

Ph.D. in Health Services Research

GUIDEBOOK

2018 – 2019



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

www.bu.edu/sph/hlpm

Ph.D. PROGRAM IN HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

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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.

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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.

Values

Our values drive what we do and how we do it. We are deeply committed to igniting positive change in the world. We seek to create a respectful, collaborative, diverse, and inclusive community within SPH, and to promote justice, human rights, and equity within and across our local and global communities. We are bold in our pursuit of knowledge that matters, creative in our pursuit of solutions, and innovative in our education. In all we do, it is our engagement with people, communities, and institutions in the world beyond our academic walls that leads to success.

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Welcome!

This guidebook is intended to be a helpful reference throughout your time in the PhD in Health Services Research program. It 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, please share your ideas with us! 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 PhD students, you represent the future of our field and we are committed to providing a program that will enable you to successfully move into the next phase of your career. We look forward to working with you as you progress, 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,

Steve Pizer, Ph.D.

Faculty Director, Ph.D. program

Health Services Research Programs Committee:

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Jack Clark, Ph.D.

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Christine Gunn, Ph.D.

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Julia Raifman, Sc.D.

Michael Stein, M.D.

Quick Reference Guide

Please see the SPH [Bulletin](#) and the SPH Student [Resources Page](#) 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, 617-358-4078 Justine de Marrais, 617-358-6550</p>
Financial Assistance	<p>Office of Student Financial Services Email: osfs-sph@bumc.bu.edu 617-638-5130; or 877-776-6243 Financing Your Education</p>
International Student Services: Visas; Immigration; Employment	<p>International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) William Caleb Felder, 617-353-3565</p>
Housing: Seeking a roommate	<p>Office of Housing Resources Jonathan Brett, 617-358-5208</p>
Library Resources: Paper and online books and journals; Reserve materials; Computer labs; Research guides	<p>Alumni Medical Library L Building, 12th Floor 617-358-2350 Boston University Library Network</p>
Parking and Transportation: Student T passes; bike cages; parking	<p>Office of Parking and Transportation Services 710 Albany Street 617-638-7473</p>
Registration Information: Graduation applications; Course Rotation guide; Academic policies	<p>Office of Professional & Academic Services Talbot 2 Center Nikki Longe, Registrar, 617-358-3434 Amelia Williams</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, Director of Graduate Student Life, 617-638-5059 Erica Townsend, Program Manager for Graduate Student Life, 617-638-5006 Mahogany Price, Program Manager for Student Mentoring, 617-358-1499</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 2018 Withdrawal* and Tuition Refund [Schedule](#)

On or before September 3	100% refund of tuition and fees
September 4 – September 17	80% refund of tuition only
September 18– September 24	60% refund of tuition only
September 25 – October 1	40% refund of tuition only
October 2 – October 9	20% refund of tuition only
As of October 10	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).

Graduation Dates

The following table includes dates that are especially important for your consideration as a doctoral student.

Doctoral Calendar 2018-2019			
Doctoral Candidates (DrPH/PhD)	September 2018 Award	January 2019 Award	May 2019 Award
Graduation Application (submitted to the BUSPH Registrar)	June 10, 2018	August 10, 2018	January 10, 2019
Last Date to hold Dissertation Defense	August 15, 2018	November 30, 2018	April 15, 2019
Deadline for Submission of Approved and Signed Dissertation*	August 31, 2018	December 15, 2018	April 30, 2019

*Dates are subject to change

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](#). 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 2018 semester and several in the Spring 2019 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 2018 Make-Up Days

November 3 & 4

Spring 2019 Make-Up Days

March 23, 24, 30 & 31

April 6 & 7

Section

1

Introduction

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 program at the Boston University School of Public Health 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 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 to make concrete improvements in health services financing, organization and delivery.

* * *

This program is committed to education in both quantitative and qualitative research methods and encourages students to develop facility in mixed methods research. The 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 delivery systems.

The program is based upon the theoretical knowledge and core competencies that the program faculty have identified as critical foundations. In particular, the program focuses on developing the ability to adapt and apply theoretical and conceptual models relevant to health services research. Students in the BUSPH program 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) and implementation 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 Health Services Research 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 Health Services Research. Our diverse student body also enriches classroom discussions, as the students in health services research courses bring experience from a variety of professional and disciplinary backgrounds.

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.

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 chairs your dissertation committee.

Program Director

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

Academic Advisor

After considering your areas of interest and research goals, you will identify a faculty member who might serve as your initial academic advisor. It is not assumed or expected that your initial advisor will eventually become your dissertation advisor, although this is sometimes the case.

You should meet regularly with your Academic Advisor to help plan your direction in the program. The Academic Advisor consults on your choice of courses and projects, and also helps you begin to think about an appropriate dissertation topic and choose a 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 to seek funding to support your dissertation research and how to do so.

Dissertation Advisor

After you form a dissertation committee, your committee chair will become a primary resource to help you consider such questions to further your professional development. (Other sections of this Guidebook address your work with your dissertation committee.)

Planning

Boston University offers its students an enormous array of 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 your dissertation work and supplemental activities carefully to enhance your career preparation.

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.

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

Problems

If you experience challenges executing your academic plan, return to your Academic Advisor or the Health Services Research Program Director for guidance. The Registrar's Office is also available to provide help with academic roadblocks. The Student Services Office can help students connect with many useful resources.

