) program online system (see Appendix B). School of Public Health faculty and University staff from the Office of Vice President for Research and Research Administration participate as presenters and discussants along with students. Successful completion of this course includes attendance at all meetings and passing the written final examination.
Additionally, all students may continue their training after the first year by attending relevant lectures and discussion sessions sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research.

**Students pursuing a ScM in Epidemiology are required to take the following courses:**

- **PHP 2150** – Foundations in Epidemiologic Research Methods
- **PHP 2200** – Intermediate Methods in Epidemiologic Research
- **PHP 2130** – Human Biology for Epidemiology

**Students must also take 2 or more of the following methods selective courses (note, not all courses will be offered each year):**

Students are encouraged to seek diversity in their epidemiologic and biostatistical methods training, in line with their career goals. The following courses have been approved to be counted as methods courses for PhD and ScM Epidemiology students. See the key below the courses for exceptions and specifications. *

- **PHP 1560/2560** – Statistical Programming in R ¹ ²
- **PHP 1895** - Mindfulness Epidemiology
- **PHP 2030** – Clinical Trials Methodology
- **PHP 2040** – Applied Research Methods
- **PHP 2180** – Interpretation and Application of Epidemiology ³
- **PHP 2220B** - Nutritional Epidemiology
- **PHP 2250** – Advanced Quantitative Methods in Epidemiologic Research ³
- **PHP 2260** – Applied Epidemiologic Analysis Using SAS ² ⁴
- **PHP 2430** – Analysis of Population Based Datasets ² ⁴
- **PHP 2440** - Introduction to Pharmacoepidemiology*
- **PHP 2455A** – Health Services Research Methods I ⁵
- **PHP 2455B** – Health Services Research Methods II ⁵
- **PHP 2465A** – Introduction to Health Decision Analysis
- **PHP 2520** – Statistical Inference I
- **PHP 2530** – Bayesian Statistical Methods
- **PHP 2550** – Practical Data Analysis ² ⁴
PHP 2601 – Linear and Generalized Linear Models
PHP 2602 – Analysis of Lifetime Data
PHP 2610 – Causal Inference and Missing Data
PHP 2620 – Statistical Methods in Bioinformatics I

* 1 PhD students must enroll in PHP2560. ScM students may enroll in either PHP1560 or PHP2560.
  2 ScM students may only count one of these courses as a methods selective.
  3 Required for PhD students and does not count as methods selective.
  4 PhD students may only count one of these courses as a methods selective.
  5 Students are encouraged to take PHP2250 prior to or concurrently with either PHP2455A or PHP2455B. Students are discouraged from taking both PHP2455B and PHP2610.

Additional methods selectives will be approved at the discretion of the department Curriculum Committee. Students wishing to have a course approved as a methods selective should consult with their academic advisor. With support of the academic advisor, the student should then forward a copy of the course syllabus and a brief rationale for taking the course as a methods selective to the Curriculum Committee for review and possible approval. Requests should be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the semester that the course will be offered.

NOTE: For course descriptions visit the University Bulletin
Required Biostatistics Courses:

**PHP 2510** – Principles of Biostatistics and Data Analysis
**PHP 2511** – Introduction to Applied Regression Analysis

**NOTE:** Qualified students may request permission from their academic advisor to substitute more advanced biostatistics courses in place of these introductory courses (this requires waiving the introductory courses, see box below.)

The remaining courses can be selected from among various offerings in Public Health, Sociology, Environmental Studies, or related disciplines with approval from the student’s academic advisor. Electives must be chosen so the student will develop substantive expertise in epidemiologic methods as applied to a specific substantive area, such as cardiovascular, cancer, infectious disease, or environmental epidemiology, or health services research. *Independent Studies* completed under the direction of an Epidemiology faculty member may also be counted as electives with prior approval of the study plan from the student’s academic advisor.

Up to two elective courses may be taken S/NC. Requests for additional courses to be taken S/NC will require GPD approval. Please note completing a course S/NC will not impact your letter grade average, either positively or negatively. Students on academic warning should consult with their academic advisor before registering for a course S/NC.

Students may request that up to four related graduate/medical courses taken previously be counted toward the twelve-course requirement.
Sample Curriculum

The following is a sample progression of the core requirements during the two-year curriculum, leading to a ScM in Epidemiology:

The program expects students to enroll in 3 courses per semester, unless they have written approval by their academic advisor and the Master’s Program Director. Occasionally, and with written permission from the Graduate Program Director, students may opt to take additional courses and, in some instances, complete the degree in 3 semesters.

Semester I (Fall):
PHP 2150 – Foundations of Epidemiologic Research
PHP 2510 – Principles of Biostatistics and Data Analysis
Public Health 1001 (non-credit)
Online Graduate Student Course on SAS Data Management (non-credit)
Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) Course (non-credit)

Semester II (Spring):
PHP 2200 – Intermediate Methods in Epidemiologic Research
PHP 2511 – Applied Regression Analysis
1 Selective or Independent Study
Begin development of thesis proposal
Public Health 1001 (non-credit)

Semester III (Fall):
PHP 2030 – Clinical Trials Methodology
1 Credits of Selectives or Independent Studies
Finalize thesis proposal and begin thesis work

Semester IV (Spring):
PHP 2180 – Interpretation and Application of Epidemiology
2 Credits of Selectives or Independent Studies
Complete thesis
Bi-Annual Student Evaluations

Students are formally evaluated by their advisor and the Master’s Program Director twice per academic year. The Master’s Program Director’s role is to provide consolidated feedback to students about their performance and progress in the program. The Academic Advisor should provide specific feedback to the student based on consultation with the Master’s Program Director and conversations with the student.

Students are required to complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and submit it to the Master’s Program Director each calendar year (see Appendix D). The deadline for submission of the IDP is December 1st. Before submitting your IDP, please review responses with your academic advisor. The Department views the IDP as an important opportunity to review progress with your advisor and set academic and research goals for the coming year.

If the determination is made that a student is not making satisfactory progress, prospects for future financial support could be adversely affected and/or student enrollment in the program may be terminated. The results of the evaluation are communicated to students in a letter from the Master’s Program Director.

Academic and Thesis Advisors are strongly encouraged to contact the Master’s Program Director if there is a concern about the student’s progress or performance in order to facilitate early interventions.

Role of the Master’s Program Director: The Master’s Program Director will send an email to students at the end of the Fall semester requesting the completed Individual Development Plan (IDP) and asking if there are any concerns about the student’s progress. Students may consult with the Master’s Program Director or Graduate Program Director on confidential matters associated with advising or personal/professional matters.
In addition, if a student would like to consult with someone outside the Epidemiology department on confidential matters, the Graduate School has a website where students can obtain information on grievance procedures.
Master’s Thesis Requirements

All students working toward the Master’s of Science (ScM) degree are required to demonstrate competency in carrying out an independent research project, culminating in a written thesis that is suitable for submission to a recognized, peer-reviewed journal. While students are not required to submit their thesis manuscript for publication in a peer-review journal, they are strongly encouraged to do so. Apart from the thesis, there is no written examination requirement for the ScM degree. The master’s thesis should consist of one of the following:

1. Development of a theoretical or methodological advancement in the field of epidemiology, or

2. A critical and systematic review of a substantive issue in epidemiology, or

3. Analysis of quantitative data from existing data or quantitative data from primary data collection.

Selection of the Master’s Thesis Advisor and Reader: Students must choose their thesis advisor by the end of their second semester and submit a Proposal for the Master of Science in Epidemiology Thesis form by May 23rd of their first year (see Appendix E). Selection of a Master’s Thesis Advisor is usually dictated by the topic a student wishes to pursue. Students are encouraged to learn about faculty interests by taking classes and possibly independent reading courses, and of course by visiting faculty members in person.

Master’s Thesis Advisor and Reader(s)

The Master’s thesis advisor provides ongoing supervision and consultation for conceptualization, design, conduct, analysis, and interpretation of the research project. Selection of a master’s thesis advisor is usually dictated by the topic a student wishes to pursue. Students are encouraged to learn about faculty interests by taking classes and possibly independent studies, and by visiting faculty
members in person. The initial academic advisor may also become the
advisor for the ScM thesis; however, students may arrange to work on
their thesis under the supervision of another advisor. The thesis advisor
must be a faculty member who has an appointment (primary,
secondary, or adjunct) within the Department of Epidemiology.

In addition to the thesis advisor, the student must also select at least
one reader from among the Brown faculty. A second reader, who may
be asked to provide comment or evaluation related to a specialized
topic, is optional. The second reader does not need to be on the
Department’s faculty roster. In cases where the second reader is a
faculty member at another institution, the second reader will act in the
role of consultant, and in particular does not have approval or
disapproval authority over the final thesis. The thesis advisor and
reader(s) should be selected once the student has selected a topic,
and no later than the end of the second semester.

*The thesis advisor, with input from the reader(s), determines the
point at which the student has successfully completed the stated
research project.* The student should arrange a meeting with their
thesis committee (i.e., thesis advisor and reader(s)) early in the
development of the thesis project to clarify roles and expectations. At
that time, a schedule for submission of drafts should be agreed upon.
Some readers may want to be minimally involved, commenting only
on later drafts of the thesis. Others may want extensive involvement
during all phases of the thesis project. Regardless of process, the
thesis advisor should provide regular feedback to the student
regarding progress of the project.
Timeline for the Master of Science in Epidemiology Thesis

Master’s Thesis Timeframe

The thesis constitutes significant effort often requiring several semesters. Students should consult with their academic advisor and their thesis advisor to create an appropriate timeline for the thesis project. Students are advised to meet with their thesis advisor on a regular basis. It is important to plan a meeting schedule with the thesis advisor throughout the development of the thesis.

Students must choose their thesis advisor and submit a proposal for their thesis by May 23rd of their first year (see Appendix E).

In the second year of study, all data analyses should be completed by the end of the student’s first semester to allow time for writing and interpretation. Students must complete their thesis by March 1st for graduation in that second year.

To meet the above March 1st deadline as well as the below April 1st Graduate School deadline, students are advised to allow sufficient time to make corrections and prepare the thesis for submission to the Graduate School. This should include developing a timeline with the thesis advisor and reader to be sure that they have sufficient time to read the thesis, return comments (multiple times) and sign it prior to all deadlines.

Master’s Thesis Proposal

With guidance from their research advisor, students should write a single-spaced, 1-page “ScM Thesis Proposal.” This document should include a clearly articulated research question and succinctly summarize the: 1)
background literature and gaps related to their thesis topic, 2) the dataset they will use, and 3) the methods they will use to address their question.

The thesis proposal is due on and should be submitted to the Master’s Program Director for approval by **May 23rd** of the second semester of the first year (See Timeline for the Master of Science in Epidemiology Thesis - Appendix F)

**Oral Presentation**

As part of the thesis process, the Department requires all students to orally present their completed project, with supporting slides, during Epidemiology Master’s Research Day in the spring semester of their second year. This is a capstone experience rather than a formal defense and is scheduled by the Department Manager. Students should be prepared for this presentation after the written version of the thesis has gained at least tentative approval by the faculty advisor and reader(s), but well before the deadline for submitting the thesis to the Graduate School (**April 1**). The student and committee may collectively decide to incorporate comments offered during the oral presentation into the final version of the written thesis.

The presentation should be approximately fifteen minutes in length and is followed by ten minutes of questions and discussion. The thesis advisor and reader should attend. Presentations will be advertised to the School of Public Health community and all will be welcome to attend.

**Submitting the final version to the Graduate School**

The University Graduate School requires all master’s theses to be submitted by **April 1st** for a May graduation. Students must submit their thesis electronically. The Graduate School has compiled detailed instructions to help graduate students with the preparation and presentation of the Master’s Thesis. These instructions are located on the [Graduate School website](#).
When the thesis is presented to the Graduate School, it must be in final form. It may not be revised in any way after it is submitted.

**NOTE**: In addition to providing the Graduate School with the required number of copies of the ScM thesis, the student must also provide the Department of Epidemiology Department Manager and each committee member with an electronic copy of their thesis.

**The Graduate School requires all master's theses to be completed by April 1 for May graduation**

Please see Appendix G for a Template to Help Conceptualize and Design Thesis or Dissertation Topic Papers, a complete outline of the Timeline for the Master of Science in Epidemiology Thesis (Appendix F) and Template for Proposal for the Master of Science in Epidemiology Thesis (Appendix E).
Master’s Advising Guidelines

**Academic Advisors:** All entering master’s students are assigned an Academic Advisor from the Epidemiology faculty. The faculty member must have a primary appointment in the Department. The role of the Academic Advisor is to meet regularly with the student, provide guidance on the student’s academic and career goals, help with the selection of courses and the completion of the Individual Development Plan (IDP), identify and discuss any challenges in the graduate program, help with the identification of a thesis topic/advisor, and serve as a resource to the student for general professional development advice, mentorship, and academic advocacy. Academic Advisors will also provide the Master’s Program Director with a formal evaluation of each student and discuss this evaluation in greater detail with the student on a bi-annual basis.

Topics relevant for the evaluation may include (but are not limited to) status in academic courses, performance on exams or papers, progress towards the thesis, and professional development.

Students must meet with their Academic Advisors at least twice per semester. One meeting should occur at the beginning of the semester as an introductory meeting to plan and set goals for the semester, and one meeting should occur after the mid-point of the semester to discuss the student’s experiences and challenges and review the student’s IDP and mid-term exam results. Additional and regular contact between students and Advisor is encouraged.

Academic advisors should discuss students’ research interests during their meetings and encourage students to meet with faculty members that have relevant expertise, interests, or data that could be leveraged for the student’s thesis. In addition, advisors are strongly encouraged to discuss topics related to professional and career development with students, including advice on publishing manuscripts, the selection of appropriate journals for manuscripts, networking, and presentation skills. Students are encouraged to take the initiative to schedule appointments with advisors on a recurring basis as needed.

**NOTE:** Advisors should note that the Graduate Student Handbook a student enters the program with is the handbook that they follow for the duration of their time in the program.
**Seminars, Clubs, and Forums**

One of the priorities of the master’s program is for the ScM students to become proficient in the written and oral communication of scientific thinking. One strategy for the support and development of communication skills is the participation in the Department of Epidemiology Seminar Series, Journal Club, and Faculty Forum (see Section 6 – Information Relevant to Both ScM and PhD Students).

