**Student Mentoring**

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**Faculty resources**

* To learn more about University, school-wide and departmental standards for student advisement at each stage of the student life cycle, as well as acceptable expectations and responsibilities of faculty and students in the advisement process, refer to:
* [**Elements of Good Academic Advising**](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/advising.html)  document developed by the Office of the Provost University Council on Graduate Study
* [**University/GSPH graduate student policies**](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=126)

* **When advisor/advisee relationships are not successful**
* A student may change academic advisors if he/she identifies another member of the Epidemiology faculty who is willing to act as his/her advisor. Academic advisor changes are encouraged if all involved agree.
	+ Refer to the Students area of the **Roles and Responsibilities** section of the Faculty Handbook for more information about procedures for processing faculty advisor changes.
* Faculty may contact Lori Smith, Student Services Program Administrator, at smithl@edc.pitt.edu to discuss alternatives available to them and students in regard to unsuccessful advisor/advisee relationships, or Kim Sutton-Tyrrell, Vice Chair of Academics, at Tyrrell@edc.pitt.edu for input from a faculty member’s perspective.
* Refer to the [**Student Grievances**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/STUDENT_HANDBOOK_STUDENT_GRIEVANCE_PROCEDURES_9-1-07lss.pdf) section of the online Student Handbook for more information related to grievance resolution.

**Role of Student Services Office staff in providing student advisement**

* Student Services staff members cannot:
* Recommend courses for enrollment

* Authorize course exemptions or credit transfers based upon student academic background or experience
* Complete Report on Requirement forms as a record of student milestone exam passage (faculty should assume this responsibility)
* Student Services staff can:
* Generate and forward course enrollment permission numbers for students who wish to self enroll and need them (refer to the **Course Processes and Policies** section of the Faculty Handbook)
* Confirm (in collaboration with faculty academic advisors) that students are prepared to graduate
* Address student grievances and concerns, when appropriate

**Requirements for becoming an academic advisor**

* Refer to **New Faculty Information** and **Roles and Responsibilities** Faculty Handbook sections

**Advisement involving courses, scheduling and graduation**

* [GSPH course descriptions](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=120)
* [GSPH schedule information](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=120)
* [Epidemiology required course guide and suggested course sequences](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/forms.asp)

 (**Curriculum** section in Student Handbook)

* [Graduation checklists by degree program and matriculation year](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/handbook_FAQFormsAndDocuments.asp)
* [GSPH graduation requirement information](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=3290)

More information is available in the **Graduation** section of the Faculty Handbook.

[**Mentoring MD/PhD program students**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/degrees.asp#JointMD)

 Information concerning this program and its requirements is available here.

[**Career counseling and related resources**](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=290)

**Conflict resolution / student concerns and grievances**

* **GSPH resources**
* [**School-wide probation and dismissal policy**](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/docs/Probation_and_Dismissal_Policy.pdf)
* [**Other school-wide resources**](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=126)

**Interacting with distressed students**

It may be necessary for faculty who hear of or observe student distress or inappropriate behavior to obtain professional assistance for students or help with disciplinary measures. It is important to address potential problems before they escalate. **Primary focus should be on prevention and effective response**.

**Threats of harm or serious breaches of discipline must be taken seriously at all times.**

* Coordination of effort and communication among all University parties that could become involved are keys to successful resolution of distressed student situations. They include
* [The University Counseling Center](http://www.counseling.pitt.edu/)
* [University of Pittsburgh Police Department](http://www.police.pitt.edu/) (811 by phone)
* [Student Health Service](http://www.studhlth.pitt.edu/)
* [Office of Student Conduct](http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/conduct/)
* [Disability Resources and Services](http://www.drs.pitt.edu/)
* Student’s course instructor(s)
* Student’s academic advisor
* Epidemiology Student Services Program Coordinator (Lori Smith, smithl@edc.pitt.edu or (412)383-5269
* **How to address general concerns about student welfare**
* The student should be approached discreetly by the class instructor (if a mental health or behavioral problem is observed in class) and the student’s advisor should be notified.
* The student should be encouraged to seek assistance from the University Counseling Center. If the student refuses help, the advisor or instructor may seek advice from the Counseling Center, or a meeting may be scheduled with the director of the Office of Student Conduct in the Division of Student Affairs.
* If a student’s behavior is inappropriate (violates the Student Code of Conduct referenced above), class instructors should inform the student of this.