If you wish to request a change of Academic Advisor, please contact the Program Director.

For information concerning policies on timely completion of course requirements, please refer to the [Registrar's website](#).

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

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. See the BUSPH [Student Resources Page](#) or your advisor for additional information on all resources available to students.

COMPETENCIES

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

Section

2

Course Requirements

OVERVIEW

The doctoral program in Health Services Research is designed to provide advanced training in research methods and the substantive areas of theory relevant to health services. Qualified students will hold a Master's or Bachelor's degree in a field related to health services research, such as social or behavioral sciences, epidemiology, management, biological sciences or the health professions. Students who complete the program will be prepared to assume leadership positions in academic and applied research settings and to pursue careers as independent investigators.

PHD IN HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

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

- Complete a minimum of 42 credits of coursework: nine core courses and the remainder in methods courses and electives in an area of focus. Students entering with relevant prior graduate courses may be eligible for course waivers and/or transfers. However, in every case, students must complete a minimum of 32 credits in residence at BU.
 - *Students in the AHRQ or NIDA T32 training grants may have additional requirements related to those training grants and they should consult the T32 PI for further information.*
- Participate in two Boston University training programs: training in the responsible conduct of research (this is a 4-session program) and training in the protection of human research subjects.
- Pass the Admission to Candidacy Exam (ACE).
- Successfully present an oral defense of their dissertation proposal.
- Complete a dissertation that is the equivalent of three publishable papers.
- Successfully defend the dissertation and receive final approval from the dissertation committee and outside readers.
- Earn a BUSPH grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher and earn at least a B or better in each individual course.
- Complete all PhD degree requirements within 7 years. Students typically finish in 4-5 years.

COURSEWORK

<i>Pre-requisites</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> BS704: Introduction to Biostatistics or equivalent	Fall, Spring
<input type="checkbox"/> EP713: Introduction to Epidemiology or equivalent	Fall, Spring
<i>Core Courses</i>	
<i>Students must earn at least a B in all Required Courses and Elective courses.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> PH842: Research Theory and Design (2)	Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> PH843: Introduction to Quantitative Methods for Public Health and Health Services Research (2)	Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> PH844: Introduction to Qualitative Analysis for Public Health and Health Services Research (2)	Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> PM814: Contemporary Theoretical & Empirical Issues in Health Services Research (4)	Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> PM837: Evaluating Health Care Quality (4)	Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> PM824: Theory and Research on Organizations (4)	Alt. Spring (even years)
<input type="checkbox"/> PM826: Health, Illness and the Use of Health Services (4)	Alt. Spring (even years)
<input type="checkbox"/> PM844: Health Policy & Policy Making for Public Health Researchers (4)	Alt. Spring (odd years)
<input type="checkbox"/> PM842: Health Economics for Health Services Research (4)	Alt. Spring (odd years)
<i>A minimum of 12 credits is required in elective courses. These 12 credits can be used to define an area of emphasis (e.g. health economics, implementation, quality/outcomes).</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> PM822: Advanced Quantitative Health Services Research Methods (4, Spring) OR <input type="checkbox"/> PM828: Advanced Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods (4, alt Fall – odd years) AND <input type="checkbox"/> 8-9 additional credits in methods courses	

EMPHASIS AREAS

The following courses are organized by emphasis area and have been pre-approved as electives. This list should serve as a general guide. Additional courses may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Program Director.

Economics: <i>Students who select this emphasis area must take SPH PM 822 as their advanced research methods course.</i>	
☐ CAS MA 242: Linear Algebra (4)	Fall, Spring
☐ CAS EC 501: Microeconomic Theory (4)	Fall, Spring
☐ CAS EC 508: Econometrics (4)	Fall, Spring
☐ CAS EC 782: Health Economics II (4)	Fall
☐ SPH PM 822: Advanced Quantitative Health Services Research Methods (4)	Spring
☐ SPH PM 807: Introduction to Cost Effectiveness Analysis (2)	Spring
☐ SPH PM 855: Cost Effectiveness and Decision Analysis (4)	Spring

Quality/Outcomes: <i>Students who select this emphasis area must take SPH PM 822 as their advanced research methods course.</i>	
☐ SPH PM 828: Advanced Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods for Health Services Research (4)	Fall
☐ SPH PM 822: Advanced Quantitative Health Services Research Methods (4)	Spring
☐ SPH PM 807: Introduction to Cost Effectiveness Analysis (2)	Spring
☐ SPH PM 855: Cost Effectiveness and Decision Analysis (4)	Spring
☐ SPH PM BS 805: Intermediate Statistical Computing and Applied Regression Analysis (4)	Fall, Spring
☐ SPH PM 830: Developing Patient-Based Health Status and Outcomes Measures (4)	Alt. Spring (odd years)
☐ (BOSTON COLLEGE) ERME 8669: Psychometric Theory I (3)	Alt. Spring
☐ (BOSTON COLLEGE) ERME 8670: Psychometric Theory II (3)	Alt. Fall

Health Care Policy: <i>Students who select this emphasis area may take either SPH PM 822 or SPH PM 828 for the advanced research methods requirement.</i>	
☐ SPH PM 822: Advanced Quantitative Health Services Research Methods (4)	Spring
☐ SPH PM 828: Advanced Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods for Health Services Research (4)	Fall
☐ PM 735: Healthcare Finance: How Policy Makers and Managers Can Use Money as a Tool to Improve Healthcare (4)	Fall

