



DOWNSTATE
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

SPH Doctoral Dissertation Handbook

Table of Contents

Program administration.....	4
General policies and guidelines.....	5
Dissertation overview.....	6
Dissertation credits.....	7
Dissertation committee.....	9
Committee membership.....	9
Expectations of dissertation committee members.....	10
Expectations of the chair of the dissertation committee.....	10
Conflicts with the dissertation committee.....	11
Dissertation proposal.....	