



PennState

DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

HPA PH.D. PROGRAM AND POLICY HANDBOOK

2024-2025

Department of Health Policy and Administration

604 Ford Building

The Pennsylvania State University

University Park, PA 16802

1 CONTENTS

2	Introduction	1
2.1	Purpose of this Handbook.....	1
2.2	Nondiscrimination Statement.....	1
2.3	HPA Program Graduate Faculty	1
2.4	Program Governance	2
3	Program Learning Objectives.....	4
4	Ph.D. Curriculum.....	4
4.1	Core Requirements	5
4.1.1	Health Care Policy and Organization Segment (12 credits)	5
4.1.2	Health Services Research Methods Segment (15 credits).....	5
4.1.3	Professional Development Segment (2 credits).....	6
4.2	HPA Ph.D. Program Tracks	6
4.2.1	Health Economics Track	7
4.2.2	Health Care Management and Organization Track.....	8
4.2.3	Population Health Track.....	9
4.3	Demography Ph.D. Minor and Dual-title Ph.D.....	11
4.3.1	Ph.D. Minor in Demography.....	11
4.3.2	Dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography.....	12
4.4	Recommended HPA Electives	12
4.5	Independent Study, Thesis Research and Ph.D. Dissertation Enrollment	13
4.6	Scholarship and Research Integrity.....	13
4.6.1	CITI Component.....	14
4.6.2	In-person Component	14
4.7	Allowance for Prior Graduate Study	14
5	Program Requirements and Milestones.....	15
5.1	Residency Requirement	15
5.2	Continuity of Registration, Absence and Leave Policy.....	15
5.3	Qualifying Examination	16
5.3.1	Purpose.....	16
5.3.2	Timing.....	16
5.3.3	Process.....	17
5.4	English Competence.....	17
5.4.1	Purpose.....	17

5.4.2	Timing.....	18
5.4.3	Process.....	18
5.5	Annual Progress Evaluation	18
5.5.1	Purpose.....	18
5.5.2	Timing.....	18
5.5.3	Process.....	18
5.6	Research and the Dissertation	19
5.6.1	Dissertation Advisor	20
5.6.2	Ph.D. Committee	20
5.6.3	Dissertation Structure	21
5.6.4	Dissertation Proposal	22
5.7	Comprehensive Examination	23
5.7.1	Purpose.....	23
5.7.2	Timing.....	23
5.7.3	Process.....	23
5.8	Final Oral Examination	24
5.8.1	Purpose.....	24
5.8.2	Timing.....	24
5.8.3	Process.....	25
6	GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS	26
6.1	Purpose	26
6.2	Process	26
7	Funding from Other Sources	27
7.1	Tuition Assistance Program (Summer Session Only)	27
8	Appendices	29
8.1	Appendix A: Current List of Electives (Fall 2024)	29
8.2	Appendix B: Independent Study and Thesis Research Agreement.....	34
8.3	Appendix C: Annual Progress Report Form.....	38

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This Program and Policy Handbook contains the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of the HPA Ph.D. Program as established by the Health Policy and Administration (HPA) department faculty and the J. Jeffrey and Ann Marie Fox Graduate School at Penn State. Each student should become familiar with the handbook and work with a faculty advisor to make certain that their academic plans comply with the requirements. The most current handbook is posted on the [HPA website](#). Students are responsible for being aware of current Program policies as well as [Graduate Education Policies](#) of the Fox Graduate School.

2.2 NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The University is committed to equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment for all persons. It is the policy of the University to maintain an environment free of harassment and free of discrimination against any person because of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity, genetic information or political ideas. Discriminatory conduct and harassment, as well as sexual misconduct and relationship violence, violates the dignity of individuals, impedes the realization of the University's educational mission, and will not be tolerated. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Office, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901, Email: aao@psu.edu, Tel (814) 863-0471.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

2.3 HPA PROGRAM GRADUATE FACULTY

Penn State graduate faculty have the authority to serve as full members of a student's Ph.D. (dissertation) Committee. Graduate faculty current membership status can be found through the University's [Graduate Program Search](#) tool, either by searching by program or by faculty member name. As of Fall 2024, the Graduate Faculty of the HPA Ph.D. Program in Health Policy and Administration who are available to serve as potential Ph.D. Committee Chairs are:

Yubraj Acharya, Ph.D. (University of Michigan), Associate Professor of Health Policy and Administration. Dr. Acharya's research interests include program evaluation, health disparities, global health policy, and health economics. (On Sabbatical 2024-2025 academic year)

Christopher Hollenbeak, Ph.D. (Washington University, St. Louis), Professor of Health Policy and Administration and Department Head. Dr. Hollenbeak's research interests focus on health economics especially in relation to surgical issues, and he is also interested in development and use of Bayesian statistical methods.

Charleen Hsuan, Ph.D. (University of California, Los Angeles), Associate Professor of Health Policy and Administration. Dr. Hsuan's research interests include macro-organizational behavior and understanding how organizations respond to regulations and laws in ways that exacerbate or alleviate access to health care.

John Moran, Ph.D. (Penn State University), Associate Professor of Health Policy and Administration. Dr. Moran's research interests include the economic impact of cancer, health insurance, and other topics in health economics.

Selena Ortiz, Ph.D. (University of California, Los Angeles), Associate Professor of Health Policy and Administration. Dr. Ortiz's research examines the determinants of population health policy formation, including problem recognition, the formulation of policy proposals, and politics.

Jeannette Rogowski, Ph.D. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Professor of Health Policy and Administration. Dr. Rogowski's research interests are in health economics, health policy, and health disparities.

Dennis Scanlon, Ph.D. (University of Michigan), Professor of Health Policy and Administration and Director of Center for Health Care and Policy Research. Dr. Scanlon's research interests relate to consumer information and health care markets, health insurance and HMO plan performance and measurement of quality.

Joel Segel, Ph.D. (University of Michigan), Associate Professor of Health Policy and Administration. Dr. Segel's research interests include cancer, substance use and behavioral health, health economics, patient decision making and consumer behavior, and quality of care and outcomes.

Yunfeng Shi, Ph.D. (Carnegie Mellon University), Associate Professor of Health Policy and Administration. Dr. Shi's research interests include consumer engagement and behavior, quality measurement and reporting, health care organizations, and health information technology.

Jessica Thompson, Ph.D. (University of Pittsburgh), Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Administration. Dr. Thompson's research interests include lung cancer and cardiovascular disease prevention, community-engaged interventions, rural health, women's health, and mixed methods.

David Vanness, Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Professor of Health Policy and Administration and PIC. Dr. Vanness' research focuses on developing and applying methods for evaluating the comparative outcomes, costs and cost-effectiveness of health care interventions. He is also interested in the process of how patients, physicians, payers and policymakers make decisions about treatment use and coverage in the presence of uncertainty. Dr. Vanness' research makes use of Bayesian, machine learning and simulation-based methods.

Jessica Williams, Ph.D. (University of California, Los Angeles), Associate Professor of Health Policy and Administration. Dr. Williams' research is at the intersection of occupational health and population health. She is interested in how organizational policies in workplaces and communities can alter the social determinants of health.

2.4 PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

All responsibility for the academic conduct, standards, and requirements of the HPA Ph.D. Program rests with the HPA department faculty in accordance with University policy. The following individuals are charged with the authority to administer the program on behalf of the HPA department faculty:

Program Head: The Department Head of the Department of Health Policy and Administration at the University Park Campus will serve as Program Head and has ultimate responsibility and academic authority for the HPA Ph.D. Program. All responsibilities of the Program Head may be delegated to the Professor-in-Charge (PIC) at the Program Head's discretion, with the following exceptions: a) The Program Head must approve the decision to terminate a graduate student from the graduate degree program; b) The Program Head must manage the appeal process of the termination of a student from the graduate degree program (see [GCAC-803](#) Procedures for Termination of the Degree Program of a Graduate Student for Unsatisfactory Scholarship). The Program Head makes decisions about Graduate Assistantship assignments with the advice of the Program Committee and/or the Professor-in-Charge. The current Program Head for the HPA Ph.D. Program is Christopher S. Hollenbeak, Ph.D.

Professor-in-Charge: The Professor-in-Charge (PIC) is responsible for all administrative affairs of the HPA Ph.D. Program, including the administration of academic conduct, standards, and requirements. In addition, the PIC is responsible for recommending admissions and financial support, assigning advisors to incoming students, advising the Ph.D. Committee and faculty on the interpretation of policies and requirements, and performing other administrative duties as delegated by the department head. The current PIC for the HPA Ph.D. Program is David J. Vanness, Ph.D.

Program Committee: The Program Committee consists of at least four HPA Graduate Faculty members. The committee is supported by administrative staff within the HPA Department. The Program Committee advises the PIC with regard to all issues related to the HPA Ph.D. Program (e.g., admissions, curriculum, and academic conduct) and is the main decision-making body for the program. Meetings of the Program Committee may be in-person, remote, hybrid or via group email. Decisions by the Program Committee shall be by consensus; in the event that consensus cannot be reached on a decision, or if the decision involves a determination of unsatisfactory scholarship of a student under [GCAC-803](#), then the decision shall be by majority vote. The vote of the PIC shall be the tie-breaking vote. The Program Committee shall manage the Annual Progress Evaluation process for all students. Current members of the Program Committee for the 2024-2025 academic year are Drs. Vanness (PIC), Acharya (on sabbatical 2024-2025), Moran, Segel, Thompson, and Williams.

Academic Advisor: Academic Advisors are normally appointed early in the first semester of a student's program. Each student will be notified of the faculty member who will act as their initial Academic Advisor and how to contact that person. Initial Academic Advisor assignments are not necessarily a reflection of an intended or existing mentoring relationship. The main responsibility of the initial Academic Advisor is to assist the student in choosing courses, track of specialization, and other experiences that will form the foundation for their graduate studies. As necessary, the Academic Advisor will assist the student in reviewing their prior graduate work to determine which, if any, HPA Program requirements and/or prerequisites may already have been fulfilled. The Academic Advisor will also provide guidance to the student in identifying a potential Dissertation Advisor (or co-Advisors). Once a Dissertation Advisor has been determined, the Dissertation Advisor should become the Academic Advisor, and a change made with the Fox Graduate School. Academic Advisors will participate in the Annual Progress Evaluation, as requested by the Program Committee. Students bear primary responsibility for developing and planning their own programs of study and research to meet their professional goals. The main role of the Academic Advisor is to consult with the student. The Academic Advisor assists the student in this regard and makes recommendations to the PIC and/or Program Committee as necessary. Students are responsible for knowing relevant Fox Graduate School policies and procedures, as well as keeping track of program and Fox Graduate School requirements and

deadlines. Students are responsible for arranging regular meetings with their Academic Advisor, informing advisors of opportunities and successes as well as challenges they may be experiencing. Students who wish to change Academic Advisors for any reason should consult the PIC.