□ MC 840: Women and Health Policy: Gender, Evidence & Politics (4)	Fall
□ PM 802: Pharmaceutical Management, Policy and Practice in the 21 st Century: A Case Study Approach (2)	Fall
□ SPH LW 850 : Public Health Law (4)	Fall
□ PM 838: Health Politics and Policy (2)	Spring
□ PM 840: Analysis of Current Health Policy Issues (4)	Spring
□ SPH IH 888 : Seminar on Global Health Policy Issues (2)	Spring
□ MC 763: Maternal and Child Health Policy Making (2)	Spring
□ (BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY) HS 472B: Policy and Program Implementation	Fall

Implementation Science/Organizational Change: *Students who select this emphasis area may take either SPH PM 822 or SPH PM 828 for the advanced research methods requirement.*

□ SPH PM 822: Advanced Quantitative Health Services Research Methods (4)	Spring
□ SPH PM 828: Advanced Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods for Health Services Research (4)	Fall
□ SPH PM 831 : Implementation Science : Linking Research to Practice (2)	Spring
□ GSM OB 844 : Managing Organizational Change (3)	Fall
□ CAS AN 590: Seminar: Theory, Method, and Techniques in Fieldwork (4)	Alt. Fall
□ (BOSTON COLLEGE) MGMT 8853: Organizational Change and Transformation (3)	Fall
□ SPH PH 854: Program and Policy Evaluation (4) or (BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY) HS 472B: Policy and Program Implementation	Fall
□ SPH PH 729: Social Network Analysis for Public Health Research (4)	Fall
□ (BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY) HS 321F: Implementing Policy and Practice Change in Health and Social Systems	Fall
□ SB 740: Applied Research Methods for Social Determinants of Health (4)	Spring

Dissertation Requirement: Students must have approval to begin dissertation work. Students must register for PM980 Continuing Study every fall and spring semester that the dissertation is not completed after coursework has been finished.

Please note — Calendar for Dissertation Defense and Submission:

- * Approved **Dissertation Abstract** must be submitted to HSR Program Director and Program Administrator at least 30 days before Dissertation Defense
- * Dissertation Defense: see semester deadlines, published annually for BUSPH
- * Library Submission of Approved Dissertation: see BUSPH semester deadlines

CONTINUING STUDY

Doctoral students who have finished coursework and are working only on their dissertation must register for PM980: Continuing Study, each fall and spring semester until the dissertation 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.

DIRECTED STUDY/DIRECTED RESEARCH COURSES

Students may choose to augment elective course offerings by arranging a Directed Study (PM931) or Directed Research (PM932) project with a BUSPH faculty member. In addition to the usual process for registering for these courses, approval of the Program Director is required in advance and must be applied for at least two months before coursework is scheduled to begin. A BUSPH faculty member is required to advise Directed Study or Directed Research coursework.

Section**3****Program Policies**

THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The Health Services Research PhD Program Committee, chaired by the MS and PhD Program Directors and composed of department faculty, oversees the PhD program in Health Services Research and develops and implements the guidelines described below. The Program Committee delegates authority to other persons for certain functions, such as the dissertation committee for a student's doctoral dissertation, but retains final authority. This authority includes approving or disapproving a student's PhD studies, approving members of a student's dissertation committee, outside readers for the dissertation, dissertation papers, final dissertation, and dismissal of students from the PhD program. All dissertation topic proposals are reviewed and approved by the Program Committee (this process is described in detail in Section 5).

ACADEMIC ADVISOR

Each student is assigned an initial academic advisor. The academic advisor will be a member of the Department of Health Law, Policy and Management faculty and will be appointed by the Program Director. A student may request a change in academic advisor by contacting the Program Director and may request a particular academic advisor with that faculty member's written agreement. 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.

At the time a student chooses a dissertation topic, a change in advisors may be appropriate to provide the student with the most appropriate supervision for completing the dissertation. Until the dissertation committee is fully appointed and the dissertation plan is codified in the dissertation proposal, the academic advisor for a student may not also simultaneously be the work supervisor for that student. Once the dissertation committee is appointed, the Chair of the dissertation committee is the academic advisor for the student and may also serve as his/her work supervisor. (Please see Section 1 of this Guidebook for additional information on advisors.)

PRESENTATION REQUIREMENT

All PhD students who have completed the qualifying process (which includes passing the ACE and completing and orally defending the dissertation proposal) are required to make an oral presentation concerning their dissertation research at least once per academic year (July 1 – June 30). These presentations serve as an opportunity to share the dissertation work, receive valuable feedback from colleagues, and develop oral presentation skills. Any additional presentations made by the student at seminars or at conferences should be documented in the PhD Student Annual Report. Although the annual presentation is

required only of students who have passed the qualifying examination process, they are an extremely valuable experience for all PhD students and are open to students at any stage.

PHD STUDENT ANNUAL REPORT

The PhD Student Annual Report process is conducted each spring, and reports are due by June 1 each year. Any current PhD student who fails to submit the report by June 1 without prior permission for a delay may be placed on Academic Probation by the Health Services Research Program Committee or may be dismissed from the program.

COURSE WAIVERS

Previous graduate-level coursework may be used to waive particular course requirements with the approval of the Program Director. Course waivers should first be discussed with your academic advisor and then with the Program Director.