**Research and Teaching Opportunities for ScM Students**

We encourage ScM students to participate in research projects with department faculty. Students can assist with conducting literature reviews, fieldwork, data entry, statistical analyses, and manuscript preparation. These projects can be related to the student’s ScM thesis. In some cases, faculty may pay students to work on these projects as a research assistant (RA) on either a 10 or 20 hour per week model.

Second year ScM students may also work as paid supplemental teaching assistants (STAs) for introductory public health or epidemiology courses. Students interested in working as a STA should contact the Department Manager so they can be added to the pool of available STAs.

During a given semester, students should spend no more than 20 hours per week on activities related to their STA or RA. It is acceptable for a student to work for 10 hours per week as an RA and another 10 hours per week as a STA.

Students must be in good academic standing to be a STA or RA.

Please go to Section 6 and Appendix H for more information
Commitment to Program Diversity

The Brown University Department of Epidemiology is committed to ensuring that we admit students from diverse socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. In order to ensure that income is not a barrier to pursuing a master’s degree, we will continue to make efforts to identify and recruit under-represented master’s candidates, offer them scholarship support, and provide them with research assistantships.
4. MPH (Epidemiology Concentration) Program Guide

The MPH with a concentration in epidemiology provides advanced training at a master’s degree level in the underlying principles and practice of epidemiology for students with little or no prior graduate-level training in epidemiology. This program prepares students to work in academia, industry, or public health practice as a key member of a team who can provide expertise in epidemiologic study design or data analysis. Relative to those with masters degrees in other public health fields, those with a concentration in epidemiology are often looked to as providing quantitative expertise and the ability to interpret and apply epidemiologic data. Potential career paths after completing the epidemiology concentration are included below.

- **Research Data Manager**: acquiring, organizing, and tabulating information from clinical research studies, public health programs, or other population research activities for statistical analysis

- **Clinical Research Coordinator**: managing the recruitment of study participants, coordinating data collection through interviews, clinical examinations, or biospecimens, hiring and supervising study staff, managing study budgets

- **Data Analyst**: creating tables and graphical presentations of research or public health data, performing and interpreting statistical analyses of the data

- **Staff Epidemiologist**: collecting published information on health conditions of interest, descriptive data, risk factors, and preventive measures, advising on various applications of epidemiologic data

- **Syndromic Surveillance Epidemiologist**: support department of health by performing public health surveillance; designing, developing, and producing datasets, reports, and data visualizations; assisting with efforts to model outbreaks;
developing, validating, and utilizing advanced analytical tools including text mining and machine learning to improve surveillance practice

- **Observational Research Manager**: Within a pharmaceutical company execute and manage descriptive epidemiologic studies to characterize the incidence or prevalence of disease; execute and manage research projects involving the analysis of multiple types of data including medical claims, electronic health records and prospective observational cohort studies; and provide safety research across the life cycle of pharmaceutical products.

- **Analytical Epidemiologist**: As a member of a consulting firm, provide consulting services focused on supporting the analytical planning, execution, and dissemination of health and healthcare data for government agencies; be responsible for data management, analysis design, application of epidemiological methods, statistical programming; and assist with monitoring and assessing data integrity and accuracy.

- **Pursue a PhD or MD**: PhD may be in epidemiology or related public health field, including environmental health, global health, health services, etc.

The Epidemiology concentration is administered through the MPH program. For comprehensive information regarding the MPH Epidemiology concentration and to view the MPH student handbook, please visit the following website: [https://www.brown.edu/academics/public-health/mph/curriculum](https://www.brown.edu/academics/public-health/mph/curriculum). For questions about the MPH programs, admissions, or funding, please contact Joann Barao at joann_barao@brown.edu.

The information below provides details on the MPH Epidemiology concentration curriculum and provides details on thesis requirements that are specific to the Epidemiology concentration.
Curriculum Requirements for the MPH with a Concentration in Epidemiology:

To receive the MPH degree at Brown, students are required to successfully complete fourteen courses (12 full credit courses and two half credit courses) and complete an internship* and a thesis. Full-time students typically take 6.5 courses/year. Students pursuing the MPH with a concentration in Epidemiology are specifically required to complete the following courses and non-credit activities:

*Note: As the MPH internship requirement is not tied to the specific concentrations, the Epidemiology concentration has no additional requirements or specifications regarding the internship. Please see the MPH handbook for internship guidelines.

Required Courses
- All of the following 6 core courses*:
  - PHP2150 – Foundations in Epidemiologic Research Methods
    (Full credit course offered every year)
  - PHP2510 – Principles of Biostatistics and Data Analysis
    (Full credit course offered every year)
  - PHP2511 – Introduction to Applied Regression Analysis
    (Full credit course offered every year)
  - PHP2071 – Applied Public Health: Systems and Practice
    (Half credit course offered every year)
  - PHP2072 - Applied Public Health: Policy, Leadership and Communication
    (Half credit course offered every other year)
  - PHP2355 – Designing and Evaluating Public Health Interventions
    (Full credit course offered every year)
- All of the following 5 concentration courses:
  - PHP2200 – Intermediate Methods in Epidemiologic Research
    (Full credit course offered every year)
  - PHP2180 – Interpretation and Application of Epidemiology
    (Full credit course offered every year)
o PHP2260 – Applied Epidemiologic Data Analysis
   (Full credit course offered every year)
o 1 full credit methods course chosen from the following list**
   (Course may be offered every year or every other year):
   - PHP1560/2560 – Statistical Programming in R
   - PHP1895 – Mindfulness Epidemiology***
   - PHP2030 – Clinical Trials Methodology
   - PHP2040 – Survey Research Methods
   - PHP2118 – Genomics Epidemiology
   - PHP2220B - Nutritional Epidemiology***
   - PHP2250 – Advanced Quantitative Methods in Epidemiologic Research
   - PHP2440 - Introduction to Pharmacoepidemiology
   - PHP2455A – Health Services Research Methods I
   - PHP2465A – Introduction to Health Decision Analysis
   - PHP2515 – Fundamentals of Probability and Statistical Inference
   - PHP2530 – Bayesian Statistical Methods
   - PHP2550 – Practical Data Analysis
   - PHP2602 – Analysis of Lifetime Data
   - PHP2610 – Causal Inference and Missing Data
   - PHP2620 – Statistical Methods in Bioinformatics I
   - PHP2650 – Statistical Learning and Big Data

o 1 full-credit substantive course at the 1000 or 2000 level chosen so that the student
will develop greater knowledge of human biology or expertise in applying
epidemiologic methods to substantive areas (e.g., cardiovascular disease, cancer,
infectious diseases, or environmental health). Substantive courses may be offered
every year or every other year. The below list includes example substantive courses
that would meet this requirement. However, other courses may meet this
requirement as well.
   - PHP2130 – Human Biology for Public Health
   - PHP1854 - Infectious Disease Epidemiology
   - PHP2220H – HIV Epidemiology
   - PHP1895 – Mindfulness Epidemiology***
- PHP1900H – Racial/Ethnic-, Socioeconomic-, and other Group-based Health Disparities in the United States
- PHP1920 – Social Determinants of Health
- PHP1964 – Cancer Epidemiology
- PHP2108 – Epidemiology of Cardio-Metabolic Health
- PHP2118 – Nutritional Epidemiology***
- PHP2220F – Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology
- PHP2220D – Reproductive Epidemiology
- PHP2222E – Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology
- 3 full-credit selective courses at the 1000 or 2000 level that are different from the 5 selected concentration courses****. Selective courses may be offered every year or every other year.

Non-credit activities (to be completed by the end of the first semester after enrollment):
- PHP1001 - Foundations in Public Health
- CITI Training
- IRB Basics
- Semester One Core Advisor Small Group Sessions
- Online course offered by the SAS Institute
  - SAS Programming 1: Essentials

Non-credit activities (to be completed by the end of the second semester after enrollment):
- Online course offered by the SAS Institute
  - SAS Programming 2: Data Management

Non-credit activities (to be completed each semester):
- Epidemiology Student Journal Club* (See note below and page for more details)
- Department of Epidemiology Seminar series
- Lunch with Epidemiology Concentration Lead

* MPH students are not required to be Journal Club Student Director(s) or Student Facilitator(s); however they should come to journal club having read the discussion materials and with 2-3 questions to share during the breakout group discussion.
*If a student completes PHP2120 or PHP2507 or PHP2507 & PHP2508 before deciding on the Epidemiology Concentration, the student must meet with the Epidemiology Concentration Lead and the MPH Program Director to request that PHP2120 or PHP2507 or PHP2507 & PHP2508 meet(s) the relevant core requirement(s). Based on an assessment of the student’s background, course performance, and knowledge base and other Department of Epidemiology requirements, PHP2120 or PHP2507 or PHP2507 & PHP2508 may be able to substitute.

**1 full-credit methods course requirement can also be met by taking both of the following half credit methods courses: PHP2516 – Applied Longitudinal Data Analysis and PHP2517 – Applied Multilevel Data Analysis.**

***Can be used as either a substantive or methods course, but cannot count towards both.

****1 of the required 3 full-credit selective courses can be PHP2516 – Applied Longitudinal Data Analysis (half credit course) plus PHP2517 – Applied Multilevel Data Analysis (half credit course).

Overview of Introductory Methods Classes Offered by the Department of Epidemiology at the Brown University School of Public Health

The Department of Epidemiology offers the 3 following introductory methods classes:

**PHP0850 (Fundamentals of Epidemiology).** Undergraduate introductory course. Required of all undergraduate public health concentrators. This course is aimed towards juniors and seniors who have completed prior coursework and/or who have a strong interest in public health methods.

This is an introductory course relevant for those who have not yet taken an epidemiology class. Successful completion of PHP 0320 (Introduction to Public Health) is a prerequisite. This course will provide students with a strong foundation in basic epidemiologic concepts and methods to describe the occurrence of infectious and chronic diseases and study their etiologies. How to interpret epidemiologic evidence to inform public health policy and practice will be emphasized throughout the course. Lectures are reinforced with problem-based discussion groups throughout the semester.
**PHP2120 (Introduction to Methods in Epidemiologic Research).** Graduate-level, terminal course. Required of 5th year Masters students, general MPH students and some PhD students.

This course is designed for graduate students who are planning a career in public health but who may not see their primary interest in epidemiological methods. Thus, the course is designed as preparation for a professional career in public health (i.e., ‘consumers’ of epidemiological research, rather than ‘producers’ per se). The focus is on understanding epidemiological methods, applying them to a variety of settings and becoming conversant in critical reading of the epidemiological literature. The emphasis is on the application of basic epidemiological methods and concepts and interpretation of findings from epidemiological studies.

**PHP2150 (Foundations in Epidemiologic Research Methods).** Graduate-level, advanced introductory methods course. Required of PhD Epi students, Epi ScM students, MPH students who concentrate in Epi, and some other doctoral programs in public health.

This more advanced introductory epidemiological methods class is intended for students who are planning to pursue a career in epidemiology (e.g., ‘producers’ of epidemiology) or closely related disciplines (e.g., health policy, behavioral science). It is the first class in the sequence of epidemiological methods classes required of Epi PhD and Epi ScM students and MPH students who concentrate in Epi. Other students often elect to take some or all the subsequent courses in the Epi methods sequence (PHP2200, PHP2250, PHP2180). Many (but not all) students who take PHP2150 will have already taken a basic introductory epidemiology course. The goal of PHP2150 is to provide a solid foundation in core epi methods that will be built upon in subsequent courses in the sequence. The course delves deeply into theory and principles behind epi methods, focusing on causal inference.
Required activities for MPH students who have decided to declare the Epi concentration after they have taken PHP2120 (Introduction to Methods in Epidemiologic Research)

The epidemiology methods sequence that is designed for the Epidemiology master’s (i.e., ScM and MPH) and doctoral students includes PHP2150 (Foundations in Epidemiologic Research Methods), followed by PHP2200 (Intermediate Methods in Epidemiologic Research). However, the curriculum is designed such that it may be possible for MPH students who decide to declare the Epi concentration after taking PHP2120 (Introduction in Epidemiologic Research) to enroll in PHP2200 (Intermediate Methods in Epidemiologic Research) to meet the MPH in Epi degree requirements (MPH students who declare the Epi concentration must enroll in PHP2200).

Given that PHP2150 is a more advanced introduction to epidemiological methods than PHP2120, prior to enrolling in PHP2200, the following activities must be completed.


4. Receive approval from the Epidemiology Concentration Lead and the MPH Program Director for PHP2120 to substitute for PHP2150.

5. Meet with the instructor of PHP2200 at least two weeks before the start of classes to ensure that other gaps in knowledge have been addressed.
Additional Thesis Requirements for the MPH Epidemiology Concentration:
(Please review the MPH thesis requirements in the MPH program handbook.)

1. The thesis advisor or the thesis reader must be a primary, secondary, or adjunct faculty member of the epidemiology department.
2. Students must add a sentence or two to the project description portion of their thesis proposal that explains the scientific rationale for the selected thesis reader or thesis advisor who is not an affiliated faculty member within the epidemiology department (if applicable).
3. The thesis must be disseminated to a public health audience in writing. Examples of broad dissemination include:
   - Submit thesis work as a manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal
   - Submit thesis work as an abstract to a conference
   - Submit thesis work as an abstract to the SPH Public Health Research Day
   - Thesis work is posted on a partner website (e.g. as a report, or a data or policy brief)
4. The thesis must be disseminated to a public health audience via an oral or poster presentation. Examples of broad dissemination include:
   - Present thesis work as an oral or poster presentation at a conference
   - Present thesis work as part of an oral invited talk
   - Present thesis work as part of a poster presentation at the SPH Public Health Research Day (during spring semester)
   - Present thesis work as an oral or poster presentation given in a public forum or at an appropriate organizational meeting for a public health organization
   - Present thesis work as part of oral testimony before a government body
   - Students completing their degree for October or February for whom the SPH Public Health Research Day is not an option may present their thesis work as part of a poster presentation to be given simultaneously for the thesis reader, thesis advisor, and concentration lead (during the fall semester)
5. PhD Program Guide

Program Description

The Doctoral Program in Epidemiology’s mission is to prepare students to become leading, independent investigators with rigorous training in epidemiologic methods, able to excel in academia, industry, government or public health practice. All students in the Doctoral Program in Epidemiology are required to demonstrate mastery of advanced epidemiologic methods, which is assessed via coursework and examinations.

