

Master of Science (MS) in Health Services Research

GUIDEBOOK

2016 – 2017



Boston University School of Public Health
Department of Health Law, Policy & Management

MS PROGRAM IN HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Department of Health Law, Policy & Management

Talbot Building, West Wing, 2nd and 3rd Floors

Boston, Massachusetts 02118

Fax 617.638.5374

www.bu.edu/sph/hpm

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mari-Lynn Drainoni

Director

MS Program in Health Services Research

(617) 414-1417

drainoni@bu.edu

Michael Stein

Chair, HLPM Department

(617) 414-1309

mdstein@bu.edu

Marianna McGrath

Curriculum Coordinator, HLPM Department

(617) 414-1473

mcgrath2@bu.edu

Karen Greene

Administrative Director, HLPM Department

(617) 414-1423

molloyk@bu.edu

Suzie Kallin

Administrative Coordinator, HLPM Department

(617) 414-1420

suziek@bu.edu

Boston University Policy Statement

Boston University and the Boston University School of Public Health reserve the right to change the policies, curricula, or any other matter in this handbook without prior notice. Students will be notified of major changes as soon as practicable after they are decided.

Boston University School of Public Health
Department of Health Law, Policy & Management
Talbot Building, West Wing, 2nd and 3rd Floors
715 Albany Street, Boston, MA 02118
www.bu.edu/sph/hpm





Mission

The mission of the Boston University School of Public Health is to improve the health of local, national and international populations, particularly the disadvantaged, underserved and vulnerable, through excellence and innovation in education, research and service.

Strategic Themes

Involved: Emphasize real-world involvement and meaningful partnerships
Interconnected: Emphasize interdisciplinary efforts and integrated programs
Global: Emphasize global health issues and perspectives

Table of Contents

| | | | |
|---|----------|--|-----------|
| Welcome from Program Director | 1 | Registration Requirements | |
| Quick Reference Guide..... | 2 | Program Time limit | |
| Important Dates | 3 | Course Waivers and Transfer Credit | |
| Section 1: Introduction to the MS | | Required Training as Researchers | |
| Program in HSR | 5 | International Students | |
| Overview | | Section 5: Student Resources and | |
| MS Program Leadership | | Professional Development | 18 |
| MS Program Requirements | | Advising | |
| Competencies | | Academic Assistance | |
| Section 2: MS Course Requirements | 7 | Disability Services | |
| Course Requirements and Electives | | Student Health and Behavioral Medicine | |
| Continuing Study | | Communications | |
| Section 3: Thesis for the MS program | 9 | Events | |
| General Description | | Public Health Forum | |
| Finding a Topic | | Professional Development | |
| Thesis Mentoring and Advising | | Professional Associations | |
| Topic Approval Form and Thesis Proposal | | Section 6: Faculty | 23 |
| Thesis Content | | APPENDICES | |
| Thesis Defense | | Appendix A: Thesis Resources | 25 |
| Post-Defense: Submission of Thesis | | General Overview | |
| Section 4: Boston University and SPH | | Policy for MS HSR Thesis Proposal Approval | |
| Student Policies | 12 | Thesis Topic/Committee Approval Form | |
| Compliance Requirements for all Students | | MS Thesis Proposal Template | |
| Childbirth/Adoption Accommodation Policy | | Thesis Completion Record | |
| Academic Honesty | | Thesis Signature Page Template | |
| Grading Standards, Probation, Dismissal | | Appendix B: MS Competencies | 32 |

Welcome!

This guidebook is intended to be a helpful reference throughout your time in the MS in Health Services Research program here at BUSPH, and is updated each academic year to reflect current calendars and changes in curriculum. If you have suggestions for other information that would be helpful to include, we would love to entertain those suggestions. We also encourage you to use this guidebook in conversation with your faculty mentors at each stage of the program as a way to ensure that your planning is consistent with program expectations and parameters.

As MS students, you represent the future of our field and we are committed to providing a program and mentoring that will enable you to successfully move into the next phase of your career. We look forward to working with you throughout your academic program, and urge you to take full advantage of the many resources that are available within the School and broader Boston community to support and extend your learning.

Warmly,

Mari-Lynn Drainoni, Ph.D.
Faculty Director, MS program

Health Services Research Programs Committee:

Sally Bachman, Ph.D.

Dan Berlowitz, M.D.

Barbara Bokhour, Ph.D.

Kathleen Carey, Ph.D.

Jack Clark, Ph.D.

Mari-Lynn Drainoni, Ph.D.

Alan Jette, Ph.D.

Lewis Kazis, Ph.D.

Vicky Parker, D.B.A.

Quick Reference Guide

Please see the SPH [Bulletin](#) and the SPH Student [Handbook](#) for all resources available to SPH students.

| Subject | Office & Contact Info |
|---|---|
| Course Materials | <p>Online: Course information, assignments, and syllabi are often posted on Blackboard. A BU email address and Kerberos password are required for access.</p> <p>Course Readers and textbooks are available for purchase through Barnes & Noble bookstore located at 660 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston University Charles River Campus.</p> |
| Career Services: Resume reviews; Networking; Job fairs; Career workshops | <p>Office of Career Services Talbot 1 East Lisa Toby, 617-638-4675 Justine de Marrais, 617-638-4695</p> |
| Financial Assistance | <p>Office of Student Financial Services Email: osfs-sph@bumc.bu.edu 617-638-5130; or 877-776-6243 SPH Admissions, Financing Your Education</p> |
| Housing: Seeking a roommate | <p>Office of Housing Resources</p> |
| Library Resources: Paper and online books and journals; Reserve materials; Computer labs; Research guides | <p>Alumni Medical Library L Building, 12th Floor 617-638-4232 Boston University Library Network</p> |
| Parking and Transportation: Student T passes; bike cages; parking | <p>Office of Parking and Transportation Services 710 Albany Street 617-638-4915</p> |
| Registration Information: Graduation applications; Course Rotation guide; Academic policies | <p>Office of Professional & Academic Services Talbot 2 Center Alan Hatton, 617-638-4994 Brendan Hoey, 617-638-5062 Amelia Williams, 617-638-5057</p> <p>Course registration and unofficial transcripts are available through Student Link Official transcripts available at through the University Registrar's Office</p> |
| Student Health Behavioral Medicine | <p>Student Health Services 881 Commonwealth Avenue, 617-353-3575 OR Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Building, 85 E. Newton St. Suite 816, 617-353-3569</p> |
| Student Services: Student organizations; Academic accommodations; Orientation; Commencement; Student events | <p>Office of Graduate Student Life Talbot 2 Center Mary Murphy-Phillips, 617-638-5059 Chase Crossno, 617-638-5006</p> |

IMPORTANT DATES THROUGHOUT THE ACADEMIC YEAR

Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH), like other schools & programs on the Medical Campus, maintains its own academic calendar distinct from the Charles River Campus. It is important that students always refer to the BUSPH registration packets, academic calendar, and websites for SPH-specific information.