* The student’s department chair, advisor, the Epidemiology Student Services Program Coordinator (Lori Smith, smithl@edc.pitt.edu) the Student Services Director (Tom Songer, tjs@pitt.edu), and the University Conduct Officer should be notified.
* **Confidentiality issues**
* Faculty and staff must treat behavioral issues with sensitivity and operate within standards of confidentiality.
* Student information should be communicated only to those with a legitimate need to know and must NOT be shared with colleagues not associated with the issue at hand or with other students, unless the student has given permission or such communication is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or others.
* In many situations, information may be shared with family members (you may check with the Division of Student Affairs, Office of the Provost, Office of General Counsel, the University Counseling Center and University policy to obtain assistance with making this determination).
* **Handling unusual events or deteriorating student conditions**
* When the following occur, the University Conduct Officer, the student’s advisor, the department chair and the Epidemiology Student Services Coordinator should be notified:
	+ A student’s emotional problem or inappropriate behavior affects academic performance
	+ The problem or behavior interferes with class instruction
	+ The problem or behavior involves other students, faculty or staff
	+ University police ( 811) and the Director of the Office of Student Conduct should be notified if a student persists in behavior that violates the rights or welfare of others
* **Emergency situations**
* Strict observation of confidentiality may be waived in the event of actual or imminent danger (e.g. students threatening themselves or others), or if a significant disruptive behavior occurs.
* Faculty and staff who are first responders to emergency situations should NOT put themselves or others in danger.
* Call 811 (University police) immediately.
* Notify the Office of Student Conduct of any violations of the [Student Code of Conduct](http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/conduct/).

**Epidemiology Teaching Practicum program (EPIDEM 2215)**

Additional information concerning the Epidemiology Teaching Practicum program is available in the **New Faculty and Student Related Processes and Policies** sections of the Faculty Handbook.

This program is designed to enable doctoral program students to learn and apply best practices in teaching. Students attend workshops and University orientation programs to broaden their exposure to teaching methodologies, provide supporting services for instructors, and gain actual classroom teaching experience.

* **Eligibility** – PhD and DrPH students may complete their required Teaching Practicum experiences by assisting in an Epidemiology class or GSPH course taught by a member of the Epidemiology faculty. They must enroll in EPIDEM 2215 (Teaching Practicum).
* They must have already taken the course in question.
	+ They must have already taken and passed all three sections of the Preliminary Exam (PhD students) or the Qualifying Exam (DrPH students).
	+ Some international students may need to take and pass the University’s English Comprehensibility Test prior to registering for EPIDEM 2215 (more information is included below).
* **Finding a teaching assistant** - Faculty may request doctoral program students to act as their teaching assistants, they may be asked about teaching assistant opportunities by students or they may request the Epidemiology Student Services staff to advertise for students interested in fulfilling their Teaching Practicum experiences.
* **Required student and instructor documentation –** Teaching Practicum Agreement Forms must be completed prior to the Teaching Practicum experience, and Teaching Practicum Student Evaluation and Instructor Evaluation Forms must be completed and signed afterwards. All [forms](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/handbook_FAQFormsAndDocuments.asp) must be submitted to the Epidemiology Student Services Offices.
* **Mentoring TAs** – Instructors are expected to provide TAs with opportunities to teach in front of the class for at least 30 minutes, to help develop the course syllabus, grade homework and write and grade exams. Appropriate feedback on TA performance should be provided.

 ***Students are not compensated for their Teaching Assistant (EPIDEM 2215) responsibilities.***

* [**University Teaching Assistant / Teaching Fellow/ policy & advisement**](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/tapolicyrev.htm)
* [**English Language Comprehensibility Test requirement**](http://www.linguistics.pitt.edu/centers/ect.htm)
* **Purpose** – To ensure eligible doctoral program students planning to act as teaching assistants by enrolling in EPIDEM 2215 (a departmental graduation requirement) or departmentally appointed Teaching Fellows have sufficient English communication skills to be effective in these roles.
* **Test eligibility –** PhD and DrPH students who are non-native speakers of English must take and pass the test prior to registering for EPIDEM 2215 if English was not the official language of instruction in their undergraduate degree programs.
* **Timeframe** - 20-minute exams are held once each term in the Cathedral of Learning by the University English Language Institute. Scheduling will be announced by the Student Services staff**.**
* **Faculty involvement** - A member of the Epidemiology faculty must accompany individual students to each exam. Faculty advisors will be notified if they must accompany one of their advisees.