Graduate Program Coordinator: The Graduate Program Coordinator supports graduate students by assisting with enrollment, course management, and graduation certification. They also act as a liaison with various contacts, and provide support for student inquiries regarding application, enrollment, and graduation procedures. The current Graduate Program Coordinator for the HPA Ph.D. Program is Ashlee Foreman.

3 PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The [HPA Ph.D. Program Learning Objectives](#) are designed to meet the [Fox Graduate School's scholarly and professional goals for all graduate students](#). Specifically, all HPA Ph.D. students are expected to achieve the following learning objectives through their program of study:

1. **KNOW:** Define and explain key conceptual, theoretical and empirical frameworks related to the field of health policy and administration broadly and in a specialized or interdisciplinary area.
2. **THINK:** Interpret, appraise and critique seminal and current theoretical and empirical literature in the field of health policy and administration broadly and in a specialized or interdisciplinary area.
3. **THINK:** Describe, differentiate, evaluate and apply analytical and empirical methods used to answer research questions in the field of health policy and administration broadly and in a specialized or interdisciplinary area.
4. **APPLY/CREATE:** Review and synthesize research related to one or more topics within a specialized field or interdisciplinary area of health policy and administration; identify areas within those topics where expanding the frontier of knowledge is valuable; propose a cohesive set of relevant and answerable research questions; design research strategies to answer those questions.
5. **APPLY/CREATE:** Formulate, plan and execute an independent research project culminating in a dissertation that significantly furthers knowledge in a specialized field or interdisciplinary area of health policy and administration.
6. **COMMUNICATE:** Motivate, describe, interpret, and evaluate the context, methods, results, and conclusions of an independent research project in a specialized field or interdisciplinary area of health policy and administration in the form of a written dissertation and oral defense.
7. **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE:** Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards and research integrity in the field of health policy and administration broadly and in a specialized or interdisciplinary area.

4 PH.D. CURRICULUM

For completion of the Ph.D., the Fox Graduate School requires no specific number of courses or credits. Instead, individual programs determine course requirements to achieve program learning objectives.

Students are encouraged to preregister for each semester's courses. This saves time and trouble and provides leverage for gaining entrance into courses that may be overenrolled. Preregistration enhances faculty planning by providing valuable information regarding expected class size and other matters. Each semester, the registrar publishes a schedule of courses for the following semester, which is available through [LionPath](#). Students should consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator for assistance with registering for courses, including addressing any holds.

4.1 CORE REQUIREMENTS

The HPA Ph.D. Program core curriculum is designed for all HPA Ph.D. students, regardless of specialization track (Health Economics, Health Care Management and Organization, and Population Health). The core consists of three segments: 1) Health Care Policy and Organization; 2) Health Services Research Methods; 3) Professional Development. The total credits for the core curriculum is 29. This consists of 12 credits in health care policy and organization, 15 credits in health services research methods, and 2 credits in professional development.

4.1.1 Health Care Policy and Organization Segment

HPA 520: *Introduction to Health Services Organization and Delivery* (3 credits): This course provides an overview of health care in the United States. Topics covered include defining what is meant by health systems; health care need, utilization and health status; differences among medical care, health services delivery and public health; and the structure of health care in the United States, including personnel and types of provider organizations (e.g., hospitals, ambulatory practices, long-term care facilities).

HPA 521: *Research Seminar on Health Services Organization and Delivery* (3 credits): The goal of this course is to expose research degree students to the literature to build a strong foundation for advanced research courses and the thesis. The course focuses on reading published research on health services organization and delivery. It is normally to be taken in the same semester as HPA 520, and topics may be covered in parallel. The articles studied include many of the health services research classics. The course emphasizes how health service research methods are applied in published research. Classes include a mix of lectures, mock research design exercises, and student presentations on research readings. Concurrent or Pre-requisite: HPA 520.

HPA 510: *Introduction to Health Services Financing and Policy* (3 credits): This course provides an overview of health services financing and policy in the United States. Topics covered include the different arrangements for financing and paying for health care in the United States, including the Medicare and Medicaid programs and commercial insurance; the problem of the uninsured; current issues in health payments and reimbursement; and other public finance issues related to health care. The course examines financing and policy issues, including classic and recurring debates as well as contemporary policy issues.

HPA 511: *Research Seminar on Health Services Financing and Policy* (3 credits): The goal of this course is to expose research degree students to the literature to build a strong foundation for advanced research courses and the thesis. The course focuses on reading published research on health services financing and policy. It is normally to be taken in the same semester as HPA 510, and topics may be covered in parallel. The articles studied include many of the health services research classics. The course emphasizes how health service research methods are applied in published research. Classes include a mix of lectures, mock research design exercises, and student presentations on research readings. Concurrent or Prerequisite: HPA 510.

4.1.2 Health Services Research Methods Segment

HPA 518: *Basic Analytic Methods for Health Services Research* (3 credits): This course provides an introduction to basic methods for undertaking research pertaining to health services organizations and systems. In addition to basic methods, the course also provides "the current state of the art" in health services research. Students will gain an understanding of research design, statistics, and methodology while developing critical thinking and analytical skills to examine the health services research literature.

HPA 540: *Epidemiological Applications in Health Services Research* (3 credits): This course presents research and quantitative methods for the design and analysis of epidemiologic studies. These studies use observational methods to assess the health and disease status of human populations or to identify factors associated with health and disease status. Specific topics include causation and research hypotheses in epidemiology; measures of disease frequency (case definition, incidence and prevalence, rates and ratios, and standardization); measures of association (odds and risk ratios, and risk differences); study designs (ecological, cross-sectional, case-control, and cohort); bias, confounding effects, and effect modification; multivariate analysis (logistic regression and Poisson regression); sample size and power estimation for epidemiologic study designs; and special topics (disease prevention and screening, molecular epidemiology, geographic variation in disease occurrence, race/ethnicity and health disparities in epidemiological research. Prerequisite for HPA students: HPA 440, HPA 528.

HPA 561: *Introduction to Research Design in Health Services Research* (3 credits): This course is an introduction to research design and methods in health services research. Topics include the scientific method, motivation for health services research questions, frameworks and hypotheses, types of validity, sample design, and randomized, quasi-experimental, and observational research designs. Students write a research proposal.

HPA 564: *Research Methods in Health Services Research* (3 credits): The focus of this course is the basic linear regression model, which serves as the main building block and point of departure for more advanced econometric methods. Both the theoretical underpinnings and practical aspects of regression models will be discussed. Prerequisite: HPA 518.

HPA 528: *Health Data Analysis for Research* (3 credits): This course trains students in data base management (data cleaning, types of missing data, file construction, confidentiality procedures, and documentation); alternative ways of treating missing data; and the features (sample design, components, contents, and special design features) of some of the main secondary data sets used in health services research (e.g., HRS, MCBS, MEPS, Medicare claims data); merging data and extracting analysis files. The course also provides students with some hands-on experience analyzing one of the main secondary data sets using major software packages.

4.1.3 Professional Development Segment

HPA 590: *Colloquium* (1 credit per semester, fall and spring of first year): Introduction to the field of health services research. Note: HPA 590 may be taken for a maximum of three semesters for credit, but attendance is welcomed and expected for all graduate students even if not being taken for credit.

4.2 HPA PH.D. PROGRAM TRACKS

In addition to completing the core requirements, students pursuing the Ph.D. in HPA must select one of the following program tracks of specialization: Health Economics, Health Care Management and Organization, and Population Health. Students should select a track prior to the beginning of the second year of study. If a required course for any track is not offered and therefore cannot be completed during the second year of study, the student should discuss with their Academic Advisor whether an alternative course may be substituted or whether the course should instead be taken during the third year. Course substitutions must be approved by the PIC.

4.2.1 Health Economics Track

This track consists of 24 credits in theory, research methods, and related electives as described below. Students should have had prior coursework in intermediate microeconomics and basic calculus (particularly differentiation). These are popular courses, and many universities, including Penn State, offer sections over the summer. Alternatively, students could take these courses online, or at a local college or university before arriving at University Park or during their first fall semester.

THEORY (9 CREDITS)

EEFE 512: *Applied Microeconomic Theory* (3 credits): Basic principles of microeconomic theory using calculus, with an emphasis on applied theory and problem solving. Topics include consumer choice and demand, production and supply, the functioning of competitive and monopolistic markets, and general equilibrium and welfare analysis. Prerequisite: ECON 302 and basic calculus.

Either: **HPA 445: *Health Economics*** (3 credits): Economic analysis of the U.S. health care system; planning, organization, and financing; current public policy issues and alternatives. Prerequisite: ECON 302, ECON 315, or ECON 323. Or: **HPA 545: *Introduction to Health Economics*** (3 credits): Survey of the application of economics to the roles of markets and government in health care. *HPA 445 is generally preferred. If a student plans to take HPA 545, they must obtain the approval of the PIC before enrolling.*

HPA 562: *Economics Applications in Health Services Research* (3 credits): Selected topics in health economics with an emphasis on recent developments in the literature. Prerequisite: HPA 445 or HPA 545.

METHODS (9 CREDITS)

HPA 566: *Advanced Methods in Health Services Research I* (3 credits): Advanced topics course focusing on extensions of the ordinary least squares regression model. Topics include discrete choice models, limited dependent variable models, count models, hazard models, models that account for censoring and sample selection, multilevel models, and panel data. Prerequisite: HPA 564 or equivalent.

HPA 567: *Advanced Methods in Health Services Research II* (3 credits): Advanced topics course focusing on causal inference. Topics include fixed effects models, difference-in-differences, instrumental variables, propensity score matching, and regression discontinuity designs. Prerequisite: HPA 564 or equivalent.

Choose 3 additional credits in consultation with and approved by the PIC (see electives Appendix A for suggested methods courses appropriate for the health economics track).

ELECTIVES (6 CREDITS)

Students will select 6 credits in consultation with their Academic Advisor and with approval by the PIC. See the list of current recommended electives below and other potential electives in Appendix A of this document. A description of courses may be found in the [Graduate Bulletin](#).

4.2.2 Health Care Management and Organization Track

This track consists of 24 credits in management or business courses, subdivided into theory, methods, and elective courses.

THEORY (6 CREDITS)

HPA 503: Health Services Organizational Behavior (3 credits): A systematic application of the principles of organizational behavior to understanding professional roles in health services organizations.

HPA 524: Management of Health Services Organizations (3 credits): A systematic study of the roles of health services managers and the organizational and environmental context within which they work.

METHODS (9 CREDITS)

Select HPA 567 and two other 3-credit methods courses (below).

HPA 567: *Advanced Methods in Health Services Research II* (3 credits). Advanced topics course focusing on causal inference. Possible topics include fixed effects models, difference-in-differences, instrumental variables, propensity score matching, and regression discontinuity designs. Prerequisite: HPA 564 or equivalent.

MGMT 592: *Qualitative Research Methods* (3 credits): This course provides students with an introduction to and experience with qualitative research methods employed in organizational contexts. Prerequisite: admission to a doctoral program at Penn State. Or **NURS 585: *Qualitative Methods in Health Research*** (3 credits): Provides an overview of advanced qualitative research methodologies useful in the conduct of social and behavioral health research.