TRANSFER OF COURSE CREDITS

Students may take courses at other accredited graduate schools and transfer these courses into BUSPH; however, transfer course credit may not exceed 8 credits, and may not reduce credits taken at BUSPH for the doctoral degree below 32 credits. For a previously completed course to be accepted for transfer credit, it must be a graduate-level course in which the student has received a grade of B or better and which has **not** been applied to meet the requirements of another degree program either at Boston University or elsewhere. The previously completed course must be relevant to the PhD program as determined by the Program Director, who must approve all transfer credits. The judgment of the Program Director in this regard will be final.

Section**4****Qualifying Process**

The Admission to Candidacy Exam (ACE) is a mandatory examination that students must pass as the first step in the qualifying process. This exam is broad in scope and covers the range of the theory and practice of health services research, while also expecting the student to apply this knowledge to specific research design questions. The qualifying process is complete once the student successfully completes the ACE and the oral defense of his/her dissertation proposal (see Section 5 for more details). Students may take the Health Services Research Admission to Candidacy Exam once they have completed the core course requirements.

SCHEDULING

The Admission to Candidacy Exam is offered two times each year, usually at the start of the spring semester and over the summer. No guarantee is made that exams will be offered on the schedule desired by students. Each student who intends to take an exam must notify the faculty examination coordinator for the exam in writing no later than two months before the expected examination date.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY EXAM

The exam will be a full-day examination. The exam will contain 4-6 questions. The questions will be integrative (covering material from 2 or more courses). At least 4-6 weeks before the exam, the faculty exam coordinator will meet with the students taking the exam to address any general questions.

The key substantive areas for the basis for the exam are drawn from the core PhD courses:

Theory and Research on Organizations (PM824)
Health, Illness, and Use of Health Services (PM826)
Health Economics for Health Services Research (PM842)
Contemporary Theoretical & Empirical Issues in Health Services Research (PM814)
Research Theory and Design (PH842)
Introduction to Quantitative Methods for Public Health & Health Services Research (PH843)
Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods (PH844)
Evaluating Health Care Quality (PM837)
Health Policy & Policy Making for Public Health Researchers (PM844)
Implementation Science: Linking Research to Practice (PM 831)

EXAM GRADING & OUTCOMES

Each exam question answer is blind reviewed by two program faculty members on a pass/fail basis. Students must pass all of the exam questions in order to pass the exam. Students who fail the Admission to Candidacy Exam on their initial attempt must take the exam again within one year of the initial exam date. Students who fail to re-take the exam within one year of the initial examination date will be subject to review by the Program Committee, which may result in dismissal from the program. Students who fail the exam a

second time will be dismissed from the program. Under no circumstances may a student take the exam a third time.

Section

5

Dissertation

DEVELOPING A TOPIC

The dissertation should address an important issue in a content area of interest to the student and to the wider health services research community. Each paper should address a clearly defined research question within that general content area. 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. Given the importance of methods training, strong dissertations often include multiple types of study methods and/or designs that demonstrate different areas of methodologic strength.

DISSERTATION MENTORING AND ADVISING

The dissertation committee shall consist of one Dissertation Chairperson and at least two other committee members who must be Boston University faculty members. The Dissertation Chairperson must be a Department of Health Law, Policy and Management faculty member who has served on at least one prior dissertation committee and has the experience needed to guide the student through all aspects of the dissertation process. Depending on the content area or methods proposed for the dissertation, additional committee members may be recommended.

It is strongly recommended that students choose committee members who have expertise in the content and methods areas of their dissertations. Students may want to add additional committee members to assist with particular methods or content areas who may come from other schools/departments within the University. The student's initial Academic Advisor may or may not be an official member of the dissertation committee, but should assist in connecting the student with the communities and resources necessary to develop the dissertation proposal, and form the committee.

The HSR Program Committee must approve all members the dissertation committee as part of the Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval process. In the event that the Dissertation Chair or another member of the committee leaves their position at Boston University prior to the student's defense, the chair and student must consult with the HSR Program Committee about the advisability of the member's continued involvement in the committee.

TOPIC APPROVAL FORM AND DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Within six months after successful completion of the Admission to Candidacy Exam (ACE) and not before successful ACE completion, the PhD candidate should submit the [Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval Form](#) to the HSR Programs Committee. This will include both a brief synopsis of the proposed dissertation research topic and methods for each paper, and the proposed composition of and rationale for the dissertation committee. All members of the proposed dissertation committee must either sign the approval form or e-mail their

approval of the candidate's dissertation topic proposal before it will be reviewed by the HSR Program Committee.

Once the approved form is received, it will be placed on the agenda for the next month's HSR Program Committee meeting. If the Committee anticipates issues with either the research topic or the dissertation committee composition, written feedback will be provided to both the student and dissertation committee members following the meeting. Once the Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval form is approved, the PhD candidate may proceed with developing and writing the full dissertation proposal which will be evaluated and approved solely by the candidate's dissertation committee. 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 three months of work with careful involvement of the dissertation committee.

STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

The structure of the full proposal should follow the format of the [PhD Dissertation Proposal template](#) included in the Guidebook. The proposal should be structured in a grant format and must include the following: an abstract, specific aims, a statement of significance, innovation and impact of the research, a literature review, a conceptual framework, sources of data, and a complete plan for analysis. See Appendix A for a detailed outline. The conceptual framework is extremely important. It includes a description of key concepts and themes, a contextual relationship to the problem being studied, and a linkage to the analytical methods that will be applied.

ORAL DEFENSE OF DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

After the student's dissertation proposal has been preliminarily approved by his/her committee, the student will defend his/her proposal in a formal oral proposal defense. Once the full proposal is preliminarily approved, the student should consult with the dissertation committee to identify a date and time for the dissertation proposal defense. Once a date and time is established, contact the Program Administrator to address all administrative and process details. This date must be set at least 30 days in advance so that a room can be reserved and the program community invited. After final proposal approval, a copy should be submitted to the Program Administrator for tracking purposes. Additionally, the student must submit the [Dissertation Proposal Completion Record form](#), which is to be signed by all committee members.

DISSERTATION CONTENT

Following approval of the proposal, students should carry out the proposed dissertation work. The completed dissertation must display proficiency with application of research and analytic skills (quantitative, qualitative and/or mixed methods). Each individual paper should address a clearly defined research question within that general content area - strong dissertations often include multiple types of studies to show different areas of methodologic strength. One paper may be a systematic literature or scoping review.

The typical dissertation includes five chapters: 1) introduction, complete review of the literature and conceptual framework for addressing the health services research issue; 2) paper one, including research question, methods, results, discussion; 3) paper two, including research question, methods, results, discussion; 4) paper three, including research question, methods, results, discussion; and 5) conclusion/implications for HSR. It also

includes references and appendices. The dissertation will likely require multiple iterations after review by the dissertation committee. All review efforts are designed to mirror the research review process in which many students will become actively engaged upon program completion, and to facilitate completion of a high quality dissertation. See the [dissertation evaluation rubric](#) in Appendix A for areas to be assessed.

OUTSIDE READERS

The Chair of the dissertation committee in consultation with the candidate will recruit two outside readers who are not on the student's dissertation committee. The outside readers must be approved by the Dissertation Chair and have an arm's length relationship with the candidate. They may be faculty members outside of the HLPM department at Boston University, or they may be researchers outside of Boston University. Once the outside readers have been contacted and have agreed to participate, the Program Director must be notified with their contact information and a formal letter will be sent to the outside readers. The outside readers will be given at least 30 days to review the dissertation between the draft submission date and the date of the dissertation defense.

Their role is to ensure that the methods and results are scientifically sound. They must review the dissertation to ensure that it has the quality of a manuscript or manuscripts acceptable for publication in an academic health services research journal (e.g. *Health Services Research*).

The outside readers will give the dissertation one of the following three ratings:

- approve as is, or with minor suggested edits;
- approve contingent upon substantive changes based on recommendations
- disapprove, accompanied by reasons.

The readers must send their reviews of the dissertation to the student and dissertation chair. The student must discuss the comments from both outside readers with the dissertation committee chair, in order to come to agreement about necessary changes. Any unresolved disagreements among the student, the dissertation committee chair, and either or both of the outside readers must be brought to the Program Director (and then to the Department Chair if necessary) by the dissertation committee chair for resolution.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The dissertation defense is an oral presentation of the dissertation work, with dissertation committee members present, and to which all interested persons are invited. A final draft of the entire dissertation must be sent to dissertation committee members, with committee agreement that it is ready to defend. A 350-word abstract approved by the dissertation committee must be submitted to the Program Director and Program Administrator at least 30 days before the defense date. Students must consult with the dissertation committee and the outside readers to identify a date and time for the dissertation defense. Once a date and time is established, contact the Program Administrator to address all administrative and process details.

Prior to the scheduled date of defense, the student must submit a draft of the signature page to [Brendan McDermott](#), Thesis & Dissertation Coordinator, to ensure that page formatting is appropriate.

POST-DEFENSE: SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION

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 dissertation 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 dissertation 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 available at bu.edu/library/guide/theses/. It is strongly recommended that students review the final draft of the dissertation as early as possible with Brendan McDermott, Thesis & Dissertation Coordinator, Mugar Memorial Library, Room 306 (brendan@bu.edu).

Section

6

Boston University and BUSPH Student Policies

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

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 PhD 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.

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

All SPH degree candidates must earn a minimum 3.0 GPA each semester to be in good academic standing and to graduate. Doctoral students must earn a B or better in all 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 (SAP) 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. The Office of Student Financial Services (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.

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 PhD 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.

Leaves of Absence

A student may request a leave of absence of up to two semesters by writing a letter explaining the need for the proposed leave to the PhD 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 PhD students to complete the program within 7 years of matriculation. Most students are able and expected to finish in less time. Any extensions of the overall time limit must be requested in writing to the PhD Program Director with documentation of the extraordinary circumstances creating the delay and a date by which the requirements will be met, and will be reviewed by the HSR program committee. A student who does not meet the time limits established by the program may be dismissed from the program without a degree.

REQUIRED RESEARCH TRAINING

All PhD students are required to complete two Boston University training programs: training in the responsible conduct of research, which consists of four, in-person, 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. For more information, visit the [RCR website](#).