BUSPH Key Dates

BUSPH key registration and course schedule dates can be found on the [Academic Calendar](#).

Fall 2016 Withdrawal* and Tuition Refund [Schedule](#)

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| On or before September 5 | 100% refund of tuition and fees |
| September 6 – September 19 | 80% refund of tuition only |
| September 20 – September 26 | 60% refund of tuition only |
| September 27 – October 3 | 40% refund of tuition only |
| October 4 – October 11 | 20% refund of tuition only |
| As of October 12 | 0% refund |

*A withdrawal means dropping ALL classes at the University. Students must complete a withdrawal form (forms are available in the SPH Registrar's Office).

| Master of Science and Doctoral Graduation Calendar | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| MS and Doctoral Candidates (MS/PhD) | September 25, 2016 Award | January 25, 2017 Award | May 20, 2017 Award |
| Graduation Application (submitted to the BUSPH registrar) | June 24, 2016 | October 21, 2017 | February 10, 2017 |
| Thesis/Dissertation Abstract (submitted to the HSR Program Director) | At least 30 days prior to the Thesis/Dissertation Defense | At least 30 days prior to the Thesis/Dissertation Defense | At least 30 days prior to the Thesis/Dissertation Defense |
| Last Date to hold Thesis/Dissertation Defense | August 26, 2016 | November 25, 2016 | April 7, 2017 |
| Deadline for Submission of Approved and Signed Dissertation (submitted electronically to Mugar Memorial Library via ProQuest) | September 16, 2016 | December 16, 2016 | April 28, 2017 |

School of Public Health Policy on Religious and Government Holidays

The School, in scheduling classes on religious or government holidays, intends that students observing these holidays be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe such holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet with their classes or for canceled classes to be rescheduled.

Emergency Cancellation Information

In the event of an emergency or class cancellation, notices will be posted to the [BUSPH Student Page](#) and the [BUSPH website](#). Email messages will also be sent to faculty, staff and students in the event of closings. A message will also be posted to the BUSPH main telephone number: 617-638-4640.

PLEASE NOTE: Do not rely on information about closings for the Charles River Campus or Boston University. The Boston University Medical Campus has different closing policies from the Charles River Campus. Obtain information specific to SPH from the above resources. Instructors are required to reschedule cancelled classes. Students will be notified by the instructor of make-up dates for any cancelled classes.

Emergency Make-Up Days

In an effort to better manage emergency closings which cancel classes, SPH has scheduled two dates in the Fall 2016 semester and several in the Spring 2017 semester as make-up class days:

Faculty and students are urged to keep these dates open on their personal calendars in the event that they are needed for class make-up times.

Fall 2016 Make-Up Days

- Saturday, November 12
- Sunday, November 13

Spring 2017 Make-Up Days

- Saturday, March 18
- Sunday, March 19
- Saturday, April 1
- Sunday, April 2
- Saturday, April 8
- Sunday, April 9

Section

1

Introduction to the MS in Health Services Research

OVERVIEW

What Is Health Services Research?

Health services research is the multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviors affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and ultimately our health and well-being. Its research domains are individuals, families, organizations, institutions, communities, and populations.

(Defined by AcademyHealth, June 2000)

The Health Services Research (HSR) program at the Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) focuses on developing independent research scientists and scholars with excellent methodological skills and strong substantive knowledge of health care settings and policies. The methodological skill emphasis encompasses qualitative and quantitative methods and an understanding of diverse interdisciplinary perspectives. The development of substantive knowledge occurs in the context of the multiple and diverse perspectives on the delivery of health services. The desired program outcome is for students to develop the necessary skills to conceive, design and execute innovative research projects of high quality. The practical context of the educational approach employed will enable students to produce research findings that address challenging problems in clinical and management settings and to translate and apply them in those settings.

* * *

This program is committed to education in both quantitative and qualitative research methods and encourages students to develop facility in mixed methods research. This program has particular strengths in health services research related to health care quality and outcomes, health economics, organizational behavior and transformation, and how to improve the implementation and sustainability of desired changes in health care.

The BUSPH HSR program is based upon the theoretical knowledge and core competencies that the program has identified as critical foundations. In particular, the program focuses on developing the ability to apply or develop theoretical and conceptual models relevant to health services research. Students in the BUSPH program develop the ability to create trans-disciplinary models that incorporate elements of frameworks from across fields, depending on the depth of their previous background and additional perspectives gained in the program. Conceptual frameworks available for study in this program include those derived from social sciences (e.g. economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology); management sciences (e.g. organizational theory, operations research); epidemiology; implementation sciences and clinical sciences.

This program ties classroom education closely to practical experience in research. Our students are assisted, encouraged and expected to begin developing their own research projects early in their studies. Most students also work directly with a faculty mentor to gain hands-on experience in current health services research.

At BUSPH, the HSR program is enriched by a department faculty drawn from many of the above fields. Faculty members are actively engaged in diverse areas of research, and the department is closely affiliated with a nearby US Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Excellence in Health Services Research. Our diverse student body also enriches classroom discussions, as the MS and PhD students in HSR courses include physicians in research-focused clinical fellowships, other clinicians, and students entering with Master's Degrees in public health, economics, management, psychology, and many other fields.

MS PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

The Health Services Research Programs Committee, chaired by the Program Director and composed of department faculty, oversees the MS/PhD programs in Health Services Research and develops and implements the guidelines outlined in this guidebook. The HSR Programs Committee delegates authority to other persons for certain functions, such as the thesis committee for a student's MS thesis, but retains final authority in decisions concerning individual students. This authority includes approving or disapproving a student's MS studies, approving members of a student's thesis committee, thesis topic, and final thesis, and dismissal of students from the MS program. All thesis topics and thesis committees are reviewed and approved by the HSR Programs Committee as described in Section 3.

MS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The School of Public Health requires students pursuing a Master of Science in Health Services Research to:

- Complete at least 32 graduate-level credits
- Complete at least 24 credits within the Boston University School of Public Health
- Earn at least a B in all MS coursework
- Earn a BUSPH grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher
- Participate in two Boston University training programs: training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) and training in the Protection of Human Research Subjects
- Complete a thesis
- Complete all MS degree requirements within 5 years

COMPETENCIES

Appendix B includes a full list of competencies students gain through the MS program in Health Services Research.