Upon completion of the PhD program, students are expected to have proficiency in the following areas: 1) Develop a strong foundation in contemporary approaches to epidemiologic methods, and major observational study designs; 2) Design a research study that can appropriately and efficiently examine an epidemiologic research question of interest; write and submit a proposal to support this research; 3) Use causal diagrams to identify threats to study validity and potential approaches to mitigating such threats; 4) Conduct appropriate analyses of epidemiologic data using standard regression models in SAS or R; 5) Distinguish between association and causation based on counterfactual theory to make causal inference using data obtained from observational studies; 6) Represent a priori subject-matter knowledge and hypotheses with causal diagrams; 7) Understand the difference between effect modification and interaction; 8) Learn to interpret and integrate multiple lines of scientific evidence concerning a particular topic of importance to the field of epidemiology; 9) Effective communication of scientific findings; 10) Demonstrate a basic understanding of human physiology and pathophysiology; 11) Demonstrate mastery of a substantive area; 12) Review, critically analyze and synthesize existing epidemiologic literature to identify meaningful gaps in current knowledge and formulate research objectives; 13) Strong understanding of what scientific misconduct is and the impact unethical conduct can cause within and outside of the research community.
Coursework

All students in the PhD program in Epidemiology are required to take 13 courses for credit, including 9 core courses, 2 or more methods selective courses, and 2 or more substantive selective courses. Each of these courses must be taken for credit and for a grade. PhD students are also required to: a) take PHP1001, an online, noncredit introductory course b) take a noncredit online introductory course on SAS data management, c) participate in the journal club series (course credit optional), and d) take the noncredit Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) course.

Specifically, students pursuing a PhD in Epidemiology are required to take the following:

Core Courses:

**PHP 2150** – Foundations in Epidemiologic Research Methods  
**PHP 2200** – Intermediate Methods in Epidemiologic Research  
**PHP 2250** – Advanced Quantitative Methods for Epidemiologic Research  
**PHP 2180** – Interpretation and Application of Epidemiology  
**PHP 2510** – Principles of Biostatistics and Data Analysis  
**PHP 2511** – Applied Regression Analysis  
**PHP 2090** – Research Grant Writing for Public Health  
**PHP 2130** – Human Biology for Epidemiology

In addition, doctoral students are required to take the following non-credit courses during the first semester:

Public Health 1001

The School of Public Health has developed an on-line, non-credit, modular course covering the scope of public health (Public Health 101) to meet the requirements of the accrediting organization for the School
of Public Health (i.e., The Council on Education for Public Health).
Students are required to receive instruction in the breadth of public health, in addition to having the equivalent of a three credit-hour instruction in epidemiology. There is no charge for the on-line course. As of Fall 2015, students in the MPH and the undergraduate Public Health concentration will receive the necessary broad scope of content in their courses, and thus are NOT required to complete PHP 1001. All other non-MPH graduate students are required to take the online course. The course presents one module at a time; three in the Fall and three in the Spring semester. Each module is made up of 3-5 sessions, each created by a Brown faculty member. Modules are set up to run for one scheduled week per session, during which the faculty member for that session will be available for questions using an online discussion. However, students can complete the module at their own pace, though faculty will not be available outside of their scheduled week. Students in a degree program that is represented by a module do not complete that specific module (e.g. Epidemiology students will not be required to take the epidemiology module). If a student can document that they have either or both of these two requirements from previous coursework, a waiver can be granted at the discretion of the degree program.

**Online Graduate Student Course on SAS Data Management**

Two online courses offered by the SAS Institute will be required. SAS Programming 1: Essentials is designed as a basic introduction to SAS and must be completed by the end of the first term by all students unless a waiver is obtained from the GPD. The emphasis is on data management (including how to read in different types of data, formatting, and creating variables) and, programming univariate comparisons.

The topics for the second SAS course include more advanced data management, including do loops and arrays, as well as summarizing,
reading, and writing different types of data. The online learning is self-paced, but students are encouraged to start the training early in the first semester. Epidemiology courses offered during the second term will assume the online SAS courses have been completed and that the students understand the material in the training.

**Research Ethics Training in the School of Public Health (RCR Training)** All first-year doctoral students in the School of Public Health are required to successfully complete “Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) Training.” This five-week introduction to the scope and complexity of ethical situations that confront modern public health practitioners is led by the School’s Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Melissa Clark). Training covers multiple topics including: the context and history of ethical research practices within public health; research misconduct; the peer review process and its purpose; publication practices and responsible authorship; practical and ethical issues in human-subjects research; data acquisition, storage, and privacy; use of electronic resources; recognizing and navigating conflicts of interest; the mentoring relationship and associated responsibilities of mentors and trainees; and societal impact of public health research. Discussion of the ethics of diversity is incorporated to convey an appreciation for the fact that differences of race, culture, age, gender, disability, and religion can affect the conduct and interpretation of research. The training includes presentations, short illustrative films specific to public health research issues, and small group discussion of hypothetical and real scenarios drawn from current literature and the news media. Supplemental materials and homework assignments are provided through the Collaborative Institutional Review Board Training Initiative (CITI) program online system. School of Public Health faculty and University staff from the Office of Vice President for Research and Research Administration participate as presenters and
discussants along with students.

Successful completion of this course includes attendance at all meetings and passing the written final examination.

This course can be accessed through Brown University’s Canvas site.

Additionally, all students may continue their training after the first year by attending relevant lectures and discussion sessions sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research.
Students must also take 2 or more of the following methods selective courses (note, not all courses will be offered each year):

Students are encouraged to seek diversity in their epidemiologic and biostatistical methods training, in line with their career goals. The following courses have been approved to be counted as methods courses for PhD Epidemiology students. See the key below for exceptions and specifications.

PHP 1560/2560 – Statistical Programming in R \(^1+2\)
PHP 1895 - Mindfulness Epidemiology
PHP 2030 –Clinical Trials Methodology
PHP 2040 – Applied Research Methods
PHP 2180 – Interpretation and Application of Epidemiology \(^3\)
PHP 2220B - Nutritional Epidemiology
PHP 2250 – Advanced Quantitative Methods in Epidemiologic Research \(^3\)
PHP 2260 – Applied Epidemiologic Analysis Using SAS \(^2+4\)
PHP 2430 – Analysis of Population Based Datasets \(^2+4\)
PHP 2440 - Introduction to Pharmacoepidemiology*
PHP 2455A – Health Services Research Methods I \(^5\)
PHP 2455B – Health Services Research Methods II \(^5\)
PHP 2465A – Introduction to Health Decision Analysis
PHP 2520 – Statistical Inference I
PHP 2530 – Bayesian Statistical Methods
PHP 2550 – Practical Data Analysis \(^2+4\)
PHP 2601 – Linear and Generalized Linear Models
PHP 2602 – Analysis of Lifetime Data
PHP 2610 – Causal Inference and Missing Data
PHP 2620 – Statistical Methods in Bioinformatics I
PhD students must enroll in PHP2560. ScM students may enroll in either PHP1560 or PHP2560.

2 ScM students may only count one of these courses as a methods selective.

3 Required for PhD students and will not count as methods selective.

4 PhD students may only count one of these courses as a methods selective.

5 Students are encouraged to take PHP2250 prior to or concurrently with either PHP2455A or PHP2455B. Students are discouraged from taking both PHP2455B and PHP2610.

Additional methods selectives will be approved at the discretion of the department Curriculum Committee. Students wishing to have a course approved as a methods selective should consult with their advisor. With support of the advisor, the student should then forward a copy of the course’s syllabus and a brief rationale for taking the course as a methods selective to the Curriculum Committee for review and possible approval. Requests should be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the semester that the course will be offered.
Students must also take 2 or more of the following substantive selective courses (note, not all courses will be offered each year):

PHP 1700 – Introduction to Environmental Health
PHP 1854 – The Epidemiology and Control of Infectious Diseases
PHP 1880 – Meditation, Mindfulness, and Health
PHP 1900 – Epidemiology of Disorders and Diseases of Childhood and Young Adulthood
PHP 1920 – Social Determinants of Health
PHP 1960 – Epidemiology of Chronic Disease
PHP 1964 – Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention
PHP 2018 – The Epidemiology of Cardio-metabolic Health
PHP 2170 – Injury as a Public Health Problem
PHP 2220F – Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology
PHP 2220E – Topics in Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology
PHP 2220H – Epidemiology, Treatment and Prevention of HIV
PHP 2440 - Introduction to Pharmacoepidemiology*
PHP 2371 Psychosocial and Pharmacologic Treatment of Substance Use Disorders

*Can be used as both a substantive or methods selective, but cannot count towards both.

The purpose of these selective courses is to provide additional knowledge and expertise in epidemiologic content areas, that is, related to the diagnosis of diseases and characterization of health states, distribution, and mechanisms. In addition to the above lists of approved substantive selective courses, students may propose alternative selective courses offered by other graduate departments at Brown University. For example, where relevant to a student’s thesis work or career goals, doctoral students may obtain permission (from their advisor and the Graduate Program Director) to count the following towards the substantive selective course requirements, as appropriate (the courses listed below are examples, other courses can be requested):
BIOL 2860 – Molecular Mechanisms of Disease
BIOL 1290 – Cancer Biology
BIOL 2320 – Current Topics in Developmental Biology
NEUR 1670 – Neuropharmacology and Synaptic Transmission
ECON 1630 – Econometrics I
ECON 1370 – Race and Inequality in the United States

**Students wishing to have an alternative course approved as a substantive selective should consult with their advisor.** With support of the advisor, the student should then forward a copy of the course’s syllabus and a brief rationale for taking the course as a substantive selective to the Curriculum Committee for review and possible approval. Requests should be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the semester that the course will be offered.

Based upon individual interests, students may take more than the minimum number of required and elective courses. Students may also register for independent study courses under the guidance of individual faculty members. These may be directly related to their work toward completion of their doctoral dissertation or may be taken early in their graduate student career as they work towards identifying a dissertation area and specific project.
Sample Curriculum

The following is a sample curriculum for the program leading to a PhD in Epidemiology:

Semester I (Fall):

PHP 2150 – Foundations in Epidemiologic Research Methods
PHP 2510 – Principles of Biostatistics and Data Analysis
1. Selective
Teaching Assistantship or Research Assistantship
Public Health 1001 (non-credit)
2 Online SAS training courses
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course (non-credit)

Semester II (Spring):

PHP 2200 – Intermediate Methods in Epidemiologic Research
PHP 2511 – Applied Regression Analysis
Teaching Assistantship or Research Assistantship
Public Health 1001 (non-credit)

Semester III (Fall):

PHP 2090 – Research Grant Writing for Public Health
PHP 2250 – Advanced Quantitative Methods for Epidemiologic Research
1 Selective
Teaching Assistantship or Research Assistantship

Semester IV (Spring):

PHP 2130 – Human Biology for Epidemiology
PHP 2180 – Interpretation and Application of Epidemiology
Selective Teaching Assistantship or Research Assistantship
Submit external funding application (e.g., NIH NSRAF31)

At end of this semester students take a written qualifying exam in Epidemiolog
Semester V: 1 Selective TE for credit
Research Assistantship

Oral Dissertation Proposal Exam by end of semester

Subsequent semesters:

PHP 2980 – Independent Study/Thesis Research

Additional electives (if necessary, to complete required 13 courses)
Written Qualifying Exams

Students are required to pass a written qualifying exam, which tests their knowledge on intermediate and advanced Epidemiology. For full-time students the qualifying exam is taken at the end of the fourth semester (June). Faculty from the appropriate track will write and grade the examination. The Epidemiology comprehensive exam will cover material from all classes required for Epidemiology doctoral students and typically completed by the end of the 4th semester. Following the grading process, the faculty within each track meet to discuss each student’s performance and collectively decide on a recommendation.

The recommendations will ordinarily be communicated to students within two weeks. These take four forms: high pass, full pass, conditional pass, and no pass. Students who earn at least a full pass on all portions of the required written examination are eligible to begin the dissertation process (identifying a dissertation advisor, preparing thesis proposal, etc.) Students who earn a conditional pass may also be eligible to begin the dissertation process, but may be required to remedy any stated deficiencies (e.g. through directed self-study or re-taking parts of the exam). Students who do not pass the written examination on the first attempt have one additional opportunity to earn a pass.

Those who elect to re-take the exam must do so within one year. A cumulative total of two failures (on any portion of the written examination) results in immediate termination from the doctoral program.

A sample of previous written examinations for each academic track can be obtained from the Department Manager in the Department of Epidemiology.
Research Assistantships

Master’s students in Epidemiology may participate in RAships in a variety of on and off campus settings, including Research Centers within the School of Public Health, the Rhode Island Department of Health, and clinical departments at Brown-affiliated hospitals. A RAship is an integral part of the student’s training program. The Epidemiology Master’s Program Director will identify possible RA options. There is no guarantee for RAships, but the Master’s Program Director will try to identify possibilities. Students must be in good academic standing to be a RA.

The RA advisor is responsible for supervising and directing the student’s work during the term of the appointment. The RA advisor is responsible for coordinating, scheduling, and keeping appropriate documentation of the RA’s activity; this is a particularly important function on large projects where the RA may be working with several different faculty and staff members. The advisor also will be solicited for formal feedback as part of the twice-yearly evaluation of students.

For more detail on RAships please go to Section 6 and Appendix I
Teaching Requirements

PhD students are required to develop experience and expertise in teaching. This is accomplished by: (a) serving as a Teaching Assistant in a course taught by departmental faculty for at least one semester, (b) completing the New Teaching Assistants Orientation conducted by The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning prior to the start of the Teaching Assistantship, and (c) completing a Teaching Experience (for credit). Students must be in good academic standing to be a TA.