PHS 536: *Health Survey Research Methods* (3 credits): This course provides instruction on how to design health research survey questionnaires and how to conduct survey studies. Prerequisite: HES 520; HES 500.

HPA 566: *Advanced Methods in Health Services Research I* (3 credits): Advanced topics course focusing on extensions of the ordinary least squares regression model. Possible topics include discrete choice models, limited dependent variable models, count models, hazard models, models that account for censoring and sample selection, multilevel models, and panel data. Prerequisite: HPA 564.

ELECTIVES (9 CREDITS)

Students will select 9 credits in consultation with their Academic Advisor and with approval by the PIC. See the list of current recommended electives below and other potential electives in Appendix A of this document. A description of courses may be found in the [Graduate Bulletin](#).

4.2.3 Population Health Track

This track consists of a minimum of 24 credits in population health and demography courses. While all students in this track take coursework in demography and population health, many choose to pursue a dual-title degree in HPA and Demography or a Demography minor (see below).

THEORY (6 CREDITS)

Students must take the following course:

HPA 525: *Health Care Across the Life Course* (3 credits): This graduate seminar uses a population health approach to examine vulnerable populations with shifting demographics that access health and health services at different, sometimes unequal, rates across the life course.

Students must also take one of the two courses listed below:

SOC 423: *Social Demography* (3 credits): Social demographic perspectives on fertility, mortality, morbidity, migration, population density, demographic transitions, immigration, family, the aged and minorities.

ANTH 408: *Anthropological Demography* (3 credits): Analysis of demographic studies in traditional and very small populations.

METHODS (9 CREDITS)

Students must take both of the following courses:

HPA 567: *Advanced Methods in Health Services Research II* (3 credits): Advanced topics course focusing on causal inference. Possible topics include fixed effects models, difference-in-differences, instrumental variables, propensity score matching, and regression discontinuity designs. Prerequisite HPA 564 or equivalent.

SOC 573: *Demographic Techniques* (3 credits): Survey of demographic research methods; demographic data; measures of health, mortality, fertility, and migration; life tables, population projections.

Students must also take one of the courses below:

SOC 576: *Applied Mathematical Demography* (3 credits): Survey of mathematical models used in the study of population growth, survivorship, fertility, migration, stability, kinship, labor force projections.

SOC 577: *Techniques of Event History Modeling* (3 credits): In-depth review of survival analysis methods for the analysis of change in discrete dependent variables.

ANTH 579/RSOC 597: *Spatial Demography/Spatial Analysis* (3 credits): Spatial analysis tools applied to demographic research, including issues in the collection, integration, manipulation, visualization, and analysis of both primary and secondary demographic data sources in GIS.

Either **SOC 578: *Multilevel Models*** (3 credits): Contextual analysis and growth modeling as applied to characteristics of schools, neighborhoods, geographic regions, and individual outcomes. Two-level and three-level models, multilevel analysis of discrete dependent variables, and latent variable models. Or: **HDFS 517: *Multivariate (Multi-Level) Change*** (3 credits): Analysis of both general linear mixed models

and the multilevel formulation, i.e. the hierarchical linear model (HLM). Course emphasis is on longitudinal (growth curve) models.

SOC 580: *Social Network Analysis* (3 credits): Methods of social network analysis used to examine patterns of ties among actors in a social system. This course provides an overview of the analytic methods and conceptual perspective of a social network approach to social science research, with a focus on quantitative methods.

ELECTIVES (9 CREDITS)

Students will select 9 credits in consultation with their Academic Advisor and with approval by the PIC. A description of courses may be found in the [Graduate Bulletin](#). The following electives currently align with the requirements for the minor and/or dual-title degree in HPA and Demography (for confirmation, see the [list of courses by category for the Demography dual-title Ph.D.](#)). Other recommended electives (below and in Appendix A) may not satisfy the requirements for dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography or minor in Demography. Students pursuing the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography or minor in Demography should consult the PIC of the Demography program to ensure that chosen electives will count towards Demography requirements. Electives are categorized into two groups: demographic processes (6 credits) and population studies (3 credits)

DEMOGRAPHIC PROCESSES (6 CREDITS)

Students should take two of the courses listed below:

SOC 523: *Internal and International Migration* (3 credits): Theories, frameworks, and policies related to internal and international migration patterns in developed and developing nations.

RSOC 525: *Fertility, Population Change, and Development* (3 credits): Fertility and population growth in less-developed countries; theories of fertility change, agricultural development, and population policies.

SOC 526: *Health Disparities* (3 credits): This graduate seminar utilizes an interdisciplinary, population health approach to analyze health disparities, the social conditions that are related to the health of populations, and some of the mechanisms through which these patterns are produced.

SOC 532: *Global Health and Mortality* (3 credits): Theoretical and empirical analysis of current and historical developed and developing country issues concerning epidemiological/health transition, demographic and socioeconomic differentials in health and mortality, infant and child mortality, status of women and health, environment and health, demographic change and nutrition, health care systems, and health planning policies.

POPULATION STUDIES (3 CREDITS)

Students should take:

HPA 541: *Poverty, Race, Ethnicity and Child's Health* (3 credits): This graduate seminar focuses on socioeconomic and racial/ethnic disparities in the health and well-being of infants, children, and adolescents, as well as policies and programs aimed at improving children's health and reducing disparities.

The following courses may substitute if HPA 541 is not available:

EDTHP 516: *Education and Demographic Change in the U.S. and Abroad* (3 credits): Interrelationship between schooling and employment, marriage, fertility, and migration. Focus comparatively on the U.S. and developing countries.

SOC 522: *Demography of the Life Course* (3 credits): Theoretical bases, critical concepts, and methods of life course analysis; applications to age and gender population cohorts.

RSOC 517: *International Rural Social Change* (3 credits): Implications of planned change for international rural societies, considering basic structural constraints, known institutional linkages, and potential synergetic consequences.

RSOC 530: *Sociology and Demography of Poverty in the U.S.* (3 credits): Theory and measurement of poverty with an emphasis on the U.S., social and demographic characteristics of the poor, urban underclass and vulnerable rural groups, and social welfare policy.

SOC 560: *Urban Sociology* (3 credits): Examination of the structure and dynamics of North American cities and the residents' experiences in such settings.

HDFS/SOC 537: *Biosocial Perspectives on the Family* (3 credits): The implications of knowledge from behavioral endocrinology, behavior genetics, and evolutionary psychology for understanding family relationships and child development.

HDFS 525: *Introduction to Family Studies* (3 credits): Introduction to current theory and research about micro and macro forces related to family relationships and development.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHY PH.D. MINOR AND DUAL-TITLE PH.D. IN HPA AND DEMOGRAPHY

Course requirements for the Population Health track are chosen to align with the requirements of the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography. Although it is also possible for students pursuing a dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography to choose the Health Economics or Health Care Management and Organization track, the additional courses required to satisfy the Demography program requirements will likely require two additional semesters to complete. For the most up-to-date description of those requirements, see the [Demography Dual-Title Graduate Program website](#).

4.3.1 Ph.D. Minor in Demography

To qualify for a minor in Demography, students must complete a minimum of 16 demography-related course credits. The following is required as a minimum in each curriculum category:

- Disciplinary survey course (3 credits)
- Demographic methods courses (3 credits)
- Seminars in demographic processes (3 credits)
- Seminars in population studies (3 credits)
- Electives from any category (3 credits)
- Professional development (fall or spring DEMOG 590) (1 credit)

Students should consult the [list of courses by category](#) maintained by the Demography program to ensure that category requirements are met.

The student's Ph.D. Committee must approve of the choice of the Demography minor, and one member of the Ph.D. Committee must be from the [Demography Program faculty](#).

4.3.2 Dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography

All graduate students admitted to HPA who plan to pursue the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography must complete an [application for admission to the Demography Program](#). Ideally, this should be prior to the beginning of the first year of study and must be completed prior to the Qualifying Examination. As of 2024, the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography is a STEM-designated program for purposes of optional practical training extension for international students on an F-1 visa. Students planning on applying for such an extension should consult with [Penn State Global](#) to learn about requirements.

Students completing the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography must meet the following requirements in addition to requirements for their chosen track in HPA:

1. Complete a minimum of 26 demography-related course credits. The following is required as a minimum in each curriculum category:
 - Disciplinary survey course* (3 credits)
 - Demographic methods courses* (6 credits)
 - Seminars in demographic processes (6 credits)
 - Seminars in population studies (3 credits)
 - Electives from any category (6 credits)
 - Professional development (fall & spring DEMOG 590) (2 credits)

An individual studies course (Demography 596, 3 credits) can be used to enhance training in demographic scholarship, methods, or research experience (subject to approval by the program director). Final course selection is determined in consultation with the student's Ph.D. Committee. Students should consult the [list of courses by category](#) maintained by the Demography program to ensure that category requirements are met. For students entering with a master's degree from another institution, equivalent course waivers may be approved.

2. A four-member Ph.D. Committee is required for a dual-title degree program. That is, the chair or co-chair of dissertation research and at least one additional member of the Ph.D. Committee must be members of the [Demography Program faculty](#). The Demography faculty members on the student's committee are responsible for the instructional and research component of demographic requirements (including where relevant overseeing the demography content of the Comprehensive Examination).
3. Write a dissertation on a demography-related topic.

4.4 RECOMMENDED HPA ELECTIVES

The following HPA courses are recommended and can count as electives in all HPA Ph.D. Program tracks of specialization (note: HPA 525 is required for the Population Health track; HPA 562 is required for the Health Economics track). Note that electives offered in the student's home program cannot be counted towards a Ph.D. minor. Other than HPA 525 and 541, the following electives do not count towards Demography course requirements for the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography.

HPA 525: *Health and Health Services Across the Life Course* (3 credits): Explores health and health services across the life course using a population health approach.

HPA 540: *Epidemiological Applications in Health Services Research* (3 credits): The course emphasizes theoretical as well as practical issues relating to applying advanced methods of epidemiology in health services research.

HPA 541: *Poverty, Race, Ethnicity, and Child Health* (3 credits): This graduate seminar focuses on disparities in infant, child, and adolescent health and policies and programs impacting these disparities.

HPA 546: *Assessing the Value of Health Interventions* (3 credits): This course prepares students to evaluate and conduct basic and applied research using cost-effectiveness analysis and other value assessment frameworks to shape evidence-based policy on the use, coverage and pricing of pharmaceuticals and other health interventions.

HPA 562: *Economics Applications in Health Services Research* (3 credits): Selected topics in health economics with an emphasis on recent developments in the literature. Prerequisite: HPA 445 or HPA 545.

HPA 580: *Seminar in Innovation and Research Formulation* (3 credits): The goal of this course is for students to gain experience in the process of innovation and research formulation that is necessary for successful completion of the doctoral dissertation and for future research in the fields of health economics, health services research, population health, and health policy.