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 fulltime 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 Dissertation

Regardless of when you participate in graduation ceremonies, you officially complete your studies when you submit the final version of your dissertation and Boston University certifies that you have successfully completed all degree requirements. Please note that all international students who will complete and submit their dissertation during the summer must be registered as continuing students during the summer semester to maintain lawful F-1 status. Otherwise, international students must register in every fall and spring semester. An exception to this rule is that if an international student is conducting dissertation research during the summer that is off campus; in that case, the student must be registered for summer research, PH 995 C1.

DOCTORAL STUDENT FUNDING AND WORK REGULATIONS

There are several funding models for full-time doctoral students at BU. Full-time students may be funded through a T32 training grant, or from a GRA working with faculty. Full-time students cannot work more than 20 hours per week at Boston University. Full time doctoral students can TA once per calendar year beyond the GRA or T32; this allows them to receive approximately 10% more than the full-time BU stipend.

Boston University Employees

Full-time BU employees cannot be full-time students. The tuition remission benefit covers up to 8 credits per semester. Employees must receive their supervisor's approval to take courses during the regularly scheduled workday. FT employees who are not enrolled in a degree program may TA once per academic year, with supervisor's approval.

Section 7

Student Resources & Professional Development

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. Find more information and an online appointment form [here](#).

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 Mahogany Price, Program Manager for Student Mentoring (mbprice@bu.edu) for more information or to schedule an appointment. Or, visit the [site](#). Writing assistance is **not** provided for PhD dissertations.

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, Directors 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 [Resources Page](#) 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 [Resources Page](#). 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.
- **[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 Seminars, HLPM Department Seminars and Other Regular Meetings/ Seminar Series

Health Services Research students are expected to attend the program's student seminars, 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 Seminars:** Generally held monthly. All students are expected to attend these seminars.
- **HSR Dissertation Proposal/Dissertation Defenses:** All students are expected to attend all HSR defenses.
- **Boston University training programs:** All PhD 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).

Please regularly check the [calendar](#) for BUSPH and HLPM events. HSR-specific events will generally be there as well, and will be announced via 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](#)
- [American Public Health Association \(APHA\)](#)
- [Massachusetts Public Health Association \(MPHA\)](#)
- [Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society](#)
- [International Health Economics Association](#)
- [Society for Medical Decision Making](#)
- [American Health Quality Association](#)

Section

8

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	617-358-1956	mdstein@bu.edu
Bachman, Sally	Crosstown 341	617-353-1415	sbachman@bu.edu
Bokhour, Barbara	Talbot 246 W Bedford VA	781-687-2862	bokhour@bu.edu
Borzecki, Ann	Bedford VA	781-687-2870	Amb@bu.edu
Carey, Kathleen	Talbot 257 W	617-358-2058	kcarey@bu.edu
Charns, Marty	Talbot 246 W Boston VA	617-414-1431 857-364-4945	mcharns@bu.edu
Clark, Jack	Talbot 253 W Bedford VA	617-358-1957 781-687-2937	jaclark@bu.edu
Cole, Megan	Talbot 240 W	617-358-1901	mbcole@bu.edu
Crosby, Sondra	Talbot 3 W	617-414-7179	scrobsy@bu.edu
Drainoni, Mari-Lynn	Talbot 349 W	617-358-2992	drainoni@bu.edu
Fix, Gemmae	Bedford VA	617-638-5042	gmmfix@bu.edu
Frakt, Austin	Boston VA	857-364-6064	Frakt@bu.edu
Garrido, Melissa	Boston VA		Melissa.garrido@va.gov
Gunn, Christine	Crosstown 1053	617-414-1993	cgunn@bu.edu
Hartmann, Christine	Bedford VA	781-687-2738	cwhrtmnn@bu.edu
Huberfeld, Nicole	Talbot 356 W	617-358-3026	NLH@bu.edu
Jernigan, David	Talbot 337W	617-358-2717	dhjern@bu.edu

Jones, David	Talbot 262 W	617-358-2076	dkjones@bu.edu
Kazis, Lewis	Talbot 532 W Bedford VA	617-358-2291 781-687-2860	lek@bu.edu
Lipson, Sarah	Talbot 265 W	617-358-2774	sklipson@bu.edu
Louis, Chris	Talbot 261 W	617-358-2077	louisc@bu.edu
Mariner, Wendy	Talbot 362 W	617-358-3160	wmariner@bu.edu
McCullough, Meg	Bedford VA	617-638-5300	mbmccull@bu.edu
McInnis, Keith	Talbot 246 W Bedford VA	781-687-3507	mcinnes@bu.edu
Ni, Peng-Sheng	580 Harrison Ave, Room 530	617-358-2281	psni@bu.edu
Pagoda, Terri	Boston VA		Terri.Pagoda@va.gov
Pizer, Steve	Talbot 247 W	617-358-1915	pizer@bu.edu
Raifman, Julia	Talbot 242 W	617-414-1303	jraifman@bu.edu
Ryan, Cassie	Talbot 340W	617-358-2809	cassier@bu.edu
Sheldrick, Chris	Talbot 249 W	617-358-1916	rshldrck@bu.edu
Slavin, Mary	Talbot 521 W	617-358-2258	msslavin@bu.edu
Sullivan, Jennifer	Boston VA	617-638-5300	Jennifer.Sullivan@va.gov