A Teaching Assistantship (TAship) for doctoral students is 20 hours per week. It is typically fulfilled in the third or fourth semester, and replaces the RAship for that semester. Although specific responsibilities are at the discretion of the course instructor, typical TA roles include: grading and marking, holding office hours, developing midterms and finals, running tutorials or lab sessions, and facilitating class discussions.

The second Teaching Experience (TE) is done as a registered course, with a service expectation of up to 10 hours per week, and with no payment in addition to the student’s regular support. Although specific responsibilities are at the discretion of the course instructor, typical TE roles include delivering a guest lecture, contributing to lesson plans, participating in syllabus development, mentoring students, holding office hours, and other pedagogical activities.

TAs are identified through the following process:

1. We identify eligible courses for TAs, prioritizing (1) large course enrollment, and (2) core Epidemiology and Environmental Health courses. We typically have 3-4 available TAs per year.

2. Eligible course instructors are asked to rank the eligible TAs in terms of who would be best equipped to support the course.
3. The Graduate Program Director assigns the eligible TAs, with the approval of the Department chair, emphasizing optimal fit for the TAs to the course topic areas and instructors.

TEs are identified through an identical process as above, recognizing TEs are able to dedicate fewer hours per week than TAs (10 vs. 20 hours), and have greater responsibilities to develop their teaching experience, such as contributing to course/syllabus development, mentoring by instructors on teaching techniques, along with opportunities for providing guest lecture(s) and grading.

Students are encouraged to participate in other teaching activities during their study at Brown, for example, by giving guest lectures during the semester in a departmental course. However, these activities cannot be used to fulfill the teaching requirement.

Although the program requires a minimum of one semester as a TA and one semester as a TE, students may serve more than one semester for each experience.

Department of Epidemiology TA/TE/STA Guidelines can be found in Appendix J.
Below are some resources the Sheridan Center offers TAs:

**New TA Orientation to Teaching at Brown**

In conjunction with the Graduate School, the Sheridan Center offers an orientation for first-time Teaching Assistants. Designed to complement departmental TA training, the orientation features:

- an introduction to TA'ing at Brown by the Dean of the Graduate School,
- a panel discussion with experienced TAs
- hands-on, interactive workshops on inclusive teaching for the first days of class
- breakout sessions on writing, problem-solving, and grading

2. In conjunction with these orientations, the Center offers a certificate and workshop series addressing instructional strategies and preparing for the academic job market. See the Sheridan Center calendar for this year’s dates and topics.

3. They also have learning and teaching resources on their website.
**English Proficiency Requirement**

Students whose native language is not English must be evaluated and certified for English proficiency before serving as a Teaching Assistant. English language assessments are done by appointment only at the [Center for Language Studies](#).

Students should contact Jill Stewart, at the Center for Language Studies early to schedule an English proficiency evaluation. This office handles the confirmation of English proficiency, which is required within the first year of graduate studies. If a student's command of spoken English does not meet this proficiency, the student must enroll in the appropriate ESL course(s) recommended.

**Sheridan Center New Teaching Assistants Orientation**

In conjunction with the Graduate School, the Sheridan Center offers an orientation for first-time Teaching Assistants. Designed to complement departmental TA training, the orientation introduces new TAs to the Brown curriculum and to teaching resources available on campus, and provides participants with the opportunity to discuss their roles and responsibilities as TAs with experienced TAs and with faculty. Students may choose from 1 of 3 workshops (pending availability):

- **Preparing for the First Days of Class**: Facilitated by Sheridan Head Teaching Consultants, this workshop explores inclusive teaching techniques, ways to generate student enthusiasm for the subject matter, and strategies for increasing confidence in the classroom.

- **Responding to Student Writing**: Facilitated by Sheridan Teaching Consultants, this workshop features hands-on practice in responding to and commenting on student writing, as well as a discussion of strategies for supporting student writing as a process.

- **Feedback and Grading in STEM Courses**: Facilitated by
Sheridan Teaching Consultants, this workshop discusses the differences between types of feedback (summative and formative), ways to provide feedback to students, and strategies for challenges encountered when giving feedback.

Students should register as soon as their TA assignment is made by the Graduate Program Director, as workshops fill up quickly.

**Sheridan Center Certificate Programs**

The Sheridan Center offers intensive certificate programs in which participants develop and reflect on their teaching practice in order to support diverse learners. These cross-disciplinary programs are open to Brown graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and staff. Enrollment for all programs is limited and registration is required. Completion of The Sheridan Teaching Seminar (Certificate I) is a prerequisite for all other certificate programs. These programs are not required, but are an option available to interested students.

For more information, including dates, times, and how to register for Teaching Assistant Orientation or Certificate Programs, please go to
**Grant Writing Requirement**

Over their first summer, students are expected to devote 20 hours per week to their RAship (see Section 6), and 15-20 hours per week to developing their dissertation project and developing specific aims for an external fellowship or grant. Using skills they learn in PHP 2090, which they take during the 3rd semester, students are expected to continue grant writing, with the goal of submitting a grant application at the end of the third semester, or during the fourth semester (depending on deadlines for differing submission opportunities).

**Dissertation Defense Requirements, Guidelines, and Timeline**

Students are expected to defend their thesis after 8-10 semesters in the doctoral program. Here is what you need to know to plan your dissertation defense and navigate your degree completion with the department, the Graduate School, and the Registrar's Office:

- If you plan to defend during the Fall Semester, you must complete all required paperwork with the Graduate School before the first day of the Spring Semester in order to avoid being charged for Semester II. The Graduate School may grant a 30-day courtesy extension for you to complete all paperwork. If you think you might require this extra time, please contact the Department Manager.

- To graduate in May, you must defend and complete all required paperwork with the Graduate School by **April 1**.
• Students must meet with the Department Manager in the beginning of the semester of defending to schedule a room and time.

**Before your defense (at least 3-4 weeks prior):**

• Visit the Graduate School’s [Dissertation Guidelines](#) page for all of the information you will need to complete the process. You will find links to the EDT system as well as guidelines and samples of relevant documents there.

• Coordinate with your committee to arrange possible dates/times for your defense.

• Complete the Dissertation Defense Information Form (located in the Appendix N of your handbook) and submit to the Department Manager. Submitting this form at least two weeks prior to your scheduled defense will allow enough time for processing your paperwork before your defense.

**The day of your defense:**

• The Graduate School will send a copy of the Thesis Signature Page to the Department Manager in advance of your defense. The Department Manager will give it to the defense committee chair in advance of the defense for the committees’ signatures.

• The Department Manager will bring the Graduate School generated paperwork to the defense. There is a second necessary form for your committee to sign called the “Votes for Recommending Form” or “Aye/Nay”. Your committee should sign this form and the Thesis Signature Page and return them to the Department Manager at the completion of your defense. These forms need to be signed and added to your file, before
being sent to the Graduate School. Digital electronic signatures will now be accepted.

**Following your defense** — important things to do. (Please note students who have successfully defended can now obtain their diplomas three times a year as outlined in the below Commencement section): (before start of Semester II for Fall completion OR April 1 for Spring completion):

- Complete all checklist items referenced on the [Graduate School’s website](#1-5 under Submission of the Final Copy). Contact [Barbara Bennett](mailto:barbara.bennett@graduateschool.edu) at the Graduate School to determine if all steps have been completed so that she can clear you for completion.

- Return your department laptop and submit a completed Epidemiology Exit Survey to the Department Manager.

- Your Brown electronic services will continue until August. Check out the email forwarding and other services available to you through the [Brown Alumni Association](mailto:alumni@brownalumni.org).

**Commencement:**

Graduate degree students can obtain their degree in advance of the traditional May Commencement Ceremony. Graduate students who have completed their degree requirements during the Summer term can apply to graduate and have their degree conferred on the last Sunday in October.

Graduate students who have completed their degree requirements during the Fall term can apply to graduate and have their degree conferred on the second Sunday in February.
There is no ceremonial commencement in October or February. Graduates can pick up their diplomas at the Office of the Registrar the week after conferral. After that time diplomas will be mailed to them. October and February graduates are listed in the May Commencement Bulletin and are welcome to bring their diploma covers and participate in Commencement in May.

Anyone planning to receive a degree in May must, by April 1:

- Complete theApplication to Graduate found in Banner Web.
- Register with the Graduate School for Commencement (even if not planning to attend).
- Order regalia through the Brown Bookstore (if planning to attend).

To find links to the above tasks as well as all of the information you need about Commencement, please visit both the Graduate School's Commencement page and the University’s Commencement page, paying particular attention to theFor Graduate Students section.

Other Resources:

Thesis Binding Service offered through the Brown University Library.
Academic Advising Structure

At the time of admission into the program, each student is assigned an academic faculty advisor. During the first two years of study, the academic advisor assists the student in planning for meeting degree requirements and objectives, and to assist in the process of course selection. The advisor is expected to be familiar with the student’s academic background, particularly with respect to previous graduate coursework. The assignment of an academic advisor is made by the Graduate Program Director.

The process of selecting a dissertation advisor takes place after the first two years, once a student has passed the written qualifying exams. The academic advisor and research mentor serve during the first two years, while the dissertation advisor oversees the student’s thesis research.

Either the academic advisor or the initial research mentor may eventually serve in the role of dissertation advisor, but this is not always the case. The process of selecting a dissertation advisor is initiated by the student, and is described further below.

Students should plan to meet with their academic advisor at least two to three times per semester. In the initial meetings with the academic advisor, students should try to plan a curricular program for up to two years. It is not necessary that this initial plan be adhered to throughout the two year period, but it gives a rough outline of courses to be taken and milestones to be met.

The advising relationship is an important one, and students should be comfortable with their advisor. It is understood that in some cases an individual student may wish to change academic advisors. This can be done any time by request to the Graduate Program Director. It is expected that if any problems or conflicts arise, students will discuss these first with their academic advisor, but may also contact the Graduate Program Director.
Selecting a Dissertation Chair/Advisor

Students enrolled in the PhD program must pass their written examination prior to selecting a dissertation chair and committee and progressing to the oral examination. However, we encourage students to learn about the research interests of various faculty members to gather information about prospective advisors well in advance of completion of the written exams.

Any member of the graduate faculty with an appointment in the Department of Epidemiology may serve as a doctoral dissertation advisor. A listing of graduate faculty may be found on the faculty website.

We recommend the following guidelines when selecting a dissertation advisor:

1. Ask someone who has experience in the area you are interested in studying
2. Ask someone who is able to make a commitment to be your mentor. Clarify expectations from the beginning with this person in terms of time and substance. Students who have established ongoing relationships with their advisors as Research and/or Teaching Assistants may have more opportunity for mentoring.

Your initial academic advisor may assist you in the process of doctoral advisor selection.

Your advisor provides ongoing supervision and consultation for the conceptualization, design, conduct, analysis and interpretation of the research project. Most advisors will engage you in scientific activities beyond your thesis, for example, presenting talks at university seminars and scientific meetings, assisting with manuscript reviews, and collaborating on other research projects.

Students in the doctoral program are required to successfully complete the written qualifying examination and the oral qualifying examination that is conducted in conjunction with the presentation and approval of
their thesis proposal. Eligibility for writing a doctoral thesis (or, entering “candidacy”) is based on successfully completing a written examination and oral examination.

Composition, Selection and Function of the Dissertation Committee

Students should begin the process of selecting members for the dissertation committee as soon as the written qualifying exams have been successfully completed, or sooner. The minimum size of a doctoral committee is three faculty members. More members may be preferable to have a balance of expertise representing substantive and methodological aspects of the thesis plan. On the other hand, more than four members may become administratively complicated and challenging for the student who may feel compelled to respond to differing advice.

The committee must include two graduate faculty members from the student’s degree program, one of whom has a primary appointment in the Department of Epidemiology. The third member can be affiliated with another department, but must be a Brown faculty member. It is advisable to include a faculty member from the Department of Biostatistics or another faculty member with expertise as a quantitative methodologist.

Additional committee members from other institutions may also be included. Final composition of the committee must be communicated to the Graduate Program Director and Department Chair and approved before the oral examination of your thesis proposal (see Dissertation Committee Confirmation Form in Appendix K).

Students should discuss selection of committee members with their advisors.

Although interactions with committee members will vary considerably by individual, the minimal expectation of the committee is to evaluate and provide feedback at regular intervals during the preparation of the dissertation. Thesis committee meetings should be scheduled on a regular basis (at least once per semester).
Once you have come up with a list of potential committee members, contact each one to inquire into their willingness to be on your committee. In some cases, your advisor may be in the best position to make the request of some faculty members. If the potential committee member is interested, set up a time to discuss expectations and their role as a committee member. Inform each faculty member of the desired composition of your committee, and ask for referrals to other potential members if you feel that you do not have enough expertise represented.

The dissertation committee must be approved by the Graduate Program Director(s) before membership is finalized. **Students should submit the Dissertation Committee Confirmation Form (see Appendix K) to the Graduate Program Director listing the names and department affiliation of each member.**

**Outside Reader(s)**

Our graduate programs strongly encourage each student to identify an outside reader for the dissertation. The outside reader is typically selected at the same time as the dissertation committee, and the selection should be done in consultation with your advisor. An outside reader is someone external to Brown who has recognized expertise in the topic of your research. Frequently the reader will be a colleague of the dissertation advisor and/or one or more committee members.

Officially, the outside reader will function as a consultant to the dissertation committee, providing periodic feedback on the student’s progress and offering suggestions for revision of manuscripts and/or proposals. The outside reader will also be asked to offer an opinion about the quality of scholarship evident in the thesis as it develops. In some instances, there may be separate outside readers for different aspects of the dissertation, who review a subset of the thesis papers.
Importantly, the outside reader does not vote on the final acceptance of the thesis and will not provide direct official feedback regarding student progress. The committee will serve as an arbiter of the reader’s suggestions and use the reader’s feedback at its own discretion.

