**Student Milestone Exams and Requirements – Sequence and Reporting**

**CONTENT SUMMARY**

* MPH / MS milestones\*, requirements, forms
* DrPH / PhD milestones\*, requirements, forms
* Other policies and recommendations involving timing/sequence/retakes of doctoral program exams

***\*Milestones*** *are required examinations (written and/or oral) that students must pass or requirements they must complete in order to graduate.*

**Master’s degree program milestone exams/requirements**

Master’s students must work with their academic advisors to form faculty committees meeting [University committee composition requirements](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/GSPH_Milestone_Committee_Composition_Requirements.pdf) to guide them through the essay/thesis development process and facilitate any required milestone examinations. Committee composition is approved at the departmental level by Lori Smith, Student Services Program Administrator ([smithl@edc.pitt.edu](mailto:smithl@edc.pitt.edu)), and at the GSPH level by Mary Derkach, GSPH Assistant Dean for Student Affairs ([derkach@pitt.edu](mailto:derkach@pitt.edu)). Contact the Student Services staff for information on submitting committee composition proposals.

*A master’s* ***thesis*** *must describe original research conducted by the student. It also involves two oral milestone exams.*

*A master’s* ***essay*** *can describe the student’s original research, but it does not have to do so.*

*Other options include a literature review, a grant proposal, or a surveillance report. No oral milestone exams are required for an essay. The essay may be in the same format and of similar content as a master’s thesis, but this is not required.*

**MPH program (MPH students must submit essays)**

* Milestone
* [**Essay submission**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/research/research_process.pdf)  - Refer to the Overview of the Master’s Essay section for details.
* Recommendations for students and faculty involving MPH essay submission:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Required activities | Fall term due date | Spring term due date | Summer session due dates / June & August |
| Select readers, notify Dept.1  Submit outline to readers2  Submit first draft to readers2  Submit second draft to readers2  **Submit final draft** | September  Mid October  November 6  November 30  **December 16** | January  February  March 16  April 6  **April 22** | March / April April / May May 6 / June 27 May 27 / July 18 **June 8 / August 9** |

**1**Notify the department by completing and submitting a [Committee Approval Form](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/handbook_FAQFormsAndDocuments.asp).

**2**Essay readers (essay committee members) should return comments to students within two weeks of receiving an outline or manuscript.

**MS program (MS students must submit theses)**

* Milestones
* [**Comprehensive exam**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/research/Research_Process.pdf)  - Refer to the Overview of the Master’s Thesis section for details.
* [**Thesis defense**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/research/Research_Process.pdf) - Refer to the Overview of the Master’s Thesis section for details.
* Recommendations for students involving MS milestone exam/thesis submission sequencing

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Required activities and exams | Fall term due date | Spring term due date | Summer session due dates June & August |
| Select committee members, notify Dept.1  Submit outline to committee2  Submit intro/methods to committee2  **Comprehensive exam**  Submit first draft to committee2  Submit second draft to committee2  **Final defense**  Submit final draft to committee | Early September  Mid September  Early October  **Mid October**  November 6  November 30  **Early Dec**  December 16 | Early January  Mid January  Early February  **Mid February**  March 16  April 6  **Mid April**  April 22 | Early March / April Mid March / April Early April / May Mid April / May May 6 / June 20 May 27 / July 11 June 10 / July 25 June 10 / August 9 |

**1**Notify the department by completing and submitting a [Committee Approval Form](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/handbook_FAQFormsAndDocuments.asp).

**2**Thesis committee members should return comments to students within two weeks of receiving an outline or manuscript.

[**Report on Requirements for Master’s Degree forms**](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/ReportReqmntsMasterDegree2009.pdf)  must be completed to record passage of MPH and MS milestones, and submitted to the Student Services Office (A536 or A537 Crabtree) for final processing.

* **Completion and submission process** - Forms may be completed (but not submitted) electronically. Each field highlighted in gray should be completed to record information for the appropriate milestone.
* Forms should be completed electronically as much as possible PRIOR to exams or essay/thesis submission. The faculty chairs or committee members should complete the forms, bring them to exams, and request the appropriate member signatures.