Section

2

MS Course Requirements

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ELECTIVES

All MS in Health Services Research students are required to complete 32 graduate-level credits, 24 of which must be taken at the Boston University School of Public Health. Students must earn a "B" or better in all MS coursework.

| <i>Must earn a B or better in all six Required Courses and Elective Courses</i> | Semester Offered |
|---|-------------------------|
| REQUIRED COURSES INCLUDE THESE SIX: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BS704: Introduction to Biostatistics (3) | Fall, Spring, Summer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EP713: Introduction to Epidemiology (3) | Fall, Spring, Summer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PH842: Research Theory and Design (2) | Fall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PH843: Quantitative Methods for Health Services and other Public Health research (2) | Fall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PH844: Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods (2) | Spring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PM814: Contemporary Theoretical & Empirical Issues in Health Services (4) | Fall |
| AND ONE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK COURSE: | |
| *Note: Only one Health Economics course may be taken for the MS. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PM824: Theory and Research on Organizations (4) OR | Alt. Fall (odd year) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PM826: Health, Illness and the Use of Health Services (4) OR | Alt. Spring (even year) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PM831: Implementation Science (2) OR | Fall & Spring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PM837: Evaluating Health Care Quality (4)* OR | Fall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PM842: Health Economics for Health Services Research (4)* OR | Alt. Spring (odd year) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PM844: Health Policy & Policy Making for Public Health Researchers (4) OR | Alt. Spring (odd year) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CAS EC581: Health Economics (4)* | Spring |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Plus elective courses as needed to complete the required minimum of 32 credits, from among the following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BS723 (4) <input type="checkbox"/> BS775 (4) <input type="checkbox"/> BS805 (4) <input type="checkbox"/> BS810 (4) <input type="checkbox"/> LW751 (4) <input type="checkbox"/> SB818 (4) <input type="checkbox"/> PM821 (3) <input type="checkbox"/> PM828 (4) <input type="checkbox"/> PM830 (4) <input type="checkbox"/> PM855 (4) OR PM807 (2)*Cannot take both <input type="checkbox"/> CAS EC501 (4) <input type="checkbox"/> GMS MA710 (3) <p><i>Or choose electives from among the above "Conceptual Framework" courses that are not used to meet that requirement. Other courses may be approved by the Program Director</i></p> | |
| <p>Thesis Requirement: Must have approved proposal to begin thesis. Must register for PM980 Continuing Study every fall and spring semester that the thesis is not completed after coursework has been finished.</p> | |
| <p>Please note – Calendar for Thesis Defense and Submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Approved Thesis Abstract must be submitted to BUSPH Program Director at least 30 days before Thesis Defense * Thesis Defense: see semester deadlines, published annually for BUSPH * Library Submission of Approved Thesis: see BUSPH semester deadlines | |

- A description of all BUSPH courses can be found on the Boston University [Bulletin](#).
- More information on course schedules, rotation guides and all BUSPH course evaluations are available [online](#).

CONTINUING STUDY

MS students who have finished coursework and are working only on their thesis must register for PM980, Continuing Study, each fall and spring semester until the thesis is completed. Continuing Study allows for access to advisors and other BUSPH and university resources. Registration for PM980 with additional full-time certification ("Certified Full-time") coding by the SPH Registrar may facilitate deferring payment on student loans and obtaining financial aid. (Note that the cost of PM980 is equivalent to 2 credits, but the student is registered for zero credits, and no grade is generated.)

Any interruption in Continuing Study should be documented by applying for a leave of absence, which must be approved by the Program Director.

If students are full-time BU employees, they can choose to be in part-time Continuing Study so that tuition remission may be utilized to cover the Continuing Study cost.

Section**3**

Thesis for the MS in Health Services Research

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A Master's thesis is required of all MS students. Once a student has his or her proposed thesis topic and thesis committee (using the thesis topic approval form) approved by the HSR Programs Committee, the MS candidate may proceed with developing a full thesis proposal to be evaluated and approved by the candidate's thesis committee. The thesis defense requirement for all MS students is an oral presentation of the thesis work, which is voted on for approval by the student's thesis committee.

Generally, it takes a minimum of six months for this process to be completed, so students are advised to plan ahead. Deadlines for submission of graduation application, abstract approval, oral defense, and library submission of the completed thesis are published annually by the BUSPH Registrar in the Graduation Calendar included at the front of the MS Guidebook. The Guidebook also includes the Thesis Topic Approval Form and the necessary forms that must be completed before and after the oral defense.

FINDING A TOPIC

The thesis should address a clearly defined research question in an area of interest to the student and to the wider health services research community. Ordinarily, the best way to discover topics of interest is to read the literature and search for questions that are raised but unanswered, or for questions where the evidence is mixed and further work with refined questions or methodologies can help.

THESIS MENTORING AND ADVISING

The thesis committee shall consist of one Thesis Chairperson and at least one other committee member who must be a Boston University faculty member. The Thesis Chairperson must be a Department of Health Law, Policy and Management faculty member. For some committees, depending on the content area of the thesis, two committee members in addition to the Chairperson will be recommended. It is strongly recommended that students choose committee members who have expertise in the content and methods areas of their theses. Students may want to add additional committee members to assist with particular analytic design problems who may come from other departments in the School of Public Health, the School of Medicine, or outside the University. The student's initial Academic Advisor may or may not be an official member of the thesis committee, but should assist in connecting the student with the communities and resources necessary to develop the thesis proposal, form the committee, and complete the work. The HSR Program Committee must approve the thesis committee as part of the Thesis Topic/Committee Approval process.

TOPIC APPROVAL FORM AND THESIS PROPOSAL

No earlier than May after the first year of study, but within three months of course completion, the MS candidate will submit the Thesis Topic/Committee Approval Form to the HSR Program Committee, which includes both a brief synopsis of the proposed thesis research, and the proposed composition and rationale for the thesis committee. All members of the proposed thesis committee must either sign the approval form or e-mail their approval of the candidate's thesis topic proposal to the HSR Curriculum Coordinator before it will be reviewed by the HSR Program Committee.

Once the form and committee approvals are received, this will be placed on the agenda for the next month's HSR Program Committee meeting. If the HSR Program Committee anticipates issues with either the research topic or the thesis committee composition, written feedback will be provided to both the student and thesis committee members following the meeting. Once the Thesis Topic/Committee Approval form is approved by the HSR Programs Committee, the MS candidate may proceed with developing and writing the full thesis proposal which will be evaluated and approved solely by the candidate's thesis committee. Once the full proposal is approved, a copy should be submitted to the HSR Curriculum Coordinator for tracking purposes. This is also the time to address any Institutional Review Board (IRB) issues. Some research will be exempt from IRB approval or the student may be conducting his/her study as part of a previously approved research project, but other research will require full IRB approval. This process easily can take two to three months of work with careful involvement of the thesis committee.