**Oral Qualifying Exam (Thesis Proposal)**

The oral examination should be completed six to nine months from the time of a successful written examination. Complete the Oral Exam Date Request Form (see Appendix L) and submit to the Graduate Program Director. The chair of the oral examination will typically NOT be the Dissertation Chair. The goal of this part of the qualifying examination is to determine how well the student can define important scientific questions and devise creative and innovative approaches to answer them. The oral exam consists of two parts:

1. **Written proposal.** The proposal should be delivered to members of the dissertation committee two to three weeks prior to the date of the oral exam. The body of the proposal (excluding references, figures, etc.) should be about 30 double spaced pages. The proposal should roughly follow the style of an NIH grant proposal, according to the following outline:

   a. Summary of the proposal that includes the specific aims of the work to be done (1-2 pages).

   b. Background and literature review. Describe the previous work done in the field that leads up to the scientific problem you are addressing. Raise questions about or indicate gaps in existing work that your dissertation will address. This step is crucial to establishing that your work will be original and innovative (5-7 pages).

   c. Preliminary studies. Describe what work you have done, if any,
that supports the proposed project (4-5 pages).

d. Proposed work (~15 pages). This section is the most important of your proposal and probably should be longer than each of the other three. It should describe the proposed work and give an outline for the three thesis papers. It is expected that the outline and preliminary work for the first and possibly second paper will be more developed than for the third. Essentially this section needs to answer the questions: What do you plan to do? Why is it important? How do you plan to do it? What are the expected pitfalls and how might you approach them? If successful, where will your work lead in the future?

2. Oral Examination. For the oral exam the student must prepare an oral presentation of the proposed work, using slides as necessary. The oral examination will be attended by the thesis committee. The exam will be chaired by a committee member other than the dissertation advisor. The defense begins with an oral presentation of about 30 minutes. Committee members will then direct questions to the candidate. The questioning process can take up to 90 minutes. Students should be sure to practice the presentation beforehand so that it does not exceed the 30 minute allotment. Most importantly, students should realize that the committee has read the proposal, and try to focus on the research plan and its importance, rather than reiterating the background material. Feedback from the oral exam can be very helpful for developing the thesis project.

*Evaluation.* The chair of the oral exam will summarize the discussion and the outcome of the exam in the Oral Exam Results Form (see Appendix M) which should be provided to the chair by the student prior to the exam date. A formal letter to student is encouraged to be written by a member of the
thesis committee (usually the oral exam chair or the thesis advisor) and reviewed and agreed upon by all committee members. This letter should highlight strengths of the knowledge displayed by the student during the oral exam, along with opportunities for deepening knowledge in the coming years. This will support the student in developing in as strong a way as possible for a successful thesis, and next career steps upon completion of the thesis and PhD program. The evaluation results are the same as for the written exam: high pass, full pass, conditional pass and no pass. Those earning pass with high pass or full pass are admitted to PhD candidacy. Those earning conditional pass may either be asked to re-take the oral exam or to address significant deficiencies in the proposal. In this case, the committee must agree that any shortcomings have been adequately addressed before the student is admitted to candidacy. A ‘no pass’ means the student may be directed to re-take the oral exam altogether or may be declined candidacy to the PhD degree. Upon becoming a PhD candidate, the student must plan twice-yearly meetings with the committee to review progress with members.
**Dissertation Defense**

Upon completing the proposed research, students schedule a public presentation and defense of their dissertation through the Department Manager and following procedures stipulated by the Graduate School. Please go to the [Graduate School Dissertation Guidelines](#) for instructions for preparing and presenting the PhD dissertation.

Students should contact the Graduate School for clarification of any instructions and to let them know of the preparation to defend.

Agreement by all committee members and the Graduate Program Director to schedule the thesis defense is obviously a strong predictor of approval of the doctoral thesis. However, the final approval of the thesis is made after the student's presentation.

At least three to four weeks in advance of the defense, the student must fill out the Dissertation Defense Information Form (see Appendix N) and provide the Department Manager the title of the dissertation talk and arrange a date and location for the defense. The student must also contact the Graduate School to make an appointment for submission of the complete dissertation. In addition, the Graduate School needs to have the following:

1. A copy of the title page, bearing the notation "approval of semi-final version" (typed or handwritten somewhere on the title page) and the signature of the advisor

2. Names of readers and their addresses if they are not at Brown

3. Date, time and place of the defense

4. Student mailing address and telephone number

5. Previous degrees and dates of receipt
6. Date of preliminary examination (written and oral)

Committee members should receive the penultimate draft of the thesis sufficiently far in advance of the scheduled defense to allow for reading and preparation of questions; two to three weeks is recommended.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the thesis committee will meet in private to make a final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and discuss any changes for the final version.

Submission of completed dissertation to the Graduate School:

Graduate students who complete their degree requirements during the summer term can apply to graduate and have their degree conferred on the last Sunday in October.

Graduate students who complete their degree requirements during the fall term can apply to graduate and have their degree conferred on the last Sunday in February.

Graduate students who complete their degree requirements during the spring term must have all PhD dissertations completed toward the end of March and dissertation and application documentation submitted to Barbara Bennett by April 1 for a May graduation. No exceptions will be made to extend the April 1 deadline date. Students who do not hand in their final thesis on time cannot participate in the University's graduation exercises. The Graduate School has compiled instructions to help graduate students with the preparation and presentation of the dissertation. These instructions are located at link.

There is no ceremonial commencement in October or February.

Graduates can pick up their diplomas at the Office of the Registrar the week after conferral. After that time diplomas will be mailed to them.
October and February graduates are listed in the May Commencement Bulletin, and are welcome to bring their diploma covers and participate in Commencement in May.

When the thesis is presented to the Graduate School, it must be in final form. It may not be revised in any way after it is submitted.

**NOTE:** In addition to providing the Graduate School with the required number of copies of the PhD dissertation, the student must also provide the Department Manager and each committee member with an electronic copy of the dissertation.
PhD Milestones Guide

The following summarizes the formal “milestones” required of all PhD students and the timeline by when these are to be completed in order to maintain a status of “good standing” within the program (see page 47 for academic standing information).

By the end of semester 2:
Complete 1st year coursework Serve as a RA

By the end of 1st summer:
Complete Summer RAship Work on grant proposal for PHP2090 (Research Grant Writing for Public Health)

Semesters 3 and 4:
Continue to serve as a RA Serve as TA Begin process of selecting research topic and dissertation advisor Submit external fellowship application for dissertation research

By the end of semester 4:
Complete 2nd year coursework Complete Epidemiology Written Qualifying Exam Continue to serve RA

Semester 5:
Finalize research topic and appoint dissertation committee members Complete PhD prospectus and oral qualifying exam Finish any remaining course requirements Serve as TE Continue to serve as RA

Semester 6:
Continue to serve as RA

Beginning of semester 8:
Schedule thesis defense Continue to serve as RA

End of semester 8:
Complete thesis defense & graduate Continue to serve as RA
6. General Graduate School Guidelines

The Brown University Graduate School has several University-wide requirements of all students enrolled in graduate programs at Brown. These guidelines and regulations apply to all students in the Public Health Graduate Programs, and both students and advisors are expected to become familiar with them. They can be accessed at link.

7. Information Relevant to Both ScM and PhD Students

Conflict of Interest (COI)

The Brown University Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy and its related guidelines apply to all members of the Brown community. It shall be the responsibility of all members of the Brown community to read the University's Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy and its related guidelines and to disclose potential or actual conflicts as they arise to their supervisor or assigned senior administrator.

A conflict of interest may take many forms but arises when a member of the Brown community might be able to use the authority of his or her Brown position to:

a) Influence the University's business decisions in ways to give improper advantage or financial benefit to oneself, a family member or associate, or
b) Obtain for oneself, a family member, or an associate a financial benefit beyond the compensation he or she is authorized to receive for performing his or her University responsibilities.

The Conflict of Interest and Commitment Guidelines can be viewed at link.
Program Progression Checklists

All ScM and PhD students are required to complete a Program Progression Checklist (see Appendix O and P). The checklists will be created as a Google document and shared with each student so that they can should update their progress at the end of each semester. The Doctoral Program Director or Master’s Program Director, as well as each student’s academic advisor will have access to view all students’ checklists. Keeping accurate progression checklists up-to-date will ensure that Program Directors and academic advisors can assist each student is making sure they take the appropriate core courses, assist in other course selections and make sure that each student is progressing through their programs on an appropriate timeline.

Seminars, Clubs, and Forums

One of the Program’s priorities is that graduate students become proficient in the written and oral communication of scientific thinking. One strategy for the support and development of communication skills is the participation in the Epidemiology Seminar Series, and the Department of Epidemiology’s Journal Club and Faculty Forum.

Journal Club Objectives

The objective of the Journal Club is to provide students with a regular, peer-led, semi-structured discussion forum in which they:

- Critically appraise empirical, methodological, or theoretical papers in their field
- Improve oral presentation skills through giving presentations and scholarly debate about topics in a more casual and comfortable setting
- Network with peers, Brown faculty members, and outside speakers
Meeting Schedule:

- Journal Club meetings for the Doctoral and Master’s Programs in Epidemiology occur once per month on Tuesdays from 12:00-1:00 pm.
- Journal Club meetings will take place virtually for the 2020-21 Academic Year.

Instructor of Record:

- Every departmental journal club will have an Instructor of Record and is required to notify the Associate Dean, Administrative Coordinator, and Department Manager of the Instructor’s name prior to pre-registration.
- Primary responsibilities include: attending a meeting prior to the start of the semester with the Student Journal Club Director(s) to review guidelines; attending the first journal club of each semester to review guidelines with doctoral and master’s students; reviewing journal club attendance; assisting in selection of articles upon request; attending additional Journal Club meetings upon request.
- The instructor of record will be assigned a section under PHP 2950 and will be responsible for assigning a grade of Pass or Fail for the Student Journal Club Director(s) registered in their section of PHP2950. If a Student Journal Club Director(s) responsibilities go throughout the academic year, they can register under PHP 2950 in both the Fall and Spring semesters.
- In the beginning of each semester, the Instructor of Record or the Administrative Coordinator will contact the Seminar
Series Director to obtain the names and dates of the seminar series speakers for that semester to facilitate seminar series speakers participating in journal club during that semester.

**Attendance Policy:**

- Every doctoral student in the School of Public Health is required to attend Journal Club each semester while enrolled in the program unless exempted by the Graduate Program Director.

- Every doctoral student is required to be a discussion facilitator at least once during the academic year.

- Department of Epidemiology Master’s students are required to attend Journal Club each semester while enrolled in the program unless exempted by the Master’s Program Director.

- Every Master’s student is required to be a discussion facilitator at least once during their time in the ScM program, preferably in their second year of the program to allow for their mastery of Epidemiology content to be more advanced.

- The Graduate Program Director and the Master's Program Director should notify the Instructor of Record, in writing, of any exemptions being granted each semester.

- Copies of exemptions are to be filed in the student’s e-record (See Appendix Q for waiver form).

- The Administrative Coordinator will email the Instructor of Record and the Graduate Program Director if a student has missed two consecutive Journal Club sessions in a given semester. The Graduate Program Director will email the student regarding the missed Journal Club session.
Responsibilities

Journal Club Student Director(s):

All doctoral students must serve as Journal Club Director for one full semester, typically during their 2nd or 3rd year. Students may serve as co-directors depending on cohort size. Doctoral students should register for Journal Club course credit (PHP2950) during the semester when they will act as the Journal Club Student Director(s). The Journal Club Student Director(s) can get course credit for both Fall and Spring semesters, if serving as for full academic year. If doctoral student directors are responsible for:

- Coordinating/assigning student discussion facilitators for each journal club session (including sending reminders; circulating papers in advance).

- Maintaining the semester Journal Club schedule (see below table).

- Organizing one faculty forum per semester, which includes a Brown faculty member discussing their career path and research.

- Recording attendance for the Instructor of Record.

- Ordering food, as needed, with the assistance of the Administrative Coordinator.

- Administering and summarizing a student evaluation via a survey of the overall course.

- Assist the Student Discussion Facilitators during the breakout groups (see below) by joining a breakout group that the Student
Discussion Facilitators are not participating in, when possible, and facilitating discussion as needed and helping to ensure balance of discussion by PhD and ScM students in the breakout group

- Sending the article (published or draft, as appropriate), discussion questions, and presentation slides to the students one week before the relevant Journal Club date.
- Ensure that the guest speaker, if there is one, as well as the faculty representative(s) are introduced.

**Student Discussion Facilitators must:**

- Identify an article or project in-progress for their session with a broad topic area or a historical article during the journal club sessions where a guest speaker doesn’t select an article. Historical articles should be seminal papers that considerably impacted the field. The selected article/project should not be a systematic review or a meta-analysis.
- Come up with 2-3 questions as a starting place for discussing the article/project
- Send the selected article/project to the Instructor of Record for their approval at least two weeks before their Journal Club date.
- Send the article/project that was approved by the Instructor of Record and the questions to the Student Journal Club Director(s) at least 10 days before their Journal Club date.
- Lead the journal club discussion in breakout groups, preferably no greater than 10 students per group. The student discussion facilitators should join separate breakout groups and be prepared to lead the discussion in the breakout group that they join which includes helping to ensure balance of discussion by PhD and ScM students.
Additional Department Specific Guidelines:

- During a week when a seminar speaker is visiting, the goal is that an article selected by that speaker will be discussed. The Student Discussion Facilitators are responsible for contacting the Department Manager for help with contacting the seminar speaker to obtain a suggestion for what article(s) should be discussed.

- Student Discussion Facilitators should introduce the paper and the guest seminar speaker if relevant. The Student Discussion Facilitators should introduce the paper by giving a presentation of no more than 5-mins at the start of journal club that highlights the paper objective(s), methods, results, and conclusions using no more than 3-4 slides. During a given journal club, the Student Discussion Facilitators should be one doctoral student and one second year ScM student. The Student Discussion Facilitators should send the slides to the Student Journal Club Director(s) at least 10 days before their Journal Club date.

- Faculty representatives are responsible for ensuring that discussion remains thoughtful, friendly, and supportive throughout the duration of the journal club session. Faculty members should plan to drift between the breakout groups of students as needed. The Student Discussion Facilitators should make sure that the Faculty representatives introduce themselves prior to discussing the selected article/project.