**[Working with international students and scholars](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/oisupdate.html)**

* [**International student information for faculty and staff**](http://www.ois.pitt.edu/InfoDepartments/Home.html)
* [**English Language Institute (ELI)**](http://www.eli.pitt.edu/)
* Provides English language testing and instruction and facilitates English Comprehensibility Test (refer to Teaching Practicum program information above) and the [English Language Proficiency Test](http://www.linguistics.pitt.edu/graduate/international.htm) for accepted international students with low TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores.

**When plagiarism/cheating becomes an issue**

Information regarding plagiarism is discussed with new GSPH students at the GSPH New Student Orientations, and numerous documents regarding its definition, detection and consequences are available on the University, GSPH and departmental websites. It is important for faculty to be aware of plagiarism policies and procedures so they may take appropriate steps to address these incidents if and when they occur.

* **Plagiarism definition –** copying of another person’s ideas, text, or other creative work and presenting it as one’s own, without permission. Academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, constitute a breach of the University’s mission to promote honest academic and scholarly conduct.

***All Department of Epidemiology faculty and students as of fall 2010 must complete a GSPH online module explaining plagiarism. Additional details concerning this requirement are available on the GSPH*** [***website***](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=287)***.***

* [**University academic and research integrity policies**](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=287)
* [**University policies involving plagiarism detection and related consequences**](http://www.cidde.pitt.edu/fds/lrn_plagiarism.htm#detect)

 The University’s Center for Instructional Design and Distance Education (CIDDE) provides informational resources for instructors addressing issues involving plagiarism and/or cheating.

* All faculty have access to two web-based tools to check for plagiarism:
* **Safe Assign**
* **Turnitin**
* How to proceed if plagiarism may have been committed
* Collect evidence
* Inform the student of the alleged violation
* Attempt to come to a resolution with the student
* If a resolution can be reached, faculty must document the resolution agreement by completing a Report of Possible Academic Integrity Violation by a Studentform and forwarding it to Mary Derkach, GSPH Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. This form is available on the GSPH Intranet, which is accessible via the University web portal ([www.my.pitt.edu](http://www.my.pitt.edu)), under the **My resources** tab.
* If a resolution cannot be reached, a written statement of charges should be filed with Mary Derkach, GSPH Assistant Dean for Student Affairs on a Report of Possible Academic Integrity Violation by a Studentform. If it is near the end of the academic term, a “G” grade in the class involved should be filed for thestudent until the matter is resolved.

***Report of Possible Academic Integrity Violation by a Student forms must be signed and dated by both faculty and students involved.***

* Reports of Possible Academic Integrity Violation forms reflecting an inability to reach a resolution will be forwarded to the student involved and the chair of the GSPH Academic Integrity Hearing Board, who will set a formal hearing date.
* The GSPH Academic Integrity Hearing Board will review the Violation form, consider evidence and information from both parties, and communicate its decision and recommendations.
* Students wishing to appeal the Board’s decision may request information about doing so from Mary Derkach or Lori Smith, Epidemiology Student Services Program Administrator.
* Completed Reports of Possible Academic Integrity Violation forms, including sanction descriptions, are retained in a confidential GSPH Student Affairs file and destroyed when students graduate if sanctions are met.

[**Student organizations**](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=95)

**Continuing student transitions from one program to another**

* Lateral transitions or transitions to lower level degree programs within the Epidemiology Department
* After discussing the proposed transition with their academic advisors, students should e-mail Karrie Presutti, GSPH Admissions Manager, at presutti@pitt.edu (copy Lori Smith, Epidemiology Student Services Program Coordinator, at smithl@edc.pitt.edu) to notify her of their transition requests.
* Transition requests are reviewed and authorized by the Epidemiology Admissions Committee Chair.
* Students will receive a letter from GSPH Student Affairs informing them that the transition has been approved.
* Transitions to higher level degree programs within the Epidemiology Department / student transitions to/from other GSPH departments to the Epidemiology Department
* Students should e-mail Karrie Presutti, GSPH Admissions Manager, at presutti@pitt.edu, (copy Lori Smith, Epidemiology Student Services Program Coordinator, at smithl@edc.pitt.edu) to notify her of their transition requests. They should attach a new goals statement (highlighting why they are requesting the transition) as well as two new letters of recommendation (one must be written by a member of the Epidemiology faculty).
* Original SOPHAS applications and newly submitted documents are forwarded to the GSPH Admissions Committee for review.
* GSPH Student Affairs conducts a secondary application review after departmental application decisions are made.
* Students accepted into new degree programs receive an e-mail from GSPH Student Affairs and an acceptance packet by mail.