**A separate form must be used to submit information for each milestone exam/activity**.

***Faculty should not******complete other sections of the Report on Requirements Form that do not pertain to the milestone currently being recorded.***

* Each field highlighted in gray may be completed (typed) to record information for the appropriate milestone. Dates for milestone completion and dates associated with committee signatures must be written on the forms after the exam or essay/thesis submission.
* Committee signatures and signature dates should be obtained on forms BEFORE members leave the exam location.
* Forms should be delivered immediately to the Student Services Offices.
* Student Services staff members will obtain the Department Chair’s signature.
* **Evaluation of performance**
* [Essay Grading Form](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/handbook_FAQFormsAndDocuments.asp)
* [Thesis Grading Form](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/handbook_FAQFormsAndDocuments.asp)
* Completed Grading forms must be returned to the Student Services Office (A536 or A537 Crabtree) for departmental retention.
* More Master’ program milestone exam information including essay/thesis formatting requirements, is available in the online [Student Handbook](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/STUDENT_HANDBOOK_MASTER'S_DEGREE_%20PROGRAMS_6-15-10_lss.pdf).

**Doctoral degree program milestone exams/requirements/retakes**

Doctoral students must work with their academic advisors to form faculty committees meeting [University committee composition requirements](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/GSPH_Milestone_Committee_Composition_Requirements.pdf) to guide them through the dissertation development process and facilitate required milestone examinations.

Committee composition is approved at the departmental level by Lori Smith, Student Services Program Administrator ([smithl@edc.pitt.edu](mailto:smithl@edc.pitt.edu)), and at the GSPH level by Mary Derkach, GSPH Assistant Dean for Student Affairs ([derkach@pitt.edu](mailto:derkach@pitt.edu)). Contact the Student Services staff for information on submitting committee composition proposals.

1Students not passing Preliminary or Qualifying Exams after a second retake may be advised to complete a master’s degree program. More information about exam retakes is available in the Other information about milestone exams/activities section at the end of this document.

More doctoral program milestone exam information, including dissertation formatting requirements, is available in the online [Student Handbook](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/STUDENT_HANDBOOK_DOCTORAL_DEGREE_PROGRAMS_10-14-09_kst.pdf).

[Report on Requirements for Doctoral Degree forms](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/ReportReqmntsDoctoralDegree2010.pdf) must be completed to record passage of PhD and DrPH milestones, and submitted to the Student Services Office (A536 or A537 Crabtree) for final processing.

**Completion and submission process** - Forms may be completed (but not submitted) electronically. Each field highlighted in gray should be completed to record information for the appropriate milestone.

* Forms should be completed electronically as much as possible PRIOR to exams or essay/thesis submission. The faculty chairs or committee members should complete the forms, bring them to exams, and request the appropriate member signatures.
* A separate form must be used for each milestone exam/activity.

***Faculty should not******complete other sections of the Report on Requirements Form that do not pertain to the milestone currently being recorded.***

* Each field highlighted in gray should be completed to record information for the appropriate milestone. Dates for milestone completion and dates associated with committee signatures must be written on the forms after the exam or essay/thesis submission.
* Committee signatures and signature dates should be obtained on forms BEFORE members leave the exam location.
* Forms should be delivered immediately to the Student Services Offices.
* Student Services staff members will obtain the Department Chair’s signature.
* **Evaluation of performance**
* [Dissertation Grading Form](http://www.epidemiology.pitt.edu/documents/handbook/Dissertation_Score_Form_2009.pdf)
* Completed Grading Forms must be returned to the Student Services Office (A536 or A537 Crabtree) for departmental retention after dissertation defenses are passed.
* **Qualifying Exam Grading Form**
* Completed Grading Forms must be returned to the Student Services Office (A536 or A537 Crabtree) for departmental retention after DrPH students pass the Qualifying Exam. More information about Qualifying Exams is available via the links in the **More doctoral program milestone exam information** section above.

**Other information concerning milestone exams/activities**

* **Doctoral programs**
* **Preliminary (PhD) or Qualifying (DrPH) exams** are conducted at approximately the end of the first year of full-time graduate study.
* **Comprehensive Exams** are typically taken when formal coursework is completed (usually 1.5 – 2 years, or less if a student has already earned a master’s degree in the Epidemiology Department.
* **Overview Exams** should never be taken in the student’s final term.
* **Overview and Comprehensive Exams** may be taken at the same time, but as two distinct exams, with committee authorization.
* The University Provost’s Office recommends that approximately 8 months elapse between the Comprehensive Exam and the Dissertation Defense, although this is not a firm requirement.
* **Comprehensive Exams and Dissertation Defenses** cannot take place in the same term.
* **Master’s programs**
* Refer to sequencing recommendations in the above tables in this document.
* At least one month should elapse between the date MS students take their Comprehensive Exam and the date when they defend their theses.