The structure of the full proposal should follow the format of the MS Thesis Proposal template included in the Guidebook. Elements of the proposal that must be included are: a thorough literature review, conceptual framework, research question(s), and a complete plan for methods and analysis. The conceptual framework is extremely important and should be thought about carefully. It includes a description of key concepts and themes, a contextual relationship to the problem being studied, and a linkage to the intellectual, cognitive, and social communities to which the research is intended to speak. Students should consult with the Program Director and their thesis committee to ensure that expectations are met.

THESIS CONTENT

Following approval of the proposal, students should begin to complete the thesis. The completed thesis must display proficiency with application of research and analytic skills (quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods) or may be a systematic literature review. Elements that must be included in the final thesis are: introduction, background and complete review of the literature, conceptual framework, research question(s), a complete methods section, results, discussion, conclusion/implications for HSR, references, and appendices. The thesis proposal and/or thesis itself may require significant revisions after review by the thesis committee on methodological issues, results, and discussion/conclusions or in writing/editing; therefore students should plan time to complete multiple drafts. All review efforts are designed to make the research process itself go more smoothly and to mirror the research process in which many students will become actively engaged upon program completion.

THESIS DEFENSE

The thesis defense is an oral presentation of the thesis work, with thesis committee members present, and to which all interested persons are invited. A final draft of the entire

thesis must be sent to thesis committee members, with committee agreement that it is ready to defend. Although students work with their committee members to identify the exact timing, it is recommended that the final thesis be submitted to the Committee at least 30 days in advance of the defense to allow for any additional changes to be completed before the defense. A 350-word abstract approved by the thesis committee, must be submitted to the Program Director and Curriculum Coordinator at least 30 days before the defense date. Student must consult with the thesis committee to identify a date and time for the thesis defense. Once a date and time is established, contact the HSR Curriculum Coordinator to address all administrative and process details.

On the scheduled date of defense, the student will present for approximately 30-45 minutes. This will be followed by a brief question and answer period from both the committee members and others in attendance. Immediately after the question and answer period, the committee will privately and briefly deliberate to determine success of the defense. The decision will be announced to all those in attendance. Students can expect this process to take no more than two hours. Despite successful defense, the committee may request that the student make modifications prior to submission.

POST-DEFENSE: SUBMISSION OF THESIS

Please note that students must submit a graduation application by the date specified in the BU calendar. This is often before the date of the thesis defense. Students are responsible for submission of the graduation application and all other materials within the required deadlines.

Dissertations and theses are submitted to the Mugar Library electronically via ProQuest ETD Administrator. The thesis must be in PDF format with embedded fonts and no password restrictions; otherwise, the system will not accept the upload. The library has produced a [guide](#) and a series of brief, [informative videos](#) to help with this process. It is recommended that students review the final draft of the thesis as early as possible with [Brendan McDermott](#), Thesis & Dissertation Coordinator, Mugar Memorial Library, Room 306.

Section

4

Boston University and BUSPH Student Policies

In addition to the selected academic policies outlined in this guidebook, all MS students must adhere to all Boston University School of Public Health [Academic Policies](#), the University's [Administrative Policies](#), and the policies listed in the School of Public Health [Student Handbook](#).

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL BOSTON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Boston University policy requires students be in compliance with four requirements (payment, health, BU alert number, and Massachusetts Motor Vehicle Law) in order to be in status with the University. You may check your compliance status through [Student Link](#).

The SPH Registrar's Office is blocked from entering registration for any student who is not in compliance with University requirements and cannot manually override this block and register students. If you need assistance with compliance information, please talk with a staff member in the SPH Registrar's Office.

If you have any questions regarding the purpose of the compliance requirements, or would like more information on the requirements, visit the [Registrars website](#).

Massachusetts Motor Vehicle Law

The Massachusetts Motor Vehicle Law requires that all out-of-state students, including those who do not bring cars to Massachusetts, sign an acknowledgement that they have been informed of the law.

The Massachusetts Motor Vehicle Law requires out-of-state students bringing vehicles into the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to file a non-resident driver statement with the local police department in the city in which their university is located. Students must formally acknowledge they have been notified of the law by clicking on the acknowledge button at [here](#). Students who fail to do so will not be in compliance and will be unable to register for upcoming semesters.

BU Alert Telephone Number

Boston University requires all students studying on Massachusetts campuses must provide a BU Alert phone number, which is used to notify you of a University-wide emergency. View and update your BU Alert phone number on the [Student Link](#), Personal Tab, Address and Phone Option.

Immunization Requirements

In the spirit of public health, we ask all students to be sure their immunizations are up to date, although part time students will not be asked to verify their immunization status.

International students must meet mandatory state immunization requirements at the time of registration.

For more information about immunization requirements, go to the [Student Health Services website](#).

Tuition Payment

All students must pay their bill by published tuition payment deadlines.

THE CHILDBIRTH AND ADOPTION ACCOMODATION POLICY

The [childbirth and adoption accommodation policy](#) for full-time or certified full-time MS students in good academic standing provides for extensions for academic coursework and other requirements to the primary caregiver of an infant or adopted child. It also provides for a continuation of stipend support for funded students during the accommodation period. Details of this policy can be found here:

BOSTON UNIVERSITY INFORMATION REGARDING ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty is essential for students to attain the competencies the University and School expect of graduates, and any action by a student that subverts these goals seriously undermines the integrity of the educational programs at the School. Students at the Boston University School of Public Health are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty.

Academic misconduct is any intentional act or omission by a student which represents his or her academic achievements, or attempts to misrepresent these achievements. While not an exhaustive list, the following acts constitute academic misconduct:

- Cheating on examinations: The use or attempted use of any unauthorized books, notes or other materials in order to enhance the student's performance in the examination, copying or attempting to copy from another student's examination, permitting another student to copy from an examination or otherwise assisting another student during an examination, or any other violation of the examination's stated or commonly understood ground rules.
- Plagiarism: Any representation of the work of another as his or her own constitutes plagiarism. This includes copying or substantially restating the work of another person without the use of quotation marks or other indication that the words of another have been copied, the use of any written or oral work from which the student has obtained ideas or data without acknowledging that person's contribution.
- Submitting the same work in more than one course without the consent of all the instructors.
- Misrepresentation or falsification of data.
- Allowing another student to represent your work as his or her own.

- Violating the rules of an examination or assignment.

Charges of academic misconduct will be brought to the attention of the Associate Dean for Education, who will review all such cases and decide upon the appropriate action. A student who is found guilty of academic misconduct may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the School.

Please view the [full academic misconduct policy](#) for more information.

GRADING STANDARDS, PROBATION, AND DISMISSAL

Grading Standards

All SPH degree candidates must earn a minimum 3.0 GPA each semester to be in good academic standing and to graduate. Master of Science in Health Services Research students must earn a B or better in all MS coursework.

Please see the BUSPH [Grading Policy](#) for information on grade changes and incomplete grades.