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

Appendix

A

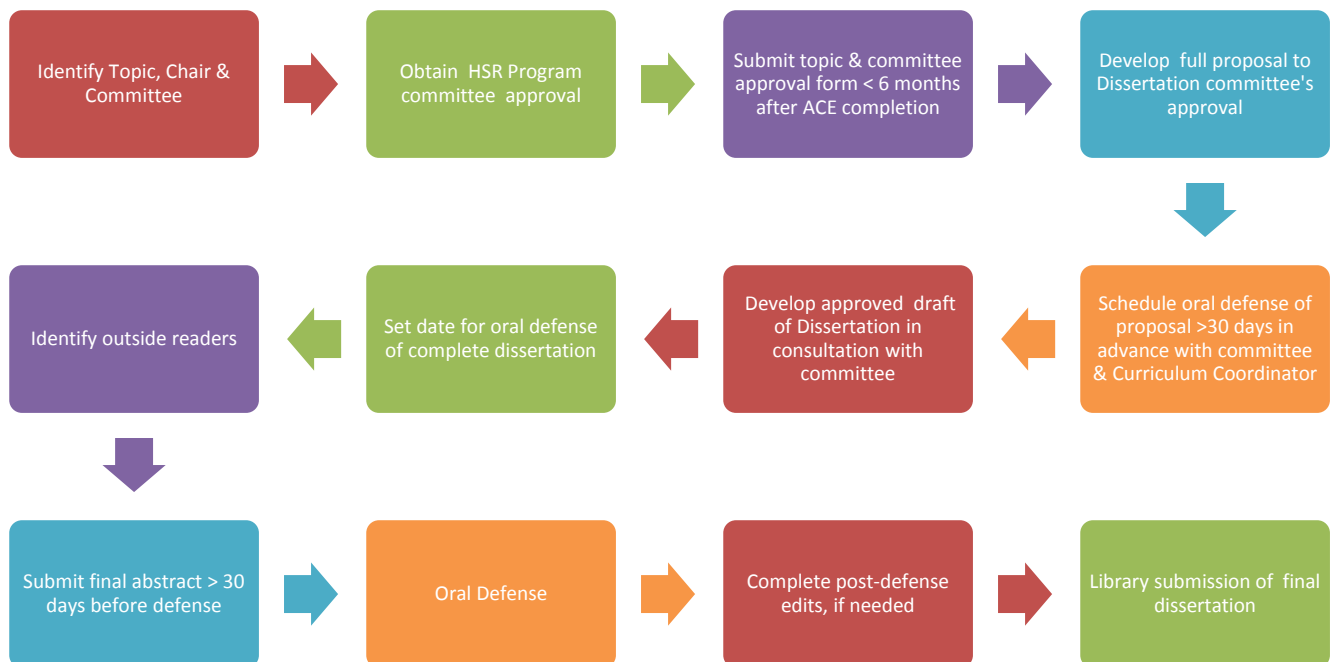
Dissertation Resources

- PhD Dissertation Process – General Overview
- Revised Policy for HSR Dissertation Proposal Approval
- HSR PhD Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval Form
- PhD Dissertation Proposal Outline
- Dissertation assessment rubric
- Dissertation Completion Record

PhD IN HSR DISSERTATION PROCESS – GENERAL OVERVIEW

A dissertation is required of all students in order to complete the PhD program. The process includes several steps:

1. Selection of a proposed topic – the dissertation typically involves the selection of an overall topical area and three specific papers within that area.
2. Identification of Dissertation Committee Chair and additional Committee Members
3. Submission of the Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval Form to the Program Administrator –within six months of successful completion of the Admission to Candidacy Exam (ACE)
4. Obtain documented approval of the dissertation topic and committee from the HSR Program Committee
5. Development of a full dissertation proposal that is evaluated and approved by the candidate’s dissertation committee – this often takes several drafts
6. Completion of an oral dissertation proposal defense
7. Development of a complete dissertation (three papers) that is evaluated and approved by the candidate’s dissertation committee – this often takes several drafts
8. Identify outside readers for dissertation
9. Work with dissertation committee to identify a date for oral dissertation defense
10. Submission of a final dissertation abstract that has been approved by the candidate’s dissertation committee to the HSR Program Administrator no later than 30 days prior to the defense date – following this, work with the HSR Program Administrator to schedule defense
11. Complete oral defense, with voting for approval by the student’s dissertation committee.
12. Library submission of the completed dissertation



Revised policy for HSR Dissertation Proposal Approval
Effective: August 1, 2015

Within six months of successfully completing the Admission to Candidacy Examination (ACE), the PhD candidate will submit to the HSR Programs Committee the Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval form (see next page), which includes both a brief synopsis of the proposed dissertation research, and the proposed composition and rationale for the Dissertation Committee.

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 dissertation committee composition, written feedback will be provided to both the student and dissertation committee members following the meeting. Once the Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval form is formally approved by the HSR Programs Committee the PhD candidate has six months within which to write a complete dissertation proposal and schedule an oral proposal defense, which will be evaluated solely by the candidate's dissertation committee.

The oral proposal defense date must be arranged with the Program Administrator. It will be publicly announced and open to all community members. All of the candidate's dissertation committee members are required to be in attendance. It should be scheduled for 90 minutes, of which no more than 45 minutes should be a prepared presentation; the balance of the time is for questions and discussion. The Dissertation Committee Chair must then report to the Program Director and Program Administrator when the full proposal has been successfully defended. The successful completion of the ACE and dissertation proposal process (HSR Programs Committee approval of the dissertation topic and committee, completion of the written dissertation proposal, and successful oral defense of the proposal) comprise the complete qualifying process for the degree.