4.5 INDEPENDENT STUDY, THESIS RESEARCH AND PH.D. DISSERTATION ENROLLMENT

Students may enroll in HPA 596 (Independent Study) with the approval of the student's Academic Advisor and with the agreement of the faculty member who will serve as the instructor of record for the course. Application of HPA 596 to requirements for any track of specialization (either required or elective courses) will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must receive the approval of the PIC. Students enrolling in HPA 596 must consult the Graduate Program Coordinator and complete the Independent Study and Thesis Research Agreement (Appendix B) prior to enrollment.

Ph.D. students who have not yet passed the Comprehensive Examination may enroll in up to 12 credits per semester of HPA 600 (on campus) or HPA 610 (off campus) (Thesis Research) under the supervision of the Dissertation Advisor or a member of the Ph.D. Committee. Unless the Academic Advisor is also the Dissertation Advisor or a member of the Ph.D. Committee, the Academic Advisor should not be the instructor of record for HPA 600 or HPA 610. Exceptions to this rule apply if the student is seeking an M.S. degree. Students enrolling in HPA 600 or 610 must consult the Graduate Program Coordinator and complete the Independent Study and Thesis Research Agreement (Appendix B) prior to enrollment.

Ph.D. students who have passed the Comprehensive Examination will enroll in HPA 601 or HPA 611 (Ph.D. Dissertation). The student may register for HPA 601 if engaged full-time in the preparation of a dissertation, or for HPA 611 if engaged part-time in dissertation preparation. Registration under these numbers will maintain status as a full-time (HPA 601) or part-time (HPA 611) Ph.D. student during the interval that begins at the time the student passes the Comprehensive Examination and meets the two-semester residence requirement and ends at the time the Ph.D. Committee accepts the dissertation.

4.6 SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

All students entering any master's or doctoral program in the College of Health and Human Development (CHHD) are required to undertake training in Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI). The [SARI Resource Portal](#)

offered by the Office of Research Protections provides access to the required online training program specifically designed for Penn State by the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative](#) (CITI). The SARI Program consists of two complementary components: 1) CITI training in the responsible conduct of research; 2) 5 hours of discussion-based education, of which 2 hours may be satisfied through offerings by the Office of Research Protections, and the remainder of which will be satisfied through departmental coursework and/or seminars. Graduate students should complete the training within the first two years of study and must complete the training before scheduling the Final Oral Examination.

4.6.1 CITI Component

HPA students are required to take the CITI Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course for the Social and Behavioral Sciences. For more information on completing the CITI component of SARI, see: <https://www.research.psu.edu/education/citi>.

4.6.2 In-person Component

The Office of Research Protections (ORP) offers a range of short seminars on topics that qualify for up to two hours of the in-person requirement. These seminars are offered in the fall, spring, and summer semesters, but predominantly in fall and spring. Not all ORP seminars count for SARI hours. A schedule of ORP seminars, including those that are eligible for SARI hours will be circulated by the Graduate Program Coordinator at the beginning of each semester. The student is responsible for enrolling in the seminar. Enrollment is required for tracking hours. Students should notify the Graduate Program Coordinator after attending each seminar.

The departmentally delivered section of the in-person component is intended to provide RCR instruction aimed at specific academic disciplines and/or domains of research. This component takes advantage of course content and program requirements already in existence in some HHD graduate programs. For a list of department courses providing in-person SARI credit hours, the student should consult the Graduate Program Coordinator, who will maintain a list. To qualify for SARI credit hours, a course must explicitly include RCR material in its content as reflected by the course syllabus. The number of hours devoted to RCR instruction must also be explicitly stated. Students wishing to use SARI approved course content to satisfy their SARI requirement should notify the Graduate Program Coordinator after completing the required course content.

4.7 ALLOWANCE FOR PRIOR GRADUATE STUDY

Many incoming HPA Ph.D. students have prior graduate degrees or have taken graduate-level coursework from Penn State or elsewhere. To avoid repetition in coursework but still assure that each student receives adequate preparation, the department has established the following policies.

A maximum of 10 credits of high-quality graduate work at an accredited institution may be applied toward the requirements for the doctoral degree. The Program Committee will only consider granting allowances for courses completed within five years of the date of acceptance into graduate study. Only prior graduate courses in which the student earned a B or better will be considered. Course content must be documented with a syllabus or other similarly descriptive material. Because the Fox Graduate School does not establish minimum credit requirements for the Ph.D. degree, students need not formally transfer credits for courses taken in other graduate programs. In most cases, students will be expected to substitute more advanced courses rather than reduce the total credit load required for the doctoral degree.

The procedure for requesting an allowance for prior graduate study is:

1. Early in the first semester of study, if not before, the student should discuss with the PIC whether any prior academic work is comparable in content and rigor to specific courses or subject area requirements.

At this time, the student must provide the PIC with a course syllabus or similar descriptive material for any academic work for which allowance is sought.

2. Once comparable academic work has been identified, the student and the Graduate Program Coordinator should prepare a memo to identify the HPA Ph.D. Program requirement(s) for which the allowance is sought and justify the request with supporting documentation, such as transcripts and course syllabi.
3. The PIC should consult with the Program Committee if there is any question whether the prior coursework should be counted in lieu of any program course requirements. Students seeking the dual-title Ph.D. or minor in HPA and Demography must consult with the PIC of the Demography program if they intend to count any credits towards Demography requirements.
4. The PIC reviews all requests for allowances and documents their decisions via a memo to the student and the Academic Advisor. A copy of the memo is placed in the student's departmental file.

5 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND MILESTONES

Students must satisfy requirements and complete milestones established by the Fox Graduate School and the Department of Health Policy and Administration. Ph.D. students are responsible for knowing and meeting the requirements of the Fox Graduate School and of the HPA Ph.D. Program as described in the following documents: 1) [The Graduate Bulletin and Graduate Education Policies](#); 2) the [Thesis and Dissertation Handbook](#) published by the Fox Graduate School; 3) the HPA Ph.D. Program and Policy Handbook (this document); and 4) other policies, notices, and announcements coming from the University, the Fox Graduate School, or HPA Department.

Many major and minor items relate to orderly progress through a graduate program. The [HPA Ph.D. Program website](#) provides updates related to graduate study, including links to the most recent HPA Ph.D. Program and Policy Handbook. Be especially alert to relevant deadlines. Each semester, the Fox Graduate School issues a [calendar of deadline dates](#). Students are also encouraged to watch bulletin boards and notices distributed through student mailboxes, e-mail, and the [HPA website](#).

5.1 RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Students must satisfy the residency requirement specified in [GCAC-601](#). Over a twelve-month period, the Ph.D. student must spend at least two consecutive semesters, exclusive of summer sessions, as a registered full-time student engaged in academic work at the University Park Campus. HPA 601 and HPA 611 cannot be used to meet this requirement.

Full-time University employees enrolled in a HPA Ph.D. Program must be registered for 6 credits or more in each semester in which residency is declared and must be certified as full-time students by their unit leader. In exceptional cases, the Program Head may certify to Graduate Enrollment Services that the student is devoting half time or more to graduate studies in lieu of registered credits. This requirement must be satisfied prior to the semester in which the Final Oral Examination is administered.

5.2 CONTINUITY OF REGISTRATION, ABSENCE AND LEAVE POLICY

The Fox Graduate School requires that graduate students maintain continuous registration, except for the summer session. A graduate student may request a Short-Term Absence, Extended Absence or Leave of Absence as described in policy GSAD-906 (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-906-graduate-student-leave-of-absence>) when they, or an immediate family

member experiences a significant life event that has the potential to disrupt progress towards the student's degree.

Other than approved Leaves of Absence, a break in the continuity of registration (except for summer sessions), requires the completion of an application to "Resume Study" as described in [GSAD-504](#) (see <https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-500/gsad-504-withdrawal>). In effect, this is an application for readmission. Each student should make sure that their Ph.D. Committee (if formed) and the PIC know of the student's intentions on these matters because readmission is not guaranteed and will depend on each student's progress in the program to date. Normally, the Program Committee consults the student's Ph.D. Committee for a recommendation on readmission based on adequate progress on the dissertation. Additionally, the Program Committee requires that students continue to register up to and including the semester of graduation.

5.3 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

International students and any accompanying dependents are required to submit proof of health insurance coverage that meets a [set of requirements](#) or purchase the Penn State SHIP. More information about specific requirements for international students, enrollment deadlines, and instructions for how to submit proof of insurance can be accessed by visiting [Student Health Insurance Information for International Students](#).

5.4 QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

5.4.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to provide an early assessment of whether the student has the potential to develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes defined in the [HPA Program Learning Objectives](#), including evidence of critical thinking skills, necessary for a successful researcher.

5.4.2 Timing

Students enrolled in the HPA Ph.D. Program, regardless of selected track of specialization, will be required to pass a written Qualifying Examination following completion of (or exemption from) the following courses in the first-year core curriculum: HPA 510, HPA 511, HPA 521, HPA 561, and HPA 564. All students must take the Qualifying Examination within three semesters of entry into the HPA Ph.D. Program, not counting summer semesters or semesters on approved Leave of Absence under [GCAC-906](#). The Qualifying Examination will be held once per year, in the summer (typically in June or July), over a three-day period.

To be eligible to take the Qualifying Examination the student must:

1. Have earned at least 18 credits in courses eligible to be counted toward the graduate degree (these may be graduate credits earned previously at other recognized institutions from which transfer credits would be accepted) or the equivalent as determined and documented by the program.
2. Have a grade-point average of 3.00 or greater for work done at the University while a graduate student.
3. Have no incomplete or deferred grades.
4. Be in good academic standing and must be registered as a full-time or part-time graduate degree student for the semester (excluding summer session) in which the qualifying examination is taken.

5.4.3 Process

The Qualifying Examination will consist of three written sections: Part A (HPA 510/511), Part B (HPA 521/561), and Part C (HPA 564). A Qualifying Examination Committee will be convened by the Program Committee each academic year and will typically include the relevant course instructors. The Qualifying Examination Committee will have final oversight and responsibility for developing, reviewing and administering the exam. Upon the approval of the Qualifying Examination Committee, the Graduate Program Coordinator may make available previous years' exams for student review. Rubrics or other study guidance will not be provided.

The exam will be graded by the Qualifying Examination Committee. Grades will be pass or fail for each section based on the Qualifying Examination Committee's assessment of whether the student's written responses clearly demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attributes defined in the [HPA Program Learning Objectives](#), including evidence of critical thinking skills, necessary for a successful researcher. A student must receive a passing grade on all three sections to satisfy the Qualifying Examination requirement.