- Students attending the journal who are not the Student Director(s) or Student Facilitator(s) should come to journal club with 2-3 questions and be prepared to share those questions during the breakout group discussion.
• We strongly encourage a diversity of topics over the school year.

All students tend to share commonalities in being interested in Epidemiology methods training. Considering interesting methodological approaches across a diversity of applied areas (e.g. cardiovascular epidemiology, perinatal epidemiology, infectious disease epidemiology, social epidemiology, etc.) can allow for fostering training in areas of common interest, while enabling diversity of applications to the field of Epidemiology.

**Faculty Forum**

• A faculty forum is an opportunity for students to ask open-ended questions for the faculty member in an informal, single group setting. The faculty member must be Brown affiliated.

• There will be no paper discussed during the faculty forum.

• There will be no Student Discussion Facilitators during the faculty forums. The Student Director(s) will help facilitate the discussion and introduce the faculty member.

**Guest Seminar Speaker Guidelines:**

• When a guest seminar speaker attends Journal Club, the format will be to invite the speaker to start out with about 10 minutes of informally discussing their career path, such as how they got to where they are now, including questions from students about their career steps. This 10 minute discussion will occur as a single group. The subsequent 35 minutes will be focused on the paper presentation and breakout group discussion of the paper. During the breakout group discussion, the Student Discussion Facilitators should inform the guest speaker that they can either
join a single breakout group or drift between the various breakout groups depending on which approach that they prefer. If a guest speaker prefers, it is fine to focus on the science of the paper only, and not on their career path.

- Before any speaker is added to the journal club schedule, the addition must be approved by the Instructor of Record.

- No more than half of the non-faculty forum journal club sessions should have a guest speaker and journal club sessions with guest speakers should not be back to back on the schedule.

**Research Assistantships**

Students in Epidemiology participate in RAships in a variety of on and off campus settings, including Research Centers within the School of Public Health, the Rhode Island Department of Health, and clinical departments at Brown-affiliated hospitals. A RAship is an integral part of the student’s training program. The Epidemiology Graduate Program Director will identify one or more RA options for an individual student, through discussions with the student and potential RA advisors. All efforts will be made to identify RAships that are well-aligned with the student’s substantive interests. Students will have the option to accept the proposed RAship, to identify an alternative that is acceptable to the Graduate Program Director, or to forgo financial support. If a student completes their coursework for the program and receives permission to finish the program remotely, they will be responsible for finding a research appointment that is compatible with their location or forgo financial support. Students must be in good academic standing to be a RA.

The RA advisor is responsible for supervising and directing the student’s work during the term of the appointment. The RA advisor is responsible for coordinating, scheduling, and keeping appropriate
documentation of the RA’s activity; this is a particularly important function on large projects where the RA may be working with several different faculty and staff members. The advisor also will be solicited for formal feedback as part of the twice-yearly evaluation of students.

**RAship Contract**

At the beginning of each semester’s RAship the RA advisor and the student should discuss the expectations and responsibilities during the course of the RAship, and complete and sign a RAship contract (see Appendix H and I). Once signed by both the student and RAship advisor, the contract should be submitted to the Department Manager. The Graduate Program Director will review all RAship contracts, and once approved will sign off on the contract. Fully signed contracts will be sent to the RAship advisor and the student.

**Role of the student:**

The student is responsible for working on the assigned project for a maximum of 20 hours a week during the academic year. It is understood that schedules fluctuate during different points in the year, such as when project demands are higher or when students are in an exam period. The advisor and student must work together to ensure that both academic and RA responsibilities are being met.

**Duration of the appointment:**

RAships typically last a minimum of 4.5 months (one academic semester) and are subject to renewal. Summer RAships are typically paired with either fall or spring semesters, and are also 20 hour/week commitments. RA advisors may want to use their funding to top-off the stipend of students who are funded by F31 grants for the Summer semester so that the stipend matches the academic year stipend. Students are provided, on average, four weeks of paid vacation during
the calendar year – two weeks during the summer and two weeks
during the winter break. Students are required to discuss winter and
summer vacation plans with their RA advisor prior to finalizing plans.
In addition, students are not expected to work during any of the official
Brown holidays.

Publications and academic freedoms:

Although the RA’s role in generating manuscripts for publication may
vary by individual setting, it must be recognized that, consistent with
academic norms, those who contribute intellectual content must be
given appropriate credit. Contributing to a project as an RA as opposed
to as an investigator is not grounds to necessarily preclude authorship.
RAs who contribute meaningfully to a research project should be offered
the opportunity to participate as a coauthor in publications, even if the
RAship has been completed at the time the manuscript is being
prepared. RAs should notify and work with the RA advisor directly
should they wish to initiate preparation of a manuscript for publication
based on a project or data associated with the RAship.

Special consideration for students engaged in dissertation work:
Students engaged in PhD thesis research should, when possible, be
matched to a RAship that is closely related to their field of research, to
the point that some of their work as a RA may eventually result in a
first-author published manuscript.

Awarding of industry-sponsored RAships and internships:

Industry-sponsored RAships will be awarded to students based on
mutual agreement by the student, the sponsoring organization, and the
Graduate Program Director. The industry sponsor should submit a
description of the RAship to the Graduate Program Director for review
and approval before it is made available as a means of support.
The process of awarding industry RAships follows the same guidelines, including timeline, publications, and terms of appointment, as the awarding of other RAships. Sponsors of off campus RAs should factor travel time into the student’s overall time commitment, and may be expected to defray appropriate travel expenses.

**Tax Withholding Information**

Doctoral student support is in the form of various types of appointments, including research assistantships, teaching assistantships, fellowships, training grant appointments, and others, and these appointments can change from semester to semester. If you have a question about which type of appointment you have, please ask the Department Manager.

For U.S. Residents, most of these appointments withhold taxes in the monthly paycheck. However, some that are denoted as fellowships are not subject to tax withholding (while taxes are not deducted monthly, they may be due at the end of the tax year.) For Non-US residents, the same tax rules apply unless you are covered by a Tax Treaty.

For more detailed information, please refer to the Graduate School, Payroll Office and this STUDENT EMPLOYEE FAQ. International students and non-resident aliens always refer to the OISSS.

Note: Tax filing varies by individual and the absence of tax withholding does not relieve the responsibility to file taxes. If you have further questions about tax withholding and your responsibilities, we recommend seeking advice from a tax professional. Brown faculty and staff cannot provide advice on taxes.
Specific guidelines for off campus RAships:

All RAships awarded to Epidemiology graduate students must be directly supervised by a full time Brown faculty member. When the supervisor is not a member of the Department, a faculty liaison, who is a Department faculty member, will be assigned to oversee the RAship broadly. In many cases this liaison can be the student’s academic advisor. The Department Manager will create a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for all off campus RAships which will outline the financial terms of the RAship. The MOA will be sent to the Graduate Program Director (or Master’s Program Director, if applicable), the School of Public Health financial representative, and the off campus faculty mentor and their financial authorized signatory for review and signature.

NOTE: Graduate School policy states that students may engage in paid training opportunities outside of research assistantship appointments that play important roles in preparing graduate students for careers both inside and outside of academy up to 12 hours per week. Additionally, the Graduate School recommends that students ideally avoid or minimize time spent on paid activities unrelated to their research assistantship appointments and that any student who wishes to exceed the twelve (12) hours per week limitation must seek the approval of the Graduate School. Importantly, regulations of outside agencies that provide funding to specific students, as well as those governing visas for international students, must be observed at all times.
8. Other Useful Departmental Information

Grading Policy

The Department of Epidemiology expects all students in the Master and Doctoral degree programs to maintain a “B” average or better for the academic year. If a student’s performance is poor enough (i.e., drops below a “B” average for the year), s/he may be asked to engage in remedial activities (e.g., additional coursework).

Students who do not maintain good academic standing may be asked to leave the program.

Student Academic Standing Evaluations

Students’ academic standing (good, satisfactory, or warning) is evaluated two times per year, at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Student evaluations are completed with input from all graduate program faculty (teaching faculty, RA or TA supervisors, academic advisors). The purpose is to provide consolidated feedback to students about their performance and progress in the program. If the determination is made that a student is not making satisfactory progress, prospects for future financial support could be adversely affected and/or student enrollment in the program may be terminated.

Students’ advisors will discuss the evaluation in greater detail and will be able to provide additional information. Topics relevant for the evaluation can include (though are not limited to) status in academic courses, performance on the qualifying exams, progress towards the thesis, performance as a teaching assistant and research assistant, priorities for the coming year to facilitate progress towards completing the degree, and becoming an independent investigator and current and possible financial support.
The program expects that students and advisors meet at the very least twice per semester to discuss the student’s progress. This should occur in the context of course selection and subsequently to review the results of the annual evaluation. Students are encouraged to take the initiative to schedule appointments with advisors on a recurring basis.

**Individual Development Plan (IDP)**

The IDP is a valuable tool that gives students the opportunity to address their short term and long term career goals. The NIH has mandated that IDP’s be a regular part of training and that institutions encourage trainees to comply with this mandate. In addition, the School of Public Health is requiring all students, regardless of funding, to fill out an IDP (see Appendix D).

The Department of Epidemiology require that students complete an IDP each calendar year. The deadline for submission of the Individual Development Plan Google Form is **December 1st**. Before submitting your IDP, please review responses with your academic advisor. In addition to NIH reporting requirements, the Department views the IDP as an important opportunity to review progress with your advisor, set academic and research goals for the coming year, and update your academic CV.

**Service Expectation**

Students are expected to participate in department and school wide activities which include representation on committees, attending student orientation and recruitment events, research forums and faculty recruitment. Meeting these expectations require students to be on campus, at least for a portion of their program.
Travel Fund Opportunities

Below please find listed conference funding opportunities. Conference travel funding procedures can be found in Appendix R.

Graduate Conference Travel Fund

After travel is completed, graduate students must submit appropriate documentation [as explained on the Graduate School’s Conference Travel Reimbursement webpage] to their home program’s administrative coordinator for approval and electronic processing of the reimbursement request. If the documents submitted do not correspond to those guidelines, reimbursement requests will be returned for completion. Completed travel reimbursement requests should be submitted to the home program no later than 30 days after completion of travel; those submitted after 45 days will not be reimbursed.

School of Public Health Conference Travel Fund

Doctoral students, who present original work at academic conferences, can request support from both the Graduate School (see above instructions) and the School of Public Health. The School of Public Health will provide up to $400 to cover related travel expenses not covered by the Graduate School. Students are eligible to receive these funds one time, at any time during their doctoral training period. Given funding limitations, application does not guarantee support. When requesting both Graduate School and School of Public Health support, doctoral students must: • Complete the UFUNDS travel funding application. Where instructed, “Please indicate any other funding you expect to receive for this trip,” the student should write “School of Public Health” and the $ amount (up to $400) being requested of the School. • Attach necessary forms as explained on the application form. • Sign the application and obtain approvals from the Director of Graduate Program. • Save completed application form in PDF format.
Submit the application via e-mail to graduate-travel@brown.edu (please send cc Cynthia Ferreira Cynthia_Ferreira@brown.edu and Barbara Dailey Barbara_Dailey@brown.edu for approval.

**The Department of Epidemiology Abstract Award**

The Department of Epidemiology holds a conference abstract competition twice a year. This competition is open to all current doctoral and master’s students in the Department of Epidemiology. Students who have submitted work to a national or international conference are encouraged to forward a copy of their abstract and confirmation of their abstract submission to the Department Manager. Students may submit multiple abstracts each cycle, but will be awarded a maximum of one prize per academic year.

Abstracts will be reviewed by a faculty panel in January (fall cycle) and June (spring cycle). Priority will be given to students who submit abstracts to epidemiology conferences (SER, ISEE).

The awarded prizes for each cycle are two prizes of $1,000 to the top-rated abstracts (first and second place) and two prizes of $500 to runner-ups (third and fourth place). Awards must be used for conference registration, accommodation, or travel.

Abstracts must be submitted by December 15th for the fall cycle and May 15th for the spring cycle.

**Joukowsky Summer Research Award**

The Joukowsky Summer Research Award Program was developed by the Graduate School in 2012 to provide additional funding for scholarly activities outside of Brown during the summer months. Students conducting research or traveling for other academic purposes during the summer months may be eligible for this award. Academic purposes could include attending language programs, summer workshops, or other activities. Doctoral students applying for summer research after the first through fifth years of study are eligible for the awards. Detailed information on the Joukowsky Summer Research Award Program is in the Graduate School Handbook. Note: You do not need to seek a Graduate School signature for the form; if your request is approved, that signature will be added and a copy will be returned to you.
**International Travel Fund**

The International Travel Fund provides funding for graduate student conference presentations and research studies abroad. Awards range from $200 to $1,000. Funding decisions are based on the distance of the international conference from the continental United States, the budget requested, and the availability of funding at the time the request is received by the Graduate School. Only one award will be made per student within an award cycle (September-August). These awards may be used in combination with other Graduate School travel awards, but are treated as funding internal to the Graduate School and therefore do not satisfy external award matching requirements that other travel awards may require. Master’s students and doctoral students in years 1 through 5 of their studies are automatically eligible to apply for the international travel fund award.

Doctoral students in the sixth year are also eligible but are required to have a letter of support from the Director of Graduate Studies of the home program, in addition to the international travel fund application.

**Note:** Volunteering at some conferences may waive the registration fee.

**Student Space and Resources**

**Office Space and Workspaces**

The Epidemiology Department makes every effort to ensure that all graduate students are provided with adequate office space. The Department provides incoming students with office space that has an individual desk. Students who have placements off campus, but who request additional space at 121 S. Main St., will be able to use a common office or will be accommodated as space allows. Students will be contacted with their room locations at the beginning of the academic year.
There are several workspace areas with computer clusters for graduate student use: Room 243 for master’s students, and Room 242 for 1st year PhD students. Student mailboxes, as well as printer and internet access are available in the computer labs and the third floor student areas.

Wireless internet is accessible throughout the building.