HSR PhD Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval Form

The completed approval form should be submitted via e-mail to the Program Director, [Steve Pizer](#). 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 Dissertation 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 guide the qualitative interview study). The Committee Chair must be an HPM 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 dissertation committee. Committees should have at least 3, and no more than 5, members.*

Chair: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Explanation:

Member: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Explanation:

Member: _____ **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 each component of the dissertation, not more than 750 words.)*

PhD Dissertation Proposal Outline

The PhD dissertation proposal can be submitted after a candidate has completed the qualifying exam process. It must be approved by the proposed committee members before the oral proposal defense is scheduled. Typically proposals range from 20-30 pages in length. An approved 300-word abstract must be submitted to the Program Director and registrar 30 days before the scheduled proposal defense.

Proposed Title for Dissertation:

Abstract:

(Provide a brief description, of about 300 words, of the nature of the problem, why it is important to study (significance), and the proposed methods.)

Specific Aims Page:

(In one page present the problem, significance and specific aims of the research, including hypotheses to be tested if appropriate.)

Significance, Innovation and Impact:

(Describe the severity of the problem and the size of the populations affected, how the research adds to the literature, and how the anticipated findings could affect policy, management or practice.)

Literature Review:

(What is the state of the literature on this problem? The literature review should be a focused, critical review of the relevant literature that clearly provides a rationale for both the study topic and the conceptual approach to it.)

Theoretical context & framework:

(In both text & graphic; what is the conceptual model & what is the rationale for it? What is novel about your use of existing model(s) OR what new model are you proposing? How will your inquiry contribute to model development?)

The description of each distinct dissertation paper (3) should include the following components. Please describe each in the same depth below.

Title of Study X:

Summary:

(Goals/nature of the study; how it connects to the overall research area & model)

Research Question(s):

(State clearly what the research question(s) is(are); including 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 the analysis plan?)

These items should be included at the end of the proposal:

Timeline:

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

List of Committee members:

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

Reference List:

HSR Dissertation Proposal Defense Completion Record

Candidate Name: _____

Approved Title: _____

Committee Chair: _____

Additional Committee Members: _____

Date proposal defense draft given to committee: _____

Date Proposal Defense Held: _____

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

- Satisfactory and complete
- Satisfactory, with minimal additional work required
- Satisfactory, with significant additional work required
- Unsatisfactory

COMMITTEE MEMBER
SIGNATURE _____ DATE: _____

COMMITTEE MEMBER
SIGNATURE _____ DATE: _____

COMMITTEE MEMBER
SIGNATURE _____ DATE: _____

DATE OF FINAL APPROVAL BY CHAIR: _____

COMMITTEE CHAIR SIGNATURE: _____

HSR PhD Dissertation Rubric

Dissertation domain	Approve as is OR Approve w/minor changes	Approve contingent on substantive changes	Do not approve; significant changes are needed	Comments/ concerns/ changes needed
Literature review <i>(clear, relevant, Comprehensive)</i>				
Conceptual framework <i>(based on/supported by literature review, clearly linked to research ???)</i>				
Clearly defined research questions/hypotheses <i>(follow from lit review & grounded in conceptual model)</i>				
Appropriate methods and critical analysis <i>(may be quant, qual, or mixed; should be well-suited to research questions posed)</i>				
Presentation of findings <i>(well-organized, clear, concise & comprehensive)</i>				
Conclusions <i>(implications for further research, for HSR theory, and/or for policy and practice are addressed)</i>				
Independence of work <i>(work is carried out by student with moderate levels of faculty advising & direction)</i>				
Novelty <i>(contribution to the field/provides basis for next steps in new direction)</i>				

HLPM Dept. Dissertation Completion Record

Candidate Name: _____

Committee Chair: _____

Additional Committee Members: _____

Outside Readers: _____

Approved abstract to BUSPH and to HSR Program – Date: _____

Date defense draft given to committee: _____ 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 _____

Program Director signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved Title: _____

Registrar notified of successful defense by Program

Date: _____

Submitted to Mugar Library:

Date: _____

Electronic copy to HLPM Department:

Date: _____

Appendix

B

PhD Competencies

Label	PhD 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	Examine, critique, modify, and develop theory-based conceptual models of health services use. Identify and examine the use of theoretical perspectives derived from foundational fields that provide rationales for both HSR study topics and conceptual approaches to them. These fields can include anthropology, demography, economics, epidemiology, management, organizational science, political science, psychology and/or economics.
Relevant and important HSR question development	Develop original, relevant and important research questions to pursue in HSR that are grounded in both a critical analysis of prior HSR literature and relevant theoretical perspectives.
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	Based on relevant theory/concepts and the research question(s) at hand, develop and apply a health services research design, specifying study constructs, research objectives and hypotheses and utilize methods that reliably and validly measure these constructs and outcomes of interest. Select optimal methodological approach, in combination as necessary, to answering key health services research questions
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 a range of appropriate analytical techniques to data in order to explore various types of HSR questions. Utilize appropriate combination of analytic techniques to deepen data analysis and interpretation.

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 in teams within and across disciplines to develop and disseminate HSR knowledge; assembling and leading teams with the necessary combinations of knowledge and expertise
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