The student and their Academic Advisor will be notified of the student's performance in writing (via email) no more than 30 days following the examination date. Feedback will be provided to the student only for failed sections. Students who fail any section or sections of the initial exam will have an opportunity for a maximum of one retest or revision of all failed sections, to occur no later than two weeks before the beginning of the Fall Semester. Failure to achieve a passing grade on all three sections after the initial exam (and retake/revision if necessary) will constitute unsatisfactory scholarship for purposes of termination of a degree program for the student, following the process described in [GCAC-803](#). In the event the student fails the Qualifying Examination, the Program Committee and Program Head may decide to allow the student to convert to the M.S. degree, depending upon other academic performance and the results of the English competence assessment.

Students admitted to the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography will be deemed proficient in the dual-title exam area if they pass the Qualifying Examination in HPA.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In the rare event that a student has a Dissertation Advisor identified at the time of the Qualifying Exam, the Dissertation Advisor (if a member of the Qualifying Examination Committee) may review the examination but not be the sole participant in the formal assessment. If any conflict of interest, real or apparent, is raised by any member of the Qualifying Examination Committee, either the Program Head or PIC will notify the Qualifying Examination Committee and Program Head. If a member of the Qualifying Examination Committee having such a real or apparent conflict has a different assessment (pass or fail) than other members of the Qualifying Examination Committee providing an assessment, a qualified faculty member will be selected by the Qualifying Examination Committee to independently read the exam and provide an assessment. The selected faculty member's assessment will be added to the assessment of the other faculty members (including the member with the alleged conflict), and the final decision will be by majority. In the event of a tie, either the Program Head or PIC (excluding either individual, if they are the one with the alleged conflict) will break the tie.

5.5 ENGLISH COMPETENCE

5.5.1 Purpose

To ensure that all candidates for the Ph.D. demonstrate high-level competence in the use of the English language, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking, every graduate program shall have a formal mechanism for assessing and improving English language competence of both domestic and international students in accordance with [GCAC-605](#).

5.5.2 Timing

English Competence will be assessed during the student's first three semesters in the HPA Ph.D. Program. The HPA Program shall identify any areas of English Competence requiring improvement before or at the Qualifying Examination and direct students into appropriate activities and support services to improve their English skills.

English Competence must be formally attested to by the graduate program before the doctoral student's Comprehensive Examination can be scheduled.

5.5.3 Process

The HPA Program Committee assesses high-level competence in English through evaluation by the Qualifying Examination Committee of the quality of the student's written answers to the Qualifying Exam. This assessment is independent of whether the answers demonstrate disciplinary knowledge, analytical thinking, or other skills beyond the ability to write in English. The Qualifying Examination Committee will provide their assessment to the Program Committee.

Competence in spoken English is evaluated based on a presentation each student will give in the AcademyHealth Student Chapter seminar series (or other appropriate venue as necessary) during their third semester of study. The presentation will be attended by at least two members of the Program Committee, who will provide their assessment to the Program Committee.

The Program Committee will document the outcome of the English Competence assessment, including any areas requiring improvement and remedial steps and communicate those results to the student in writing (via email). Results of the English Competence assessment will be recorded with the Fox Graduate School along with results of the Qualifying Examination.

5.6 ANNUAL PROGRESS EVALUATION

5.6.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Annual Progress Evaluation is to ensure that students are making satisfactory progress in their academic program.

5.6.2 Timing

All HPA doctoral students (unless on Leave of Absence during the entire academic year) undergo a review of their progress on an annual basis, typically initiated at the conclusion of the Spring semester (in May) and concluded before the beginning of the Fall semester.

5.6.3 Process

The Program Committee directs the Annual Progress Evaluation according to the following process:

1. The student is provided an Annual Progress Evaluation Form by the Graduate Program Coordinator (see Appendix C), typically in early May.
2. The student's graduate assistantship supervisor is sent a Graduate Assistant Review Form by the Graduate Program Coordinator, typically in early May, with a request for completion by mid-May.
3. The student completes section B of the Annual Progress Evaluation Form, which asks the student to state their progress (as relevant to stage) in: a) identifying a Dissertation Advisor; forming their Ph.D. Committee; b) identifying prospective topics for the dissertation; preparing for/scheduling the Comprehensive Examination; c) preparing for/scheduling the final oral exam; d) investigating dissertation funding.

4. The student completes section C of the Annual Progress Evaluation Form by attaching a completed Statement of Academic and Career Goals and curriculum vitae and returns the completed form to the Graduate Program Coordinator, typically by the end of May.
5. The Graduate Program Coordinator forwards the Annual Progress Evaluation Form, together with transcripts and completed graduate assistantship evaluations (if relevant), to the student's Academic Advisor in early June. If the student has a primary mentor in HPA other than the Academic Advisor, but the mentor has not yet been appointed as Academic Advisor, then the Academic Advisor and primary mentor may decide between them who should submit the review. In the event of disagreement, the Academic Advisor of record shall submit the review.
6. The Academic Advisor then completes section A, evaluating the student on: a) course performance; b) graduate assistantship performance; and c) thesis research performance. Ratings shall be unsatisfactory, satisfactory, superior, not applicable (NA), or inadequate opportunity to observe. The Academic Advisor also provides a written overall assessment of performance, addressing the following:
 1. Progress in relation to any prior annual assessments;
 2. The quality of the student's research and progress toward their degree, including:
 1. Recommendations, as appropriate, to improve the student's research;
 2. Any concerns identified and recommended actions to address the concerns.
 3. The student's professional development and recommendations as appropriate and that reflect, to the extent possible, the student's career goals.

If the student has a Ph.D. Committee on file with the Fox Graduate School, then the Academic Advisor shall consult with the student's Ph.D. Committee (either in person, online, hybrid or asynchronously, for example through group email) to obtain the approval of the written assessment, ensuring that it accurately reflects the assessment by all members of the committee, including any minority opinions. The Academic Advisor then returns the completed section A, with approval by the Ph.D. Committee as necessary, to the Graduate Program Coordinator, by the end of June.

7. The PIC conducts an Annual Progress Evaluation meeting of the Program Committee to be held during the summer (either in person, online, hybrid or asynchronously, for example through group email), during which submitted Annual Progress Evaluation Forms are discussed and an overall decision is made as regards to whether the student's scholarship is "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory."
8. The PIC returns the completed Annual Progress Evaluation Form and Program Committee determination to the student and their advisor, together with any additional considerations or conditions for achieving/maintaining satisfactory progress.
9. The student and Academic Advisor meet to discuss the completed Annual Progress Evaluation, and sign and return section D of the Annual Progress Evaluation Form to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

A student's failure of the Annual Progress Evaluation will constitute unsatisfactory scholarship for purposes of termination of a degree program for the student following the process described in [GCAC-803](#). At the discretion of the Program Committee and with the approval of the Program Head, the student may be allowed to change to the M.S. degree.

5.7 RESEARCH AND THE DISSERTATION

Each HPA Ph.D. student must demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research and show competence in scholarly exposition through preparation of a dissertation on a topic related to health policy and administration. The dissertation should (1) represent a significant contribution to the field, (2) be prepared in a scholarly manner, (3) reveal an ability on the part of the student to do independent research of high quality, and (4) indicate skill in the application of appropriate research methods. It is expected that elements of the

dissertation will be publishable in high quality, scholarly journals, and the Ph.D. Committee is expected to use the potential for publication as a criterion for approving the dissertation.

5.7.1 Dissertation Advisor

The Dissertation Advisor is a member of the Graduate Faculty who will be responsible for the regular guidance of the student's dissertation research, and academic and professional development. Where regular guidance is shared by two members of the Graduate Faculty, both may be appointed to the student's Ph.D. Committee as co-advisors. Co-advisors are jointly and severally responsible for the regular guidance of the student's dissertation research, and academic and professional development. A Dissertation Advisor typically also serves as the student's Ph.D. Committee Chair (or co-Chair).

Students should identify Graduate Faculty members who may potentially serve as Dissertation Advisor during the first three semesters of study and reach agreement with a faculty member to become the Dissertation Advisor by the end of the fourth semester (prior to the second-year Annual Progress Evaluation). Once the Dissertation Advisor and student have reached agreement, the Dissertation Advisor should assume the role of Academic Advisor (if they are not already so), and the student should request the Graduate Program Coordinator to file a change of Academic Advisor form with the Fox Graduate School.

5.7.2 Ph.D. Committee

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Ph.D. Committee is to provide the expertise and advising necessary for the student to successfully carry out a well-conceived program of research. In addition to providing advice, the Ph.D. Committee has several specific functions:

- To meet with the student at least annually (individually or as a committee);
- To prepare, conduct, and evaluate the Comprehensive Examination;
- To assist in planning the dissertation research; and
- To evaluate the dissertation and conduct the Final Oral Examination.

MEMBERSHIP

Students select their own Ph.D. Committee members in accordance with Fox Graduate School and departmental policies. The Fox Graduate School requires that the Ph.D. Committee include at least four members of the Penn State Graduate Faculty, each of whom shall be able to contribute substantially to the student's education.

Each Ph.D. Committee shall have a: 1) Ph.D. Committee Chair, 2) Major Program Member, 3) Outside Field Member, 4) Outside Unit Member, and shall include the student's Dissertation Advisor. The role of Ph.D. Committee Chair is typically served by the Dissertation Advisor. For students pursuing a graduate minor, the Ph.D. Committee shall include a Minor Field Program Member representing each graduate minor. The student's Ph.D. Committee may also include other Special Members who are not members of the Graduate Faculty but are otherwise qualified and have expertise in the student's research area. All members of the Ph.D. Committee are expected to participate fully in the affairs of the Ph.D. Committee.

The Ph.D. Committee chair and at least one other member must be Graduate Faculty in the HPA Department. The Outside Field Member must have a disciplinary expertise different from the student's primary field of study and is responsible for broadening the disciplinary perspective available to the student and the Ph.D. Committee. The Outside Field Member may be from the student's graduate program but may not also serve as a Major Program Member.

For students pursuing the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography, either the Ph.D. Committee Chair or a co-Chair must be a Graduate Faculty member of the Demography program; any Demography Graduate Faculty member of the Ph.D. Committee may serve as the Outside Field Member.

Each Ph.D. Committee shall have appointed at least one Outside Unit Member. The Outside Unit Member is responsible for bringing to the attention of the student and the Ph.D. Committee issues (including, for example, conflicts of interest) that may impact a student's progress. Outside Unit Members must have their primary academic appointment in an administrative unit different than the Ph.D. Committee Chair or co-Chairs and Dissertation Advisor.

PROCESS

- During the fourth semester (or sooner), the student and their Academic Advisor discuss the membership of the Ph.D. Committee and initiate discussion with those faculty members as to their interest and abilities to serve on the committee.
- The student secures the agreement of a faculty member (or members) to serve as the Dissertation Advisor (or co-Advisors) and Ph.D. Committee Chair (or co-Chairs). The student should notify the Graduate Program Coordinator and PIC of this agreement, and the Dissertation Advisor shall become the student's Academic Advisor of record with the Fox Graduate School. The student should not wait until the entire Ph.D. Committee is formed to notify the Fox Graduate School of their new Academic Advisor.
- With the advice of the Dissertation Advisor (or co-Advisors), the student secures additional faculty members to serve as Ph.D. Committee members.
- The student provides the Graduate Program Coordinator with the list of faculty members who have agreed to serve on the Ph.D. Committee.
- The Graduate Program Coordinator circulates the [Ph.D. Committee Appointment Signature Form](#) to agreed-upon members for their signatures. This form must also be signed by the Program Head, or PIC, and submitted to the Fox Graduate School.