Academic Review

At the end of each semester, the grades of all SPH degree candidates will be reviewed against the criteria for Satisfactory Academic Progress by the SAP Committee. Students deemed at risk for failing to make SAP will be notified in writing, with a copy also sent to the Academic Advisor and student record. Such correspondence is not part of the permanent academic record unless the student is subsequently dismissed from SPH for academic reasons.

If deemed necessary by the Committee, a student deemed at risk of not making SAP will work with his or her Academic Advisor and the HSR Program Director to devise a learning plan prior to registration for each upcoming semester. The learning plan should describe a semester-by-semester educational plan to make degree progress while improving the student's GPA. The plan must be signed by the student, his or her Academic Advisor, and the HSR Program Director and be submitted to the SPH registrar. Once a student is deemed at risk, they must exhibit SAP each semester. SAP is defined as steady upward progress toward a 3.0 GPA, completing all courses with required minimum grades, and adhering to the learning plan, as established, unless all parties agree to changes. Any student who continues to fail to make progress in subsequent semesters will be placed on warning. This information is forwarded to financial aid. Any student on warning who again fails to make SAP in the following semester will be placed on academic probation. OSFS may determine that these students are no longer eligible for federal financial aid. The SAP Committee will take appropriate academic action for students on academic probation, including suspension or dismissal. Should a student be suspended, he or she may not make progress toward degree requirements during the period of academic suspension. SPH will not accept transfer credit for courses taken by a suspended SPH student at another school within Boston University or another academic institution during the student's period of suspension.

Annual Progress Report

All MS students are required to submit an annual Progress Report throughout their enrollment in the program to assess individual progression. This report will initially be submitted online to the student's academic advisor and the Program Director, and will be formally reviewed by the HSR Program Committee.

Dismissal

A student who is on probation for not making adequate progress will be dismissed from the program if he/she does not demonstrate substantial progress during the specified probationary period, or does not meet the requirement(s) of probation by the deadline specified by the HSR Program Director. Dismissal may also occur as a result of committing an act of academic dishonesty, as defined in the School's policy on Academic Dishonesty.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

All students at Boston University School of Public Health, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, must register each fall and spring semester during their program until they officially graduate.

Enrollment

International students holding F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant status and who are in residence at Boston University must meet the requirements of their visa, in particular full-time enrollment. Full-time enrollment is achieved by registration for 12 or more credits of academic coursework, or by registration in Continuing Study with additional full-time certification ("Certified Full-time") coding by the SPH Registrar. International students must check in at the Boston University International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) when they first arrive at Boston University and then complete "Semester Verification" in each subsequent semester to ensure that they remain in lawful status. International students who are not full-time by virtue of academic course load (12 credits or more) or who are not certified full time by enrolling in Continuing Study will be considered in violation of their immigration status. Students who violate their status are subject to the penalties prescribed in relevant immigration laws.

Students who are permanent residents or United States citizens may be registered as either part-time or full-time students, and must register for either coursework or Continuing Study each fall and spring semester.

Continuing Study

MS students who have finished coursework and are working only on their thesis must register for PM980, Continuing Study, each fall and spring semester until the thesis is completed. Continuing Study allows for access to advisors and other BUSPH and university resources. Registration for PM980 with additional full-time certification ("Certified Full-time") coding by the SPH Registrar may facilitate deferring payment on student loans and obtaining financial aid. (Note that the cost of PM980 is equivalent to 2 credits, but the student is registered for zero credits, and no grade is generated.)

Any interruption in Continuing Study should be documented by applying for a leave of absence, which must be approved by the Program Director.

If students are full-time BU employees, they can choose to be in part-time Continuing Study so that tuition remission may be utilized to cover the Continuing Study cost.

Leaves of Absence

A student may request a leave of absence of up to one semester by writing a letter to the HSR Program Director and the BUSPH Registrar. Longer leaves of absence may be approved under compelling circumstances. International students must have approval of ISSO to take a leave of absence and must work with ISSO when they are ready to return to their studies.

Students on leave of absence are not entitled to be advised officially by their faculty advisors during a leave of absence, nor do they have library privileges.

PROGRAM TIME LIMIT

The Boston University School of Public Health requires all MS students to complete their degree requirements within 5 years of matriculation. Most students, including part-time students, should be able to finish in less time. Any extensions of the overall time limit must be requested in writing to the HSR Program Director with documentation of the extraordinary circumstances creating the delay and a date by which the requirements will be met. A student who does not meet the time limits established by the program may be dismissed from the program without a degree.

COURSE WAIVERS AND TRANSFER CREDIT

Some SPH students enter their degree program having completed previous coursework that might help them meet degree requirements. Previous graduate-level coursework may be eligible for transfer credit or waiver of particular course requirements, with the approval of the Program Director and Academic Advisor. The course(s) must be degree-related and cannot have been used towards another degree program.

Students also have the opportunity to explore coursework outside of BUSPH, either at other schools within BU or at other approved universities, including courses through the Boston Academic Consortium. Students must seek prior approval from their Academic Advisor and Program Director before registering for courses for which they seek transfer credit. The course waiver and transfer credit policy is available [here](#). The ultimate approval of all waiver or transfer credits must be made by the Program Director and her judgment in this regard will be final.

REQUIRED TRAINING AS RESEARCHERS

All MS HSR students are required to complete two Boston University training programs: training in the [Responsible Conduct of Research](#), which consists of four training sessions; and training in the [Protection of Human Research Subjects](#). These training programs should be completed as early as possible, preferably during the first year of study.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)

The ISSO provides professional expertise on immigration and employment issues to students, faculty, and staff at Boston University.

ISSO Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday: 9:00AM - 5:00PM

Wednesday: 12:00PM - 5:00PM*

**The ISSO office is closed every Wednesday morning until 12:00PM.*

Contact Information:

888 Commonwealth Avenue, 2nd Floor

Boston, MA 02215

Phone: (617) 353-3565

Fax: (617) 358-1170

Email: isso@bu.edu

Students who have any questions regarding their required registration or necessary documents for travel or study should contact the ISSO. If students must visit the office in person, they may take the BU BUS. 888 Commonwealth Avenue is located opposite the C6 – Buick Street and Commonwealth Avenue stop on the BU Shuttle Outbound to the Charles River Campus.

Maintaining Visa Status

To remain lawfully in the United States during their studies, international students must obey the laws regulating F-1 and J-1 visa status. These regulations include, but are not limited to, registering for a full-time course of study (whether by taking 12 or more credits or via registering for Continuing Study during all fall and spring semesters), limiting travel outside the U.S. to no more than 5 months at a time, and maintaining a current and valid I-20. For a complete discussion of these requirements, please visit the ISSO website at the following URLs:

Students on an F-1 visa: bu.edu/isso/students/current/f1.

Students on a J-1 visa: bu.edu/isso/students/current/j1.