**Locker Policy**

The School of Public Health offers lockers to Masters Students. The Student Locker Form is located in Appendix S. The completed form should be dropped off at the front desk located on the 3rd floor and is due by the first day of classes. However, if there are less lockers available than the number of forms submitted, you will be entered into a “Locker Lottery” and will be notified by the second week of classes regarding locker assignments. Student use of lockers start the first day of classes in September and expire on May 31. Users must provide their own locks, but should be aware that we reserve the right to remove the lock in extenuating circumstances. Any locks remaining on June 1 will be removed and the contents of the locker disposed of.

All lockers are the property of Brown University and, therefore, you are expected to follow all applicable University guidelines. Lockers should not be defaced in any way and should be kept reasonably clean, sticker free, odor free, and its contents should not affect others.

**Laptop Computers**

The Program in Public Health will provide each incoming doctoral student his/her own new laptop computer for use while enrolled in the doctoral program. The laptop will be set up and maintained by the Public Health Systems Administrator. While the program will fund the initial laptop purchase, each student will be responsible for any needed repairs, replacement parts, upgrades, etc. which are not covered by the
warranty. As different components of the laptop are subject to different warranty periods, students should always check with the Public Health IT Systems Administrator for any possible component warranty before making a purchase or requesting repair. Graduate programs and/or RA supervisors may elect to assist students with needed repair costs, but that is determined individually by each program/RA supervisor. The Program will provide a temporary “loaner” machine for a student’s use in the event that his/her laptop must be sent out for repair (regardless of the funding source for the repair). There is now insurance coverage on the first and second year laptops. Please see Jesse Coutu for more information.

Laptops are the property of Brown University; therefore, when a student graduates or leaves the program for any reason, the laptop must be returned to the Public Health Program. Per University Policy, “Departments are strictly prohibited from gifting or selling surplus materials directly to Brown faculty, staff, students, and other individuals. This provision is mandated in order to minimize the University’s risk exposure to product liability, sales tax exemption regulations, potential loss of commercial discounts, and potential violations of special pricing structures if deemed a reseller.”
Diversity and Inclusion Resources

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion within Brown’s School of Public Health provides resources, trainings, events, and reporting assistance to the entire School of Public Health Community. The Department of Epidemiology echoes their mission to advance health as a human right for all. The Brown University Department of Epidemiology is committed to ensuring that we admit students from diverse socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

In addition to School-wide initiatives, the Department of Epidemiology has an internal Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) Committee to guide Departmental actions needed to address anti-Black racism and to create and foster a culture that embraces diversity and inclusion. Comments, concerns, and suggestions are welcomed by the committee from anyone within the Department. Email Katie Graham for the current DIAP committee’s contact information.

Student Leave Policy

During the course of graduate study a student may need to request a leave of absence. Applications for leaves of absence (with the exception of medical or psychological leaves) should be sent to the Graduate School at least four weeks before the start of the semester in which the leave is to be taken.

The Graduate School now offers a Parental Leave Policy which is designed to partially ameliorate the academic and professional demands on graduate student parents who are primary caregivers of newly born
or adopted children.

The Graduate School provides support at the rate of the standard base stipend for the duration of the relief period. Health insurance, health service fee coverage, and dental insurance for the student are maintained.

**Additional Resources offered by the Sheridan Center**

- For Faculty: *Working with Undergraduate and Graduate TAs*
- For Students: *Graduate School Handbook Teaching Assistants*

**Faculty List**

For a complete list of current faculty, including their areas of research, please visit our *website.*
9. Appendix

B. Research Ethics and Compliance Training (CITI)
C. Course Waiver Request Form
D. IDP - Insert
E. Thesis Proposal for the Master of Science Thesis Form
F. Timeline for the Master of Science in Epidemiology
G. Template to Help Conceptualize and Design Thesis of Dissertation Topic Papers
RAship Contract Letters
J. Department of Epidemiology TA/TE/STA Guidelines
Dissertation Committee Confirmation Form
Oral Exam Date Request Form
Oral Exam Results Form
Dissertation Defense Information Form
ScM Program Progression Checklist
PhD Program Progression Checklist
Journal Club Waiver Request Form
R. Conference Travel Funding Procedures
Locker Policy Form
APPENDIX B

Research Ethics and Compliance Training (CITI)

All graduate and master’s students who are engaged in human subjects research and who have contact with research participants and/or their research data and identifiers must take CITI training and receive a CITI certificate. The initial certification is good for three years and can be renewed three times.

Instructions for new users are:

2. Click “Register” and fill in steps 1-7. In Step 1, choose Brown University as your institution. Continue with the registration process filling in all of the appropriate personal information.

3. Search the institutional courses available to Brown. Be sure to click the “View Courses” button connected to Brown University. Click on “Learner Tools” and “Add a Course” for the “CITI Course Enrollment Procedure.” Please read the instructions and continue to scroll down to the “CITI Course Enrollment Questions.”

4. Answering Questions 1-7 will register you for training courses. You do not need to answer all seven questions. Please note that you may register for as many courses as you like, but not all courses may be required for your research.

5. Brown has created three Initial Education customized tracks to ensure that the education you receive is tailored to your research. Completion of one of the following modules is necessary to satisfy Brown’s requirement for initial human subjects training. You are required to take only one of the modules listed below but may elect to take more modules if you choose.

6. Please complete the track that most closely aligns with your research or discipline.

7. Once you have chosen the appropriate Group, scroll to the bottom of the page and click “Submit.” This will bring you to the main page where you can begin the correct course. You can save your progress, log out of CITI, and re-enter the course as many times as you wish.
APPENDIX C

Course Waiver Request Form

Students should use this form to request permission to waive a required course. Generally, only required introductory courses can be waived (e.g.: PHP2510, PHP2040), and then only when a student can demonstrate that s/he has satisfactorily completed an equivalent course at Brown or at another institution in the past. Students seeking permission should obtain signatures first from their advisor, second from the course instructor, and lastly, from the program director. The course instructor may ask the student to take a past final exam from the course for which a waiver is being requested. Students should propose a suitable alternate activity in place of the waived course. Suitable activities may include: serving as a TA for the waived course, taking an alternate course, and an independent study. Completed forms should be returned to the Department Manager.

Student Name: __________________________________________________________

Degree Program and Year: ______________________________________________

Course for which waiver is requested (provide course number and title): ________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Have you previously taken an equivalent course at Brown or at a different institution? _________

If so, list the institution, course name, course number, year taken and your grade in the course. Attach a course syllabus.

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

What course/activity do you propose to do in lieu of this course (eg: alternate course, TA this course)?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Required Signatures:

Academic Advisor: ___________________________ ___________________________ __________

Course Instructor: ___________________________ ___________________________ __________

Program Director: ___________________________ ___________________________ __________

(name) (signature) (date)
Department of Epidemiology Individual Development Plan (IDP)

The IDP is a valuable tool that gives students the opportunity to address their short term and long term career goals. The NIH has mandated that IDP's be a regular part of training and that institutions encourage trainees to comply with this mandate. In addition, the School of Public Health (SPH) is requiring all students, regardless of funding, to fill out an IDP.

The Department of Epidemiology requests that students complete an IDP each calendar year. The deadline for submission of the IDP is December 1st.

Before submitting your IDP, please review responses with your academic advisor. In addition to NIH reporting requirements, the Department views the IDP as an important opportunity to review progress with your advisor, set academic and research goals for the coming year, and update your academic CV.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Your email address (vickie_beaulieu@brown.edu) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not vickie_beaulieu? Sign out

* Required

1. Last name *

2. First name *

3. Banner ID *

4. Your department/Graduate Program *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Behavioral and Social Sciences
   - Biostatistics
   - Epidemiology
   - Health Services and Research

Please give a brief overview of your research project and major accomplishments in the past year.
5. Please list your publications this year.
   Include: Title, all authors, Name of Journal, Year of Publication, Volume, Page #’s. If available, please give PMCID #

6. Please list any honors and awards you received this past year.
   Include any fellowships, grants written and applied for, professional society awards, travel awards (external)

7. Please list any professional meetings you attended.

8. New areas of research or technical expertise acquired in the past year.

9. Please describe any teaching activity.
   TA, Sheridan Center, etc.
10. Please list committee or other service activity.


11. Any other professional activities or activities with professional relevance that you’d like to list.
Community activities, volunteer activities, etc. - should have relevance to your professional goals.


Plans for Next Academic Year

Your goals and objectives for the coming year.

12. Your research project goals
Brief Paragraph


13. Anticipated publications (indicate projected titles)
14. Anticipated meeting or workshop attendance

15. Fellowship or other funding applications planned

16. Other Professional Training
   (Course work, teaching activity)

17. Please discuss your long term goals

18. Identify target dates for the duration of your graduate/postdoctoral training
19. Define specific skills and strengths that you need to develop (based on discussions with your mentor) to help you achieve the long term goals you identified above

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

20. Define the approaches to obtain the specific skills and strengths described in the previous question together with anticipated time frames
Examples include courses, technical skills, teaching, supervision, conferences, workshops, etc.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

21. Please check below that you have reviewed this statement and that you have discussed this with your advisor *
Check all that apply.

☐ Yes, I have reviewed this statement and am submitting my complete statement
☐ I have discussed my IDP and plans with my mentor

22. My mentor’s name *

__________________________________________________________________________

☐ Send me a copy of my responses.
**APPENDIX E**

**PROPOSAL FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EPIDEMIOLOGY THESIS**

Students must submit this proposal form, signed by the thesis advisor and reader, accompanied by a one page description of the thesis work, by May 23rd of their first year. The thesis project description should include a brief description of the literature review topic, if applicable, or a clear description of the analytical paper, and a timeline for completing various components (see page 8 of the Thesis Guidelines for recommended dates). Be sure to clearly define and justify the thesis project, including a statement of the proposed final product and its contribution to your educational and career goals. Students should complete this proposal form, including appropriate signatures, and submit it to Master’s Program Director for approval. Students will receive an email confirmation when the thesis proposal has been approved.

The ScM Thesis Proposal must be approved by the thesis advisor, as well as Master’s Program Director

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate the final thesis product (either should be of publishable quality):

- [ ] A 10-20 page literature review
- [ ] An analytical paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Advisor</th>
<th>Academic Advisor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing Address</td>
<td>Mailing Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td>Email address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I have read and approve this thesis proposal and I agree to serve as the thesis advisor for this project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I have read and approve this thesis proposal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Master of Science Thesis Proposal has been approved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master's Program Director</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>
## APPENDIX F

**Timeline for the Master of Science in Epidemiology Thesis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>*for students planning to graduate in two years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Semester</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meet with Faculty</strong></td>
<td>Students should confer with their core advisor and review the faculty directory to find faculty with public health research interests similar to their own. Students should meet with faculty to discuss their research projects and current issues in the student's area of interest. <a href="http://www.brown.edu/academics/public-health/faculty">http://www.brown.edu/academics/public-health/faculty</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminary Research</strong></td>
<td>Students should begin to narrow their thesis topic by reading the literature and meeting with potential thesis advisors. Discussions with the epidemiology faculty should provide the opportunity to explore various topics of interest and thesis topic ideas. Students might also want to learn about the thesis projects previous ScM students have completed, which will be kept on file in the Epidemiology library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Semester</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 23rd – Thesis Proposal Due</strong></td>
<td>Students should identify a thesis advisor to guide the development of their thesis proposal. The thesis proposal should include a timeline for completion, including data analysis, first draft of literature review (if choosing this thesis option), first draft of paper/s, and final thesis. The proposal should clearly define and justify the thesis project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Year</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer</strong></td>
<td>It is recommended that students begin their thesis work over the summer. <strong>Data Analysis</strong> Students who are going to undertake a primary data analysis for their thesis are strongly advised to complete most of their data analyses over the summer. <strong>First Draft of Literature Review (including Meta-Analysis)</strong> Students preparing a literature review should have a first draft completed by <strong>September 1</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Semester</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Analyses</strong></td>
<td>All data analyses should be completed by the end of the first two months of the first semester, or before the beginning of the 2nd semester at the latest, to allow time for writing and interpretation. <strong>First Draft of Paper/s Sections</strong> Students should submit a first draft of their paper/s to include the Introduction and Methodology sections by <strong>October 1st</strong>; the Results section by <strong>November 15th</strong>; a draft of the entire paper/s by <strong>January 10th</strong>; and the final completed thesis, signed by the advisor and reader, by <strong>March 1st</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Semester</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>March 1st- Submit Thesis</strong></td>
<td>Students should submit via email their completed thesis to the Master's Program Director by <strong>March 1st</strong>. To meet this March 1st deadline, students should submit a full draft of their thesis to their thesis advisor and reader by <strong>February 1st</strong> to allow enough time for the thesis advisor and reader to review and return comments to be addressed by the student. The completed thesis that is submitted to the Master’s Program Director by <strong>March 1st</strong> should address/incorporate all of the comments received by the thesis advisor and reader. The thesis should be signed by the thesis advisor, reader, and MPD. In order to meet the Graduate School’s April 1st submission deadline, the thesis advisor and reader’s signatures may be obtained after the completed thesis has been submitted to the Master’s Program Director. All formatting changes need to be made to comply with the requirements of the Graduate School (Appendix D) and should be made prior to the April 1st deadline. <strong>April 1st</strong> The Master's Thesis must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School by April 1st for graduation in May.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX G
Template to Help Conceptualize and Design Thesis or Dissertation Topic Papers

| Thesis Title: | |
| Brief Background: | |
| Research Question: | |
| Data Source (e.g., Women’s Health Initiative): | |
| Estimated Sample Size: | |
| Source Population (Persons, place, & time): | |
| Primary Exposure(s): | |
| Primary Outcome(s): | |
| Potential Confounders and/or Covariates (age, sex, race, and SES): | |
| Potential Modifiers (e.g., sex or race): | |
| Analytic Methods (e.g., logistic or linear regression): | |
| Effect Measures to be Estimated (e.g., relative risk of disease among those with exposure compared to those without): | |
Dear FACULTY MEMBER and STUDENT,

We are delighted that you will be working together this term through a research assistantship (RAship). In order to enhance clarity and set expectations for both the advisor and student, it can be helpful to clearly outline elements of the RAship at the beginning of each term. The purpose of this agreement letter is to outline RAship goals, and ensure that all parties understand expectations involved in the RAship.