Concurrently with the Annual Progress Evaluation process, the Program Committee, with the assistance of the Graduate Program Coordinator, shall review annually each student's Ph.D. Committee to ensure that all Ph.D. Committee members continue to qualify for service in their designated roles. Ph.D. Committee Members who retire or become emeritus may continue to serve for the duration of the student's program if they were appointed to the Ph.D. Committee in this role prior to retirement, and they have the continuing approval of the student's Program Head and the Fox Graduate School. In the case of students pursuing the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography, the Demography Program Head must also approve. Ph.D. Committee Members in any role who leave Penn State for reasons other than retiring or becoming emeritus may maintain their committee appointment for up to one year with the approval of the student's Program Head and the Dean of the Fox Graduate School. If the need for Ph.D. Committee membership change is required, whether at the time of an Annual Progress Evaluation or otherwise, the Program Head, with the assistance of the Graduate Program Coordinator, will promptly make the necessary changes and notify the director of Graduate Enrollment Services.

5.7.3 Dissertation Structure

Although students may choose to structure their dissertation as a comprehensive treatment of a single topic, students in the HPA Ph.D. Program typically choose a multi-article structure for their dissertation made up of chapters that are each written in the format of a journal article. The core journal article chapters are typically preceded by an overview chapter drawing together the articles with a common introduction and are followed by a conclusion chapter summarizing conclusions and describing directions for a future research agenda. Since the dissertation must constitute a significant contribution to the field and demonstrate the student's ability to do

independent research, the multi-article format typically involves three articles. However, the number may range from two to four at the discretion of the student's Ph.D. Committee.

Regardless of the structure, a dissertation will generally include all elements listed below in the guidelines for writing the proposal. Ph.D. Committees are expected to apply comparable standards in assessing and enforcing the preceding requirements with respect to significance, skill, and quality, regardless of the format.

5.7.4 Dissertation Proposal

PURPOSE

The main purpose of the dissertation proposal is to clearly and convincingly demonstrate the feasibility of the student's planned dissertation research and assess its likelihood of making a significant contribution to the field of health policy and administration (and demography, if a dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography is sought). Significance is assessed as the potential to publish the student's work in reputable journals in the field.

TIMING

HPA Ph.D. Program students write and defend a dissertation proposal as part of, or shortly after, the Comprehensive Examination during the third year of study. However, all students should begin conceptualizing and planning their dissertation as early as possible upon entry to the program. Ideally, papers written for classes and with faculty members should build the critical mass of expertise needed to write the proposal. Students may register for HPA 600/610 for proposal development research with the approval of their Dissertation Advisor (see Independent Study, Thesis Research and Ph.D. Dissertation Enrollment above).

GUIDELINES

The length, format, and content of the dissertation proposal should be determined in consultation with the Dissertation Advisor and the student's Ph.D. Committee. Unless otherwise agreed to by the student's Ph.D. Committee, the proposal should contain the following elements:

- Statement of Research Questions or Hypotheses
- Preliminary Literature Review
- Preliminary Conceptual Frameworks and/or Theoretical Models
 - Depending on the dissertation framework, multiple frameworks or models may be required.
- Description of Data
 - Identify needed existing databases and assess their appropriateness or the data collection strategy. Sample questionnaires or documentation of existing data files should be included as appendix materials.
 - Descriptive statistics are encouraged; at a minimum, a statement of plans to obtain data is required.
- Proposed Analytic Methods
 - Include a description and justification of the analytic methods to be used.
- Human Subjects Protection
 - University policy requires that all research involving human subjects, including the use of secondary and primary data, be reviewed by the university to ensure protection of the rights of human subjects. Information and materials to be submitted for human subjects review is available through the [Office of Research Protections](#).
 - Although a formal determination by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is not required before the proposal defense, a plan for obtaining IRB approval (if necessary) or a statement of exemption is required.

- Implications for the Field of Health Policy and Administration (and Demography if the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography is sought)

5.8 COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

5.8.1 Purpose

The Comprehensive Examination assesses the student's mastery of the field of health policy and administration, including their selected track of specialization, and whether the student is prepared to succeed in their dissertation research. Note: students pursuing a minor in Demography or dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography must include demographic content (see the [Demography Student Handbook](#) for further details).

5.8.2 Timing

The Comprehensive Examination is administered by the student's Ph.D. Committee, typically during the student's third year of study. The Comprehensive Examination should be scheduled within a year of completion of all required course work to provide students with timely assessment of their ability to complete their dissertation, but it must be scheduled no later than five years following the passing of the Qualifying Examination.

5.8.3 Process

To begin the Comprehensive Examination process, the student must meet the following requirements:

1. The graduate student must be in good academic standing and must be registered as a full-time or part-time graduate degree student for the semester in which the Comprehensive Examination is taken.
 - a. All students are required to have a minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work completed at the University as a graduate student at the time the Comprehensive Examination is administered.
 - b. Students may not have deferred or missing grades.
2. The Comprehensive Examination may not occur before:
 - a. the completion of all course work required by the program and the Ph.D. Committee (this does not preclude the Ph.D. Committee from requiring additional education, including course work, as defined in [GCAC-603](#));
 - b. the student has satisfied the English competency requirement ([GCAC-605](#));

The student and their Ph.D. Committee select a date for the Comprehensive Examination at least one month in advance. The schedule should include the dates for submission of the written examination (typically, the dissertation proposal) and for the oral examination (typically, the proposal defense). The minimum time between the written examination submission and the oral examination generally should not be less than two-weeks. Any clarifications about content, format and expectations for the exam should be discussed by the student and their Ph.D. Committee well in advance.

The student and their Ph.D. Committee Chair should notify the Graduate Program Coordinator and PIC of the Comprehensive Examination oral defense date. The Comprehensive Examination is scheduled and announced officially by the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services upon recommendation of the Program Head. Two weeks' notice is required by the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services for scheduling this examination.

The Ph.D. Committee determines the content and format of the Comprehensive Examination. Typically, the Comprehensive Examination will predominantly consist of a written dissertation proposal and oral defense of that proposal. Questions will relate largely to the dissertation proposal but may cover the student's entire

program of study, since one of the purposes of the examination is to assess the student's mastery of the field of health policy and administration, including their selected track of specialization.

The Comprehensive Examination may be held fully in-person, fully remote, or hybrid with some individuals participating in-person while others participate remotely. Student preference for delivery mode should be strongly considered, but the student and advisor must agree on the mode. If the student and advisor cannot agree on the mode, the PIC will make the final decision. Either the student or advisor can appeal the decision of the PIC to the HHD Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Grading of the Comprehensive Examination is determined by the student's Ph.D. Committee. A "pass" vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the committee is required to pass. The results of the Comprehensive Examination are reported to the Program Head and the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services.

If a student fails the Comprehensive Examination, the student's Ph.D. Committee, in consultation with the PIC and Program Head, will determine based on a majority vote (with the Ph.D. Committee Chair casting any tie-breaking vote) whether another examination will be granted. The decision will be made in consideration of the likelihood that the gaps in the student's knowledge and/or dissertation proposal are likely to be correctable within one year. No more than one re-examination attempt will be allowed.

Students who have failed the Comprehensive Examination (including any re-examination, if allowed) will not be eligible to continue under the HPA Ph.D. Program, following the process described in [GCAC-803](#). At the discretion of the student's Ph.D. committee and with the approval of the Program Head, the student may be allowed to change to the M.S. degree.

5.9 FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION

5.9.1 Purpose

The Final Oral Examination (dissertation defense) is the culminating summative assessment for the Ph.D. and, along with the dissertation, determines if the candidate should be awarded the Ph.D. The final oral exam will be evaluated by the student's Ph.D. Committee. Taking both the dissertation and the Final Oral Examination into consideration, the Ph.D. Committee shall evaluate the accomplishments of the student relative to the HPA Ph.D. Program's defined Learning Objectives, particularly with respect to the student's mastery of the field of health policy and administration and selected track of specialization (and demography if the dual-title Ph.D. in HPA and Demography or minor in Demography is sought).

5.9.2 Timing

The student and the Chair of their Ph.D. Committee should agree that the student is ready to defend their dissertation before procedures to take the Final Oral Examination are initiated. Required steps in the [submission procedure](#) are set forth by the Fox Graduate School's [Office of Theses and Dissertations](#). The student is responsible for initiating these steps with the assistance of the Graduate Program Coordinator. Deadlines for completing these steps in time for the student to participate in graduation is set forth in the Fox Graduate School's [calendar of deadline dates \(note that deadlines are typically well before the end of a semester\)](#).

The student's dissertation must be in its final draft form before a Final Oral Examination is scheduled. Both the content and style should be correct and polished by the time this draft is submitted to the Ph.D. Committee. The Chair of the Ph.D. Committee should decide upon a schedule for submission and review of the final draft prior to the Final Oral Examination; typically, a minimum of two to four weeks is required between circulation of the final draft to all Ph.D. Committee members and the date of the Final Oral Examination. Review the [Thesis and Dissertation Handbook](#) for further details on style and format requirements and guidelines for the dissertation.

It is the responsibility of the student to provide a copy of the dissertation to each member of the doctoral committee at least one month before the date of the scheduled examination, unless agreed upon by the student's Ph.D. Committee.

The Fox Graduate School requires that students be registered full-time or part-time for the semester in which the Final Oral Examination is taken. Normally, the Fox Graduate School does not allow the Final Oral Examination to be scheduled until at least three months have passed since the Comprehensive Examination. The Dean of the Fox Graduate School may grant a waiver in appropriate cases.

The Fox Graduate School requires that the student complete the program, including the doctoral dissertation, within eight years from the date of successful completion of the Qualifying Examination, not including approved leaves of absence. If more than six years have elapsed between the passing of the Comprehensive Examination and the completion of the program, the student will be required to pass a second Comprehensive Examination before the Final Oral Examination of the dissertation can be scheduled.

5.9.3 Process

The Final Oral Examination consists of an oral presentation and defense of the dissertation by the student followed by a period of questions and responses. The questions will relate in large part to the dissertation but may cover the student's entire program of study, since one of the purposes of the examination is to assess the general mastery of the field. The portion of the Final Oral Examination in which the dissertation is presented is open to the public.

The Final Oral Examination may be held fully in-person, fully remote, or hybrid with some individuals participating in-person while others participate remotely. Student preference for delivery mode should be strongly considered, but the student and advisor must agree on the mode. If the student and advisor cannot agree on the mode, the PIC will make the final decision. Either the student or advisor can appeal the decision of the PIC to the HHD Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Final Oral Examinations are evaluated on a five-point scale of superior, above average, average, below average, and failure. A vote above failure of at least two-thirds of the members of the Ph.D. Committee is required to pass.