International Students Completing the Thesis

Regardless of when they participate in graduation ceremonies, international students officially complete their MS studies when they submit the final version of their thesis and when Boston University certifies that they have successfully completed all degree requirements. Please note that all international students who will complete and submit their thesis during the summer must be registered as continuing students during that summer semester to maintain lawful F-1 status. Otherwise, international students must register in every fall and spring semester.

If an international student is conducting thesis research during the summer that is off campus, the student must be registered for summer research, PH 995 C1.

Section**5****Student Resources
& Professional Development****ADVISING**

The Health Services Research program at BUSPH offers students substantial advising support — from your Academic Advisor, the Program Director, and the department faculty member who eventually chairs your thesis committee.

Program Director

The Program Director is available to discuss your goals and interests, your choice of courses and appropriate schedule, possible research assistant roles, plans for your thesis, and any questions or concerns about the Health Services Research Program.

Academic Advisor

Upon matriculation into the MS program, all students will automatically be assigned an Academic Advisor within the Department of Health Law, Policy & Management. The match will be based on mutual interests and fit. It is not assumed or expected that your pre-thesis Academic Advisor will eventually become your or Thesis Advisor, although this is sometimes the case.

For your successful progress, you should meet regularly with your Academic Advisor to help plan your direction in the program. Your Academic Advisor not only consults on your choice of courses, but—more importantly—helps you begin to think about an appropriate thesis topic, choose a Thesis Advisor, and form a thesis committee.

Further, your Academic Advisor is a professional mentor, available to discuss how you can gain the skills and competencies you need to advance your goals and career. You may wish to discuss, for example, which professional meetings to attend and association(s) to join, how to submit your research findings for presentation at conferences and for publication, or whether and how to seek funding to support your thesis research.

The advisor is available to discuss coursework, potential research topics, career paths, and other issues relevant to the student's success; however, the student bears all responsibility for meeting administrative and academic requirements and deadlines.

A student may request a change in advisor at any point by contacting the Program Director.

Thesis Advisor

At the time a student chooses a thesis topic, a change in advisor may be fitting to provide the student with the most appropriate supervision for completing the thesis. Once the proposed thesis committee is approved by the HSR Programs Committee, the chair of the thesis committee serves as the Academic Advisor for the student. Section 3 provides more information about the thesis process.

Course Planning

As you develop your course plan with the Program Director and your Academic Advisor, this Guidebook and a number of tools included in it will be helpful. You are encouraged to use the MS Course Requirements worksheet in Section 2 of this Guidebook to help keep track of your progress towards meeting MS program course requirements.

Students must obtain prior approval from the Program Director to take any elective course not specifically mentioned in this Guidebook.

Boston University offers its students an enormous array of intellectual opportunities and resources on both the Medical and Charles River Campuses. In addition to successfully completing required courses and your chosen electives, you will need to plan carefully and make choices in your thesis work and supplemental activities to enhance your career preparation.

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

If you experience challenges executing your academic plan, you should consult with your Academic Advisor or the HSR Program Director for guidance. The Registrar's Office is also available to provide help with academic roadblocks. The Office of Graduate Student Life can help students connect with many useful resources.

The University has numerous resources available to students, including the Educational Resource and Writing Centers on the Charles River Campus, and the Public Health Writing Program at SPH. To make an appointment with either writing center, please do so through this [online form](#).

SPH Public Health Writing Program

Peer writing assistance is available free of charge for students who wish to improve their public health writing skills within the context of courses. Writing assistance is provided for all courses that have a writing component and is designed for all levels of writers. Students can receive writing assistance by self-referral or instructor referral. Students bring 2 printed copies of the latest draft of the writing assignment and 2 printed copies of the assignment description to the appointment. Students may have up to two writing appointments per assignment but no more than 14 appointments per semester. Contact the [Educational Resource Coordinator](#) for more information or to schedule an appointment. Or, visit the [site](#). Writing assistance is **not** provided for MS theses.

Charles River Campus Educational Resource and Writing Center

The Educational Resource and Writing Center located on the Charles River Campus offers several types of writing assistance for BU students, including assistance for non-native English speakers. Scheduling of appointments is done through [TutorTrac](#). Students can refer to the [CRC website](#) for more details on writing assistance.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students requiring disability services or accommodations are encouraged to meet with Mary Murphy-Phillips, Director of Student and Educational Services, who is the BUSPH liaison to the Boston University Office of Disability Services. Mary may be reached at 617-638-5059, in her office on Talbot 2 Center, or via [email](#). Students may also refer to the School of

Public Health Student [Handbook](#) and to the Office of Disability Services [website](#) for more information.

STUDENT HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE

BUSPH students have several options for health and medical care, as outlined in the School of Public Health Student [Handbook](#). Students should always refer to their insurance brochure and policy for coverage options, benefits and any restrictions.

IN AN EMERGENCY, GO TO THE CLOSEST HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM.

COMMUNICATIONS

All official communications from BUSPH will be sent to your BU email. Please activate a BU email account as soon as possible after you accept admission to the program. You may elect to have this email forwarded to an alternative email account. You should regularly check and clean out your BU email so the mailbox has sufficient space to accept messages.

There are several ways to stay in touch with faculty and other students and to be informed about events and opportunities at BUSPH.

- **The SPH [website](#)**
- **HSR Update:** Weekly e-mail sent by the HLPM department, with announcements and information specific to the MS & PhD HSR program.
- **SPH [Student Page](#).** You'll also receive school-wide emails announcing information for students. Please be sure to add busph@bu.edu to your safe senders list.
- **The Student [Handbook](#).** This is also available in Student Services, Talbot 209 Center.
- **[BUSPH Bulletin](#)**

EVENTS

Each month, BUSPH hosts several events designed to get students involved in the community and socialize with your fellow students. These opportunities include:

- **5 pm Socials:** Free food held in Chequer's in the L-building basement 3-4 times per semester.
- **Student Meetings with the Deans:** Open discussions and free food for students to discuss issues they find important with the Dean of BUSPH, Sandro Galea and other deans.
- **Student Coffee Chats with Dean Galea:** Each month, Sandro Galea invites students for coffee and a chat to discuss current public health issues.

PUBLIC HEALTH FORUM

BUSPH Public Health Forum is a monthly presentation at which students, faculty, and colleagues gather to examine contemporary problems or issues in the public health world. Speakers include public health practitioners and policy experts from around the globe and faculty from schools of public health. The goal of the Forum is to promote awareness and dialogue about matters critical to the public's health. Past topics include: Fraud in Medical

Research; Strategies for Addressing Health Disparities in Boston; and Male Circumcision: Our Best Available HIV Vaccine.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HSR Student Meetings, HLPM Department Seminars and Other Regular Meetings/ Seminar Series

Health Services Research students are expected to attend the program's student meetings (twice each month), are strongly encouraged to attend the Department Seminars, and are expected to explore other seminar/meeting series at VA CHOIR, HDRI, and other centers. Some series present current health services research and others offer an opportunity to see researchers formulating research proposals and grant applications, collegially offering recommendations to improve them, responding to funders' reviews, and revising proposals, as well as discussing early and final research results and their implications. If you have questions about which of these groups are most useful for you, please discuss with your advisor or the Program Director.

- **HSR Student Meetings:** 5:00-5:50pm, generally two meetings each month. Topics vary from skills-based workshops, information sessions, student research presentations, and socials.
- **Boston University training programs:** All MS students are required to participate in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) and training in the protection of human research subjects. Students are encouraged to participate in other campus training programs, such as those held by the CTSI or the Clinical Research Resources Office (CRRO).
- **HLPM Faculty Research Seminars:** These have been held on 2nd Thursday of each month, 12-1pm.

Please regularly check the [calendar](#) for BUSPH and HLPM events. HSR events generally will be posted there as well and announced to you by email.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

In addition to skills gained through classes, HSR student meetings, and the HLPM research seminars, students benefit greatly from joining professional associations. These associations offer students opportunities to meet people working in public health, learn about job opportunities, understand trends in the field, and polish communication and presentation skills at annual meetings. Students are strongly encouraged to become active in any of the following organizations, and are welcome to discuss their interest in other associations with the Health Services Research Program Director, Academic Advisor and other faculty. These organizations generally welcome student members at a reduced cost.

- [AcademyHealth](#) – the association for health services researchers – with a BUSPH [student chapter](#).
- [American Public Health Association \(APHA\)](#) – with sections on [Medical Care](#), [Community Health Planning & Policy Development](#), [Health Administration](#), among others, and many [Caucuses](#) and [Special Primary Interest Groups](#). ([Student memberships](#) are available.) BUSPH encourages students to attend the APHA annual conference; stipends are available for students whose papers are accepted for presentation.

Deadline each August; contact the SPH Office of Student Services (617-638-5059) for information.

- [**Massachusetts Public Health Association \(MPHA\)**](#)
- [**Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society**](#) - Student memberships are available.
- [**International Health Economics Association**](#)
- [**Society for Medical Decision Making**](#)
- [**American Health Quality Association**](#)

Section

6

Faculty

Department of Health Law, Policy & Management faculty are committed to their role of teacher and mentor inside and beyond the classroom. Their research brings depth and a real-life context to the classroom. Bios of HLPM faculty, and links to publications, can be found under the Faculty & Staff tab on the department [website](#).

Teaching and Advising Faculty for the MS and PhD Programs in Health Services Research, Department of Health Law, Policy & Management

| Name | Office Location | Phone | Email |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Stein, Michael Chair | Talbot 250W | 617-414-1309 | mdstein@bu.edu |
| Bachman, Sally | Talbot 246W | 617-353-1415 | sbachman@bu.edu |
| Berlowitz, Dan | Bedford VA | 781-687-2962 | dberlow@bu.edu |
| Bokhour, Barbara | Talbot 253 W Bedford VA | 617-414-1427 781-687-2862 | bokhour@bu.edu |
| Borzecki, Ann | Bedford VA | 781-687-2870 | Amb@bu.edu |
| Burgess, Jim | Talbot 257 W Boston VA | 617-414-1424 857-364-5638 | jfburges@bu.edu |
| Carey, Kathleen | Talbot 262 W | 617-414-1459 | kcarey@bu.edu |
| Charns, Marty | Talbot 265 W Boston VA | 617-414-1431 857-364-4945 | mcharns@bu.edu |
| Christiansen, Cindy | Talbot 340 W | 617-414-1396 | cindylc@bu.edu |
| Clark, Jack | Talbot 250 W Bedford VA | 617-414-1438 781-687-2937 | jaclark@bu.edu |
| Drainoni, Mari-Lynn | Talbot 342 W | 617-414-1417 | drainoni@bu.edu |
| Elwy, Rani | Talbot 265 W Bedford VA | 617-414-1412 781-687-2861 | relwy@bu.edu |
| Fix, Gemmae | Bedford VA | 617-638-5042 | gmmfix@bu.edu |
| Gifford, Allen | Bedford VA | 781-687-3038 | agifford@bu.edu |
| Gunn, Christine | Crosstown, 1053 | 617-414-1993 | cgunn@bu.edu |
| Gupte, Gouri | Talbot 264 W | 617-414-1426 | gourig@bu.edu |
| Hartmann, Christine | Bedford VA | 781-687-2738 | cwhrtmnn@bu.edu |
| Jette, Alan | Talbot 537 W | 617-638-1985 | ajette@bu.edu |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Jones, David | Talbot 261 W | 617- 414-1324 | dkjones@bu.edu |
| Kazis, Lewis | Talbot 119A Bedford VA | 617-414-1418 781-687-2860 | lek@bu.edu |
| Louis, Chris | Talbot 261 W | 617-638-5042 | louisc@bu.edu |
| McDonough, Christine | Talbot 523 W | 617-638-1982 | cmm@bu.edu |
| McInnis, Keith | Bedford VA | 781-687-3507 | mcinnes@bu.edu |
| Parker, Victoria | Talbot 259 W | 617-414-1394 | vaparker@bu.edu |
| Rosenbloom, David | Talbot 348W | 617-638-0113 | drosenbloom@bu.edu |
| Stefos, Ted | Bedford VA | 781-687-2440 | stefos@comcast.net |

“W” addresses are in Department of HLPM offices on the 2nd and 3rd floors of Talbot Building, West Wing.



Thesis Resources

- General Overview: MS Thesis Process
- Policy for MS HSR Thesis Approval
- MS Thesis Topic/Committee Approval Form
- MS Thesis Proposal Outline
- Thesis Completion Record
- Thesis Signature Page Template

MS IN HSR THESIS PROCESS

GENERAL OVERVIEW

A Master's thesis is required of all MS students. The process includes several steps:

- Selection of a proposed topic
- Identification of Committee Chair and additional Committee Member(s)
- Submission of the Thesis Topic/Committee Approval Form to the HSR Curriculum Coordinator- this can be done no sooner than May of the first year of study, after students have completed the three-course methods sequence. It is recommended that it be done no later than 90 days following completion of all coursework.
- Obtain documented approval of the thesis topic and committee from the HSR Program Committee
- Development of a full thesis proposal that is evaluated and approved by the candidate's thesis committee – this often takes several drafts
- Development of a complete thesis that is evaluated and approved by the candidate's thesis committee – this often takes several drafts
- Work with thesis committee to identify a date for oral thesis defense
- Submission of a final thesis abstract that has been approved by the candidate's thesis committee to the HSR Curriculum Coordinator no later than 30 days prior to the defense date – following this, work with the HSR Curriculum Coordinator to schedule defense
- Complete oral defense, with voting for approval by the student's thesis committee.
- Library submission of the completed thesis



**Revised policy for HSR MS Thesis Proposal Approval
Effective: August 1, 2015**

Within three months of course completion, the MS candidate will submit the Thesis Topic/Committee Approval Form (see next page) to the HSR Programs Committee, which includes both a brief synopsis of the proposed thesis research, and the proposed composition and rationale for the thesis committee. All members of the proposed thesis committee must either sign the approval form or e-mail their approval of the candidate's thesis topic proposal before it will be reviewed by the HSR Programs Committee.