- The student is responsible for working on the assigned project for 10 or 20 hours per week during the coming term, and not beyond this term unless the RAship is renewed.
- It is understood that voluntary work on the part of the interested student may continue past this term if she/he is able to given other commitments, but is not required as part of the RAship.
- The advisor and student work together to ensure that RA responsibilities are being met.
- The RA advisor is responsible for supervising and directing the student’s work during the term of the appointment.
- The advisor also will be solicited for formal feedback as part of the twice-yearly evaluation of students.

We hope that this agreement helps foster conditions for a productive and enjoyable research experience!

Responsibilities and Expectations of Student’s RAship (describe relevant details, such as hours, frequency of meetings, nature of work, products to be produced, benchmarks and timeline):

Work 10 or 20 hours per week
The RAship for the Semester Year semester begins on Date and ends on Date. The RA is expected to lead filling out this form, and confirming/further developing responsibilities and expectations with the RAship advisor. If you have any questions, please contact the Department Manager, Vickie S. Beaulieu (vickie_beaulieu@brown.edu).

Student

Faculty Member

Master's Program Director
Dear FACULTY MEMBER and STUDENT,

We are delighted that you will be working together this term through a research assistantship (RAship). In order to enhance clarity and set expectations for both the advisor and student, it can be helpful to clearly outline elements of the RAship at the beginning of each term. The purpose of this agreement letter is to outline RAship goals, and ensure that all parties understand expectations involved in the RAship.

- The student is responsible for working on the assigned project for 20* hours per week during the coming term, and not beyond this term unless the RAship is renewed. *15 hours per/week for a first year PhD student in the first semester
- It is understood that voluntary work on the part of the interested student may continue past this term if she/he is able to given other commitments, but is not required as part of the RAship.
- The advisor and student work together to ensure that RA responsibilities are being met.
- The RA advisor is responsible for supervising and directing the student’s work during the term of the appointment.
- The advisor also will be solicited for formal feedback as part of the twice-yearly evaluation of students.

We hope that this agreement helps foster conditions for a productive and enjoyable research experience!

Responsibilities and Expectations of Student’s RAship (describe relevant details, such as hours, frequency of meetings, nature of work, products to be produced, benchmarks and timeline):

| Work 20 hours per week |
The RAship for the Semester Year semester begins on Date and ends on Date. The RA is expected to lead filling out this form, and confirming/further developing responsibilities and expectations with the RAship advisor. If you have any questions, please contact the Department Manager, Vickie S. Beaulieu (vickie_beaulieu@brown.edu).

Student

Faculty Member

Graduate Program Director
## APPENDIX J
Department of Epidemiology TA/TE/STA Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Obligation (max. hours per week)</th>
<th>Minimum Class Size†</th>
<th>Assignment Process</th>
<th>Typical Activities*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Teaching Assistant (TA)§        | 20                               | 25                  | GPD appoints TAships with input from faculty, Department Manager, and Department Chair | - Grading and marking  
- Hold office hours  
- Develop midterms and finals  
- Run tutorials or lab sessions  
- Facilitate class discussions |
|                                 | (replaces RAship, usually in 2nd year) |                      |                                                                                  |                     |
| Teaching Experience (TE)        | 10                               | 10                  | GPD appoints TEs with input from faculty, Department Manager, and Department Chair | - Deliver guest lecture(s)  
- Contribute to lesson plans  
- Participate in syllabus development  
- Hold office hours  
- Facilitate class discussions  
- Run tutorials or lab sessions |
|                                 | (for course credit, usually taken in 3rd or 4th year) |                      |                                                                                  |                     |
| Supplemental Teaching Assignment (STA) | Varies (5-12); request in course budget  
$17/hr PhD; $15/hr Master's | N/A                 | Faculty request STAs to Barbara Dailey before semester begins. | - Grading and marking  
- Hold office hours  
- Develop midterms and finals  
- Facilitate class discussions |

† Class sizes above the minimum do not guarantee a TA or TE. Assignments are based on course content, instructional method (e.g., labs or tutorials), and student availability. For AY 2015-2016, the functional minimums (based on past enrollment) for TAs and TEs were 50 and 20, respectively.

* Specific responsibilities are at the discretion of the instructor.

§ Students on externally-funded awards (e.g., NIH NSRA F31s) are waived from the TA requirement during the tenure of the award.
Dissertation Committee Confirmation Form
(Consult Student Handbook for Details/Requirements)

Student Name: ___________________________ Date: __________________
Department: ____________________________________________

Proposed Topic and Committee Members (three required; additional space provided):

Dissertation Title: ____________________________________________

Dissertation Advisor: ___________________________ - Type or Print Name - Signature

Committee Member: ___________________________ - Type or Print Name - Signature

Committee Member: ___________________________ - Type or Print Name - Signature

Committee Member: ___________________________ - Type or Print Name - Signature

Committee Member: ____________________________________________

☐ (Check if member is External Reader)

Type or Print Name - Signature

Obtain Graduate Program Director’s Signature:

___________________________________________________________
Graduate Program Director Signature Date

Public Health ♦ 121 S. Main Street ♦ Providence, RI 02912
Oral Exam Date Request Form
(Consult Student Handbook for Details/Requirements)

Student Name: ____________________ Date: ____________________
Department: ____________________
Dissertation Title: ____________________

Committee Members (Type or Print Names):

Oral Exam Chair: ____________________
Dissertation Advisor: ____________________
Committee Member: ____________________
Committee Member: ____________________
Committee Member: ____________________
Committee Member: ____________________
“(Check if External Reader)” ____________________

Schedule Oral Exam and Submit Dissertation Proposal
(Exam should be scheduled 2-3 weeks in advance, and should be completed six to nine months
from the time of a successful written examination)

Proposed Oral Exam Date: _____________ Oral Exam Location: _____________
(Contact Administrative Coordinator)
Proposal has been provided to committee members? □

Obtain Graduate Program Director’s Signature:

_________________________ Graduate Program Director Signature __________________________ Date

Distribution: Provide copies to the Program Director and Administrative Coordinator
Oral Exam Results Form

Student Portion

Student Name: ___________________________ Date of Oral Exam: ________________
Department: ______________________________
Dissertation Title: ___________________________________________________________

Committee Members (Type or Print Names):

____________________________________  ______________________________
Dissertation Advisor  Committee Member

____________________________________  ______________________________
Committee Member  Committee Member

Oral Exam Chair Portion
(Please give copies to the Graduate Program Director, Administrative Coordinator, and student)

Outcome:
- Student Passed (Date Passed: ________________)
- Student Conditionally Passed  □ Student Did Not Pass
- Request to Change Academic Advisor (New Advisor’s Name: ______________________)

Overview of What Happened During the Oral Exam:
(If student conditionally passed, what must the student do in order to pass?)

Oral Exam Chair’s Signature:

____________________________________  ______________________________  __________
Print Name  Signature  Date

Public Health  121 S. Main Street  Providence, RI 02912
Dissertation Defense Information

Student Name: _____________________________ SIS ID Number: ________________________

Department: ______________________________

Previous Degrees

Degree  Institution  Date Awarded
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

Defense Details

Date____________________ Time____________________
Building__________________ Room__________________

Exact Title of Dissertation


Committee

Director____________________ Department____________________
Reader____________________ Department____________________
Reader____________________ Department____________________
Reader____________________ Department____________________

Preliminary Examination  Language Requirements

Date Passed____________________ Date Passed____________________
Date Passed____________________ Date Passed____________________

Departmental Teaching Requirement

☐ Satisfied  ☐ Not Required

Supervised Research Requirement

☐ Satisfied  ☐ Not Required

Director of Graduate Study ___________________________ Date ______________________
### ScM Program Progression Checklist - Epidemiology

**Student Name:**  
**Advisor:**  
**Semester Enrolled:**  
**Mentor:**  
**Date Last Submitted:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Courses</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Semester &amp; Year Completed</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHP 101</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SAS Data Management 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAS Data Management 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCR Training (non-credit)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PHP 2150 Intro to Epidemiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHP 2200 Intermediate Epidemiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHP 2130 Human Biology</td>
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<td>Progress Report (January 15th of 2nd year)</td>
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<td>Thesis</td>
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Form Last Updated Spring 2019
# PhD Program Progression Checklist - Epidemiology

**Student Name:**

**Advisor:**

**Semester Enrolled:**

**Date Last Submitted:**

**Mentor:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>9 Core Courses - credit &amp; 2-3 non-credit</th>
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<td>PHP 2510 Principles of Biostats &amp; Data Analysis</td>
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<td>PHP 2090 Scientific Writing in Public Health</td>
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<td>RCR (non-credit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Development Plan</td>
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<td>TA Requirement (Please provide class information)</td>
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<td>TE Requirement (Please provide class information)</td>
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<td>Written Qualifying Exam (Please provide exam dates)</td>
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<td>Defense Date (End of Semester 8)</td>
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<td>Defense Flyer (3-4 wks prior)</td>
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Journal Club Waiver Form

Every doctoral student in the School of Public Health is required to attend Journal Club each semester while enrolled in the program unless exempted by the student’s Graduate Program Director. However, the Graduate Program Director should notify the Instructor of Record, in writing, of any exemptions being granted each semester. Please fill out the fields below in order for you to receive exception from this departmental requirement. Journal Club waiver forms are to be filed in the department student’s file or e-record.

Student Name:

(First)____________________ (Last)____________________

Please provide a few words, explaining the reason you would like to obtain a waiver from this requirement:

Student Signature

_____________________________________________________________________

The student above is exempt from participating in Journal Club for (provide year) __________ (fall or spring semester) __________.

Graduate Program Director

(First)____________________ (Last)____________________

Graduate Program Director Signature

_____________________________________________________________________

Brown University ◘ School of Public Health ◘ Box G-S121-4, Providence, RI 02912 ◘ 401-863-2768 o ◘ 401-863-6657 f ◘ Melissa_Clark@brown.edu
Conference Travel Funding

Procedures

Graduate School Funding (all graduate students):

Graduate students who present at academic conferences can apply to the Graduate School for up to $650 to cover related travel expenses. Given funding limitations, application does not guarantee support. *Eligible graduate students will be reimbursed for a maximum of one conference per fiscal year (July 1 through June 30)*, as determined by the end date of travel. Reimbursement will not be granted for merely attending a conference.

[CLICK HERE](#) for Graduate School Conference Travel information and the link to the Graduate School’s “Conference travel funding application.” All application must be submitted online using the UFUNDS online module. Please scan and upload conference description and appropriate documentation to UFUNDS. Conference travel related questions should be submitted to graduate-travel@brown.edu.

School of Public Health Funding (doctoral students):

Doctoral students, who present original work at academic conferences, can request support from both the Graduate School (see above instructions) and the School of Public Health. The School of Public Health will provide up to $400 to cover related travel expenses not covered by the Graduate School. Students are eligible to receive these funds one time, at any time during their doctoral training period. Given funding limitations, application does not guarantee support. When requesting both Graduate School and School of Public Health support, doctoral students must:

- Complete the online UFUNDS Application. Where instructed, “Please indicate any other funding you expect to receive for this trip,” the student should write “School of Public Health” and the $ amount (up to $400) being requested of the School.
- Attach confirmation of invitation to present research at a conference program with name and presentation title.
- Sixth year students should also attach a letter of support from the Director of Graduate Studies for their program or submit the DGS Travel Approval form (see appendix).
- Submit a copy of the approved UFUNDS application via email to Barbara Dailey (Barbara_dailey@brown.edu).
- If a doctoral student is only requesting SPH support, please explain in an email to Barbara Dailey why you are not applying for Grad School funds for this trip.

Conference Travel Reimbursement Instructions (all graduate students):

After travel is completed, graduate students must submit appropriate documentation [as explained on the Graduate School’s Conference Travel Reimbursement webpage] to their home program’s administrative coordinator for approval and electronic processing of the reimbursement request. If the documents submitted do not correspond to those guidelines, reimbursement requests will be returned for completion.
Completed travel reimbursement requests should be submitted to the home program no later than 30 days after completion of travel; those submitted after 45 days will not be reimbursed.

**Joukowsky Summer Research Award** (all graduate students):

The **Joukowsky Summer Research Award** was developed by the Graduate School to provide additional funding for scholarly activities outside of Brown during the summer months. Students conducting research or traveling for other academic purposes during the summer months (May – August) may be eligible for this award. Awards are provided from a minimum of $500 up to a maximum of $1,500 per summer. The application period is January 1 through the last day of February. The awards are highly competitive as funds are limited, and will be based upon academic merit and projected impact on the research trajectory or academic training. Proposals will be reviewed by the Graduate School and award notifications will be sent to applicants by April 15. Research awards will be disbursed in May or June by special request or by travel reimbursement upon return from summer research studies.

All applications must be submitted using the **UFUNDS online module**. Joukowsky research travel related questions should be submitted via email to **graduate-travel@brown.edu**.

Other Research Travel Opportunities:

- [Global Mobility Research Fellowship](#)
- [International Travel Fund](#)
- [Student Research Grants in Judaic Studies](#)
- [CFAR Trainee Support Awards](#)

Graduate students are required to register their international travel with **International SOS**. Students should take advantage of International SOS travel advice and services.
The School of Public Health offers lockers to Masters Students. This form is due by the first day of classes. However, if there are less lockers available than the number of forms submitted, you will be entered into our “Locker Lottery” and will be notified by the second week of classes regarding locker assignments. Student use of lockers start the first day of classes in September and expire on May 31. Users must provide their own locks, but should be aware that we reserve the right to remove the lock in extenuating circumstances. Any locks remaining on June 1 will be removed and the contents of the locker disposed of.

All lockers are the property of Brown University and, therefore, you are expected to follow all applicable University guidelines. Lockers should not be defaced in any way and should be kept reasonably clean, sticker free, odor free, and its contents should not affect others.

I have read and agree to follow the University guidelines.

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________

Student Signature: _________________________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________________________________

Banner ID: ________________________________________________________________

Degree Program: ___________________________________________________________

Please bring this form to the front desk on the 3rd floor of the SPH building by the first day of classes.

Locker Number: ______________