Even with a "pass" decision for the Final Oral Examination, the student may be provided with a list of required revisions (ranging from minor to more substantive, including additional analyses) that must be completed before the final submission of the dissertation can be approved. Separate from the dissertation defense, the final submission of the student's dissertation must be approved by the Dissertation Advisor, all Ph.D. Committee Members, and the Program Head or PIC. After approval of the final submission by the Ph.D. Committee and HPA Graduate Program, and the Program Head or PIC, the Fox Graduate School's Office of Theses and Dissertations will review for formatting errors. Finally, once the Office of Theses and Dissertations determines that the approved submission is free of errors, the Office of Theses and Dissertations will mark the dissertation as accepted and email confirmation to the student. Once the student's dissertation has been accepted by the Office of Theses and Dissertations, the dissertation requirement has been completed. Depending on the student's selected embargo status, theses and dissertations are released to the University Libraries approximately one week after the degree is awarded. Regardless of embargo status, the student's abstract will be publicly accessible.

If a student fails the final oral exam, the student's Ph.D. Committee, in consultation with the PIC and Program Head, will determine based on a majority vote (with the Ph.D. Committee Chair casting any tie-breaking vote) whether another examination will be granted. The decision will be made in consideration of the likelihood that

the defects in the student's dissertation are likely to be correctable within one year. No more than one re-examination attempt will be allowed.

Students who have failed the final oral exam (including any re-examination, if allowed) will not be eligible to continue under the HPA Ph.D. Program, following the process described in [GCAC-803](#). At the discretion of the student's Ph.D. committee and with the approval of the Program Head, the student may be allowed to change to the M.S. degree.

6 GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

6.1 PURPOSE

Graduate assistantships are provided to degree-seeking students enrolled in residence in the Fox Graduate School as aids to completion of advanced degrees. Graduate assistants are students, and graduate assistantships provide pedagogic and educational experiences designed to make students better instructors, researchers, and scholars. As such, graduate assistantship appointments should be related to the graduate student's disciplinary field and, wherever possible, tied to the student's program of study to contribute in a relevant manner to the student's professional development. To effectively make such a contribution, the supervisor of the assistantship necessarily serves in a mentoring role, which requires regular interaction, close communication, and feedback with the graduate assistant, including clear expectations for satisfactory fulfillment of the assistantship activities. Assistantships may require activities in the classroom, in the laboratory or other research environment, or in other areas on campus, with the opportunity for professional development further benefiting from and enriched by the scholarly environment of the University. Graduate assistantships include a stipend, tuition remission, and a subsidy for the premium for the student health insurance plan (SHIP) for Penn State. Graduate assistantships are administered under policy [GSAD-901](#), with additional conditions for international students under policy [GSAD-903](#).

6.2 PROCESS

Graduate assistantships are of two types: (1) those funded by the College of Health and Human Development and administered by the HPA Department for teaching and research assistants, and (2) those funded through research or training grants directed by individual faculty. For current information on graduate assistantships, including required credit load, health insurance subsidies, and work hour expectations by level of appointment, please see: <https://gradschool.psu.edu/funding/information-for-graduate-assistants>.

The Program Head makes funding and work assignment decisions with the advice of Program Committee and/or PIC, and in the case of assistantships funded through research or training grants, by the faculty member responsible for administering the grant funding. Because assistantships are limited, providing funding to every qualified student is not always possible beyond those funding commitments made in writing at the time of admission.

A graduate assistant may only accept concurrent employment outside the university if the PIC and the Ph.D. Program Head grant permission. International students on student visas will likely have other restrictions and should consult the Penn State Global [International Students and Scholars](#) page for further information. A student may receive a concurrent fellowship supplement if the rules of the fellowship allow.

All GAs, fellows and trainees are automatically enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). Students may choose to waive this coverage or add additional dependents by making changes to their selection in [Workday](#). It is important to note that coverage will remain the same for returning students each year if they do

not elect changes in Workday during the open enrollment period. For current details on rates, enrollment/waiver deadlines, subsidies, and coverage details, students should consult <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health-insurance/graduate-assistant-fellows-and-trainees>.

Income from graduate assistantships is considered taxable income. For information, see: <https://budgetandfinance.psu.edu/us-tax-information-graduate-assistants>. Additional information for international students is available at <https://global.psu.edu/category/taxes>. Help with tax questions may be available from several sources; see <https://guides.libraries.psu.edu/taxes/help> for more information.

On April 7, 1981, the Penn State Faculty Senate passed legislation mandating that “all graduate teaching assistants whose first language is not English” must take and pass an oral language proficiency test. This legislation is in accordance with legislation passed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under Act 76, [the English Fluency in Higher Education Act](#). Such students who have received an offer to be a teaching assistant must take and pass the American English Oral Communicative Proficiency Test (AEOCPT) to be able to perform their duties. Information about the test and registration instructions are [available online](#). Effective August 1999, a score of 250 or higher allows an international student to assume teaching responsibilities with no restrictions. Scores under 250 require additional coursework in English. Information on required coursework is also available at the above website.

All teaching assistants are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the programs offered by [the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence](#) as well as the opportunity to earn a [Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning \(CIRTL\) Teaching Certificate](#) through Penn State. For more information, send an email to cirtl@psu.edu.

Student performance in teaching and research assistantship duties is evaluated by the faculty member to whom the student is assigned. This review entails a written description of the student’s activities and an appraisal of the quality and productivity of the student’s work as a graduate assistant. Performance evaluations are used in the Annual Progress Evaluation process and will inform decisions about continued funding. Performance evaluations are discussed with the student and are filed in their departmental file.

7 FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES

Graduate students in HPA have [multiple options for financial assistance](#). An excellent sign of one's ability to succeed in a doctoral program is the ability to secure funding for research. A number of government agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, provide support for dissertation research. Note that NIH and NSF applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Private foundations also provide support. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with their Ph.D. Committee regarding opportunities for research funding. Preparation of an application for external funding can be an important part of a student’s development.

7.1 TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SUMMER SESSION ONLY)

Students may apply for tuition assistance, so they can continue graduate studies during the summer. Tuition assistance is also provided to graduate students appointed as graduate lecturers during the summer and for some students who have had assistantships for two consecutive semesters. Students wishing to apply for this program can complete the [on-line STAP application](#). The application site typically accepts applications on February 1 of each year.

8 APPENDICES

8.1 APPENDIX A: CURRENT LIST OF ELECTIVES (FALL 2024)

This Appendix provides a list of electives counting towards elective credit requirements in each track: H = Health Economics, O = Management and Organization, P = Population Health. Course content focus is indicated as: T = Theory, M = Methods, P = Professional. Note that if a class is required for a track, it cannot also count as an elective for the same track. Note also that electives for the Population Health track are not guaranteed to count also towards requirements for the Demography dual-title or minor. New classes are offered regularly. Students are encouraged to check the Graduate Bulletin every semester. If a course is found that would advance the student's studies, the student should discuss the course with their Academic Advisor and/or the PIC. Elective choices should always be discussed with the Academic Advisor and/or the PIC prior to enrollment to ensure that the course best fits your academic goals.

Major	Num	Health Econ	Org./Management	Pop Health	Theory	Methods	Professional	Course Short Title
HPA	524	H	X		T		P	Management of Health Services Organizations
HPA	525	H	O	X	T	M		Health and Health Services Across the Life Course
HPA	540	H	O	P	T	M		Epidemiological Applications in Health Services Research
HPA	541	H	O	X	T	M		Poverty, Race, Ethnicity, and Child Health
HPA	546	H	O	P	T	M		Assessing the Value of Health Interventions
HPA	562	X	O	P	T	M		Economic Applications in Health Services Research
HPA	580	H	O	P			P	Seminar in Innovation and Research Formulation
HDFS	506	H	O	P	T	M		Design and Evaluation of Prevention and Health Promotion Programs Across the Life Span
APDEM	801	H	O	P	T			Principles of Demography
BMMB	509	H	O	P	T			Ethics in Biomedical Science
CEDEV	567	H	O	P	T			Resilient Communities and Environments
ENVSE	450	H	O	P	T			Environmental Health and Safety
ESC	531	H	O	P	T			Neuroethics: Science, Technology, and Society
HPA	440	H	O	P	T			Principles of Epidemiology
HPA	445	X	O	P	T			Health Economics
HPA	545	X	O	P	T			Introduction to Health Economics
RHS	401	H	O	P	T			Community Mental Health Practice and Services
HDFS	503	H	O	P	T			Human Development Intervention: Analysis of Theories and Approaches
BAN	840	H	O	P		M	P	Predictive Analytics for Business
BAN	841	H	O	P		M	P	Data Mining for Business

Major	Num	Health Econ	Org./Management	Pop Health	Theory	Methods	Professional	Course Short Title
AI	570	H	O	P		M		Deep Learning
AI	572	H	O	P		M		Reinforcement Learning
AI	574	H	O	P		M		Natural Language Processing
CMPSC	432	H	O	P		M		Exploratory Data Mining
CMPSC	442	H	O	P		M		Artificial Intelligence
CMPSC	445	H	O	P		M		Applied Machine Learning in Data Science
CMPSC	448	H	O	P		M		Machine Learning and Algorithmic AI
CSE	584	H	O	P		M		Machine Learning: Tools and Algorithms
IST	557	H	O	P		M		Data Mining: Techniques and Applications
NURS	578	H	O	P		M		Mixed Methods in Health Research
NURS	585	H	X	P		M		Qualitative Methods in Health Research
PHS	535	H	O	P		M		Quality of Care Measurement
PHS	536	H	X	P		M		Health Survey Research Methods
SOC	518	H	O	P		M		Survey Methods I: Survey Design
SOC	580	H	O	X		M		Social Network Analysis
STAT	440	H	O	P		M		Computational Statistics
STAT	464	H	O	P		M		Applied Nonparametric Statistics
STAT	503	H	O	P		M		Design of Experiments
BIOET	432	H	O	P			P	Medical and Health Care Ethics
BIOET	401Q	H	O	P			P	Science, Ethics, Policy and Law
HHD	410	H	O	P			P	Clinical Research Practice
NURS	589	H	O	P			P	Grant Writing in Health Sciences
SOC	592	H	O	P			P	Writing for Publication in the Social Sciences
HDFS	508	H	O	P			P	Best Practices in Preventive Intervention
PHS	570	H	O		T	M		Health Economics and Economic Evaluation
HPA	807	H	O		T		P	Quality and Safety in Health Services Organizations
HPA	811	H	O		T		P	Legal Concepts for Health Services Organizations
HPA	836	H	O		T		P	Health Law
BA	513	H	O		T			Advanced Microeconomic Analysis for Business
BA	545	H	O		T			Business, Government and International Economics
ECON	402	H	O		T			Decision Making and Strategy in Economics
ECON	412	H	O		T			Labor Economics and Labor Markets: Theory, Evidence, and Policy
ECON	417	H	O		T			The Economics of Uncertainty
ECON	543	H	O		T			Industrial Organization and Public Policy
RM	430	H	O		T			Life and Health Insurance
BAN	832	H	O			M	P	Programming Skills for Business Analytics