**Dissertation/Thesis/Essay Committees**

**Master’s essay/thesis committees**

* **MPH students** must complete essays; **MS students** must complete theses.
* [**Required MPH and MS committee composition**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/GSPH_Milestone_Committee_Composition_Requirements.pdf)

**Processing of committee approval requests**

* Contact the Student Services staff for more information about submitting proposed committee requests to the department for approval.
* Committee composition is approved on behalf of the department by Lori Smith, smithl@edc.pitt.edu. Documents identifying committee members are then forwarded to the GSPH Assistant Dean for Student Affairs for her approval and signature.

Chairs of committees **not** approved are contacted by the Student Services staff. A new form must be forwarded to the office, including a revised committee member list to initiate a second review.

* The Student Services staff e-mails committee chairs to notify them that the committees they have proposed have been approved at the departmental and GSPH levels.
* [**Standards / recommendations for essay and thesis development and committee/student conduct**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/research/research_process.pdf)

**Thesis and Essay Grading**

* Essay and Thesis Grading Forms must be completed and submitted to the Student Services Office (A536 Crabtree) for departmental retention.
* [Essay Grading Form](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/Essay_grade_form_2009.pdf)
* [Thesis Grading form](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/Thesis_grade_form_2009.pdf)

**Doctoral Committees**

* **Both DrPH and PhD** students must complete dissertations.

The **Preliminary Exam Committee** is a department-wide committee charged with administering and assessing student initial readiness to pursue the **PhD** degree.

A **Qualifying Exam Committee** is a committee proposed by an individual student and his/her academic advisor that must be approved by the department chair and Mary Derkach in GSPH Student Affairs, charged with assessing student initial readiness to pursue the **DrPH** degree.

* [**Acceptable doctoral committee (dissertation and qualifying) composition**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/GSPH_Milestone_Committee_Composition_Requirements.pdf)
* **Processing of committee approval requests**
* Contact the Student Services staff for more information about submitting proposed committee requests to the department for approval.
* Committee composition is approved on behalf of the department by Lori Smith, smithl@edc.pitt.edu. Documents identifying committee members are then forwarded to the GSPH Assistant Dean for Student Affairs for her approval and signature.

Chairs of committees **not** approved are contacted by the Student Services staff. A new form must be forwarded to the office, including a revised committee member list to initiate a second review.

* The Student Services staff e-mails committee chairs to notify them that the committees they have proposed have been approved at the departmental and GSPH levels.
* [**Standards / recommendations for dissertation development and committee/student conduct**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/research/research_process.pdf)
* **Dissertation Grading**
* [**Dissertation Score Forms**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/Dissertation_Score_Form_2009.pdf) must be completed and submitted to the Student Services Offices (A536/A537 Crabtree) for departmental retention.
* **Handling student difficulties with milestone exams – transitions to other degree programs**
* **Preliminary Exam** - Doctoral students are given one opportunity to re-take failed sections of the Preliminary Exam (a three-part exam). GSPH policy does not allow a second exam re-take unless the Department of Epidemiology Chair requests this on behalf of a student and receives approval from the GSPH Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Mary Derkach. The department will notify students of final decisions concerning these requests.
* Academic advisors may recommend that students who are unsuccessful in passing all three exam sections instead complete requirements for a master’s degree. If this recommendation is made, students must notify the GSPH Admissions Manager, Karrie Presutti (presutti@pitt.edu) that this is their intention. The Epidemiology Admissions Committee Chair will then approve the request to transfer to the MPH or MS degree program, and students will move forward with completing their requirements for the selected master’s program.
* **Overview Exam** - Students not obtaining Overview approval will receive written comments regarding this assessment from their Overview/Comprehensive/Dissertation Committee, including suggestions and/or recommendations for action(s) prior to scheduling a second exam.
* If the second attempt to pass the Overview Exam is not successful, students will be unable to continue their pursuit of a doctoral degree, and may be given the opportunity to earn a master’s degree.
* **Comprehensive Exam** – It is rare for a student to fail the Comprehensive Exam. Typically, if a student’s committee has concluded that the probability that he/she will successfully complete his/her dissertation is low, that is communicated at or before this time; the student may need to pursue an alternative path (i.e. complete a master’s program). Only students who have a strong chance of passing the Comprehensive should schedule this milestone exam. **The Comprehensive Exam cannot be taken in the same term in which the dissertation defense is scheduled.**
* **Final Defense** – If a student fails the final defense, this represents lack of preparation and guidance by the committee and primary advisor; therefore, it is rare that this would occur. All committee members should be reasonably comfortable with dissertation progress before agreeing that the student is prepared to defend.