Once the form and committee approvals are received, this will be placed on the agenda for the next month's HSR Programs Committee meeting. If the HSR Programs Committee anticipates issues with either the research topic or the thesis committee composition, written feedback will be provided to both the student and thesis committee members following the meeting. Once the Thesis Topic/Committee Approval form is approved by the HSR Programs Committee, the MS candidate may proceed with developing and writing the full thesis proposal which will be evaluated and approved solely by the candidate's thesis committee.

HSR MS Thesis Topic/Committee Approval Form

The completed approval form should be submitted via e-mail to the HSR Curriculum Coordinator, [Marianna McGrath](#). All proposed Committee Members must either sign the form or e-mail their approval before it will be reviewed by the HSR Programs Committee.

Candidate name: _____

Proposed Thesis title: _____

Proposed Committee: (List your committee members, designating the chair, and briefly identifying the anticipated role of each member (e.g. Dr. X will provide methodological expertise on Bayesian analyses; Dr. Y will provide content knowledge in diabetes management). The Committee Chair must be an HLPM faculty member and all committee members should be Boston University faculty. In addition, it is strongly suggested that the Committee Chair be at the Associate Professor level or above, and have previously served on a thesis committee. Committees should have at least 2, and no more than 4, members.

Chair: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Explanation:

Member: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Explanation:

Member: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Explanation:

Background and Significance: (Provide a brief description, of about 500 words, of the nature of the problem, why it is important to study (significance), and the proposed conceptual model.)

Methods: (Provide a brief description of the methods to be used for the thesis, not more than 400 words.)

MS Thesis Proposal Outline

After the preliminary Thesis Topic/Committee Approval Form has been submitted and approved by the HSR Programs Committee, the MS candidate may proceed with developing and writing the full thesis proposal which will be evaluated and approved solely by the candidate's thesis committee. The MS Thesis proposal usually ranges from 10-20 pages. Once your thesis committee has signed off on the full proposal, it should be submitted to the Curriculum Coordinator.

Proposed Title for Thesis:

Problem Statement:

(Provide a brief description, in abstract length, of the nature of the problem and why it is important to study (significance).)

Literature Review:

(What is the state of the literature on this problem?)

Conceptual Model:

(Ideally displayed in an image/picture)

Summary:

(Outline of the goals and nature of the study)

Research Question(s):

(State clearly what the research question(s) is (are); and associated hypotheses, if applicable)

Specific Aims:

(State the specific aims of the study)

Data Source(s):

(Where will the data come from or be generated? What is included in the data?)

Methodology:

(What methodology or methodologies will be employed? What is your analysis plan?)

Timeline:

(Best in Gantt Chart format, laying out how the pieces fit together and the key milestones)

List of Committee:

(All committee members must approve (can be by E-Mail))

Reference List:

HLPM Dept. Thesis Completion Record

Candidate Name: _____

Thesis Title: _____

Committee Chair: (print/type) _____

Additional Committee Members: (print/type) _____

Approved abstract to HSR Program – Date: _____

Defense – date held: _____

Defense – Result (X - to be filled out and signed by Committee Chair):

- Satisfactory and complete __
- Satisfactory, with minimal additional work required
- Expected date of final copy completion: _____
- Unsatisfactory

COMMITTEE CHAIR SIGNATURE _____

Registrar notified of successful defense by Program - Date: _____

Committee chair signature when revisions (if required) are completed and accepted:

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Submitted to Mugar Library (including Signature Page): Date: _____

Electronic copy to HLPM Department: Date: _____

Thesis Signature Page Template

Approved by

First Reader _____

Name, Terminal Degree

Title

Second Reader _____

Name, Terminal Degree

Title

Third Reader _____

Name, Terminal Degree

Title

NOTES:

- Committee Chair, who is also the first reader, must be the student’s advisor, as well as an HLP faculty member.
- Students must submit a hard copy of this signed page to Mugar Library, as well as submit a scanned & e-mailed copy to the BUSPH Registrar for record.
- A Roman numeral does not appear on this page, although the page is counted. The first page on which a number appears is the dedication or acknowledgments. If you have neither a dedication nor acknowledgments, then the first page on which a number appears is the first page of the abstract.

Appendix

D

MS in HSR Competencies

| Label | MS Competency |
|--|---|
| Foundational health services knowledge | Identify key factors in the context of health and health care systems, institutions, actors, and environment that have the potential to influence provision and use of health services. These may include policy, organization and financing of healthcare services. They may also include social disparities and determinants that may affect access, as well as factors such as biology, behavior and culture that may influence individual health and the use of services. |
| Theoretical & conceptual development and/or application | Identify and describe contributions (and limitations) of conceptual models of health services use and theoretical perspectives derived from foundational fields, and choose relevant conceptual models to support HSR study topics. |
| Relevant & important HSR question development | Develop relevant and important research questions, grounded in critical and analytical reviews of the health services literature. |
| Research methods foundations | Identify and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of possible study designs that can appropriately address specific health services research questions. Methods include interventional, comparative and observational approaches; qualitative and quantitative approaches; and are derived from foundational health services fields and different types and sources of data. |
| Research project design | Identify and apply research methods that are appropriate to HSR questions of interest, specifying study constructs, research objectives and hypotheses, and utilize methods that reliably and validly measure these constructs. |
| Data collection and management | Identify appropriate data collection strategies to answer research questions. Collect and manage primary health and healthcare utilization data and/or assemble and manage existing data from public and private data sources in accordance with research design |
| Data analysis | Choose and apply appropriate analytical techniques to data in order to explore HSR research question |
| Research conduct management | Develop, document and employ procedures that ensure the reproducibility of the science, the responsible use of resources, mutual accountability with collaborators, and the ethical treatment of research subjects |
| Professional development | Work collaboratively with teams and across disciplines to develop and disseminate HSR knowledge. |
| Communication of HSR process, findings, implications | Effectively communicate the process, findings, and implications of health services research via multiple modes, including via peer-reviewed publications, oral presentations and via technology. Be able to communicate findings to multiple stakeholders and audiences including funders, research participants, colleagues, policy-makers and managers |