Major	Num	Health Econ	Org./Management	Pop Health	Theory	Methods	Professional	Course Short Title
BA	512	H	O			M		Quantitative Analysis for Managerial Decision Making
EDPSY	406	H	O			M		Applied Statistical Inference for the Behavioral Sciences
IE	453	H	O			M		Simulation Modeling for Decision Support
IE	468	H	O			M		Optimization Modeling and Methods
IE	513	H	O			M		Stochastic Optimization
RM	410	H	O			M		Financial Mathematics for Actuaries
HPA	835	H	O				P	Financial Management in Health Services Organizations
APDEM	806	H		P	T	M	P	Applied Demography and Health
BBH	505	H		P	T	M		Behavioral Health Research Strategies
STAT	507	H		P	T	M		Epidemiologic Research Methods
SOC	532	H		X	T	M		Global Health and Mortality
VBSC	444	H		P	T	M		Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases
ANTH	418	H		P	T			Medical Anthropology
ANTH	566	H		P	T			Infectious Diseases in Human Populations
BBH	407	H		P	T			Global Health Equity
BBH	410	H		P	T			Developmental and Health Genetics
BBH	416	H		P	T			Health Promotion II: Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation
BBH	432	H		P	T			Biobehavioral Aspects of Stress
BBH	451	H		P	T			Pharmacological Influences on Health
BBH	501	H		P	T			Biobehavioral Systems in Health and Development: Theory and Processes
BBH	502	H		P	T			Health: Biobehavioral Perspectives
BBH	503	H		P	T			Biobehavioral Systems in Health and Development: Processes and Integration
BBH	504	H		P	T			Biobehavioral Health Intervention Strategies
CED	425	H		P	T			International Community and Economic Development
CEDEV	550	H		P	T			Principles and Practices of Planning
CNED	560	H		P	T			Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Disability
ECON	415	H		P	T			The Economics of Global Climate Change
EDSGN	453	H		P	T			Design for Developing Communities
EDTHP	516	H		X	T			Education and Demographic Change in the US and Abroad
GEOG	433	H		P	T			Geographies of Justice
GEOG	448	H		P	T			Neighborhoods and Health Equity
HDFS	465	H		P	T			Child Maltreatment: Prevention and Treatment

Major	Num	Health Econ	Org./Management	Pop Health	Theory	Methods	Professional	Course Short Title
HDFS	525	H		P	T			Introduction to Family Studies
IB	470	H		P	T			International Development in an African Context
INTAF	504	H		P	T			Political Economy of Development and Growth
INTAF	506	H		P	T			International Economics: Principles, Policies, and Practices
INTAF	514	H		P	T			International Development and The Ethics of Development Assistance
LHR	444	H		P	T			Workplace Safety and Health: Principles and Practices
NUTR	503	H		P	T			Nutritional Epidemiology
NUTR	504	H		P	T			Behavioral Nutrition
PSYCH	441	H		P	T			Health Psychology
PSYCH	455	H		P	T			Cognitive Neuroscience
RSOC	516	H		X	T			Change in Rural Society
RSOC	517	H		X	T			International Rural Social Change
RSOC	525	H		X	T			Fertility, Population Change, and Development
RSOC	530	H		X	T			Sociology and Demography of Poverty in the United States
SOC	423	H		X	T			Social Demography
SOC	451	H		X	T			Health, Disease & Society
SOC	468	H		P	T			Neuroanatomical Bases for Disorders of Behavior and Health
SOC	504	H		P	T			Behavioral Health Intervention Strategies
SOC	522	H		X	T			Demography of the Life Course
SOC	523	H		X	T			Internal and International Migration
SOC	526	H		X	T			Health Disparities
SOC	529	H		X	T			Seminar in Race and Ethnicity
SOC	537	H		P	T			Biosocial Perspectives on the Family
SOC	560	H		P	T			Urban Sociology
VBSC	455	H		P	T			One Health
WMNST	420W	H		P	T			Gender and International Development
APDEM	802	H		P		M	P	Data, GIS, and Applied Demography
PLSC	504	H		P		M		Topics in Political Methodology
RSOC	514	H		P		M		Qualitative Research Methods
SOC	573	H		X		M		Demographic Techniques
SOC	576	H		X		M		Applied Mathematical Demography
SOC	577	H	O	X		M		Techniques of Event History Modeling
SOC	578	H	O	X		M		Multilevel Models

Major	Num	Health Econ	Org./Management	Pop Health	Theory	Methods	Professional	Course Short Title
SOC	579	H	O	X		M		Spatial Demography
HDFS	517	H	O	X		M		Multivariate (Multi-Level) Change
ECON	521	H			T			Advanced Microeconomic Theory
IST	501		O		T	M		Integrative Theories and Methods of the Information Sciences and Technologies
HPA	430		O		T		P	Health Care Leadership
HPA	443		O		T		P	Nursing Home Administration
HPA	527		O		T		P	Managing Healthcare Operations
HPA	810		O		T		P	Advanced Financial Concepts for Health Services Organizations
HPA	850		O		T		P	Health Care Marketing
HPA	855		O		T		P	Information Systems in Health Services Administration
MGMT	823		O		T		P	Organizational Change: Theory and Practice
MGMT	885		O		T		P	Management Consulting Methods and Practice
PPOL	807		O		T		P	Managing Public Organizations
HPA	470		O		T			Health Care Information Management
MGMT	528		O		T			Seminar in Organizational Behavior
MGMT	538		O		T			Seminar in Organization Theory
MGMT	578		O		T			Seminar in Corporate Strategy
NURS	501		O		T			Issues in Nursing and Health Care
IE	570		O			M		Supply Chain Engineering
HPA	800		O				P	Ethics in Health Services Organizations
HPA	806		O				P	Project Management in Health Services Organizations
HPA	805		O				P	Change Leadership in Health Services Organizations
HPA	808		O				P	Human Resource Management in Health Care Organizations
HPA	809		O				P	Applied Finance for Health Services Organizations
HDFS	506	H	O	P	T	M		Design and Evaluation of Prevention and Health Promotion Programs Across the Life Span

8.2 APPENDIX B: INDEPENDENT STUDY AND THESIS RESEARCH AGREEMENT

Independent Study (596) and Thesis Research (600/610) Agreement

Department of Health Policy and Administration

SECTION I

Name (please print)		
Last	First	Middle
Date Filed		Student Number
Signature of Professor in Charge (if filed after second week of semester)		
Course		Course Number
Semester		Number of Credits
Grading method (place an "X" in the appropriate blank):		
Does the student expect to receive an "R" _____ or a letter grade _____ at the end of the semester?		
Hours: The number of credits should be commensurate with the work required. University policy recommends a minimum of 40 hours of in- a out-of-class work per credit during a 15-week	Approval: The actual project is based on negotiation by the student and the instructor (see next page). Th instructor and student must sign this form after the completion of both pages.	

semester. Thus, a three-credit independent study is expected to require eight hours per week.

Instructor's Signature:

Date

Student's Signature:

Date

This form must be submitted to the Graduate Program's Staff Assistant for each semester (and each course) that a student enrolls in HPA 596, HPA 600, or HPA 610. All such forms **must be received before or within the first two weeks of the semester**. After that deadline, students will not be permitted to enroll for independent study/research without permission of the PIC.

SECTION II

This short form must be completed to identify the work to be completed for independent study or thesis research credit. The student and instructor should jointly discuss and agree upon these requirements and expectations and then describe them below.

Briefly describe the independent study or thesis research:

--

Student-faculty meetings (provide information below):

Number of meetings (per week/month/semester)

Length of meetings (30 minutes/60 minutes/90 minutes)

--	--

List or describe any readings or texts that will be required. If the readings are to be identified by the student as part of the course, describe the process for identifying and selecting the readings:

--

Briefly explain the grading policy for the course. Describe the criteria and standards (including the schedule outlined below) that will be used to grade the student and, if appropriate, the relative weights of each criterion.

--

Schedule (please list major milestones and dates below):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

8.3 APPENDIX C: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT FORM

Graduate Student Annual Progress Evaluation

Department of Health Policy and Administration

Student's Name: _____

Academic Advisor: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: All students should complete Sections B and C of the form and return to Ashlee Foreman via email (anl5234@psu.edu) **ON OR BEFORE** [].

Section A: Evaluation of student's progress (advisor completes this section)

	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Superior	Inadequate Opportunity to Observe	Not Applicable
Performance in Courses					
Thesis Research					
Performance in Assistantship					

1. Please provide a brief summary of the student's progress in the past year:

2. Has the student made adequate progress in the past year? **Yes** **No**

If your answer is “No,” please explain why and suggest a course of action.

3. Describe any key areas where the student should focus their attention over the coming year.

Section B: Questions for Student

Do you have an official Ph.D. Committee (dissertation committee) on record with the Fox Graduate School?
 Yes No

If you are a second-year or later student and have not recorded a Ph.D. committee with the Fox Graduate School, please list potential member name(s) below:

Chair/Co-chair(s):

Other HPA Members:

Other Outside Members:

Have you passed the Comprehensive Examination? Yes No

If you are a second-year or later student and have not yet passed the Comprehensive Examination, please describe the next steps you plan to take and your approximate timeline for completing the Comprehensive Examination:

If you have passed the Comprehensive Examination, please describe the next steps you plan to take and your approximate timeline for completing your dissertation:

✓ Would you like to remain with your current Academic Advisor for the next academic year? Yes No

✓ If no, please indicate whom you would prefer to serve as your Academic Advisor

✓ Have you and your Academic Advisor discussed applying for external dissertation funding? Yes No

If so, what funding plans have you made?

Section C: Attachments

Student should complete and attach the following documents:

1. Statement of Academic and Career Goals (see attached for instructions)
2. Curriculum Vitae, including a list of all publications and presentations (including those submitted for publication or presentation).

Section D: Acknowledgment

I understand my evaluation and have read and discussed its content with my advisor.

Student's Signature

Date

I have reviewed the Graduate Student Annual Progress Evaluation and discussed the contents with the student.

Advisor's Signature

Date

Statement of Academic and Career Goals

1. Please provide a brief (1-3 paragraph) summary of your research topic(s) of interest, including possible research questions, potential sources of data, methods, and scientific/policy relevance of your topics [expand space as necessary]:

2. Please provide a brief (1-2 paragraph) summary of your career goals, including the type of position you are planning to seek after graduation [expand space as necessary]:

3. Please raise any questions or concerns you may have (including about coursework or other training/development opportunities necessary to complete your academic requirements and achieve your career goals, etc.) [expand space as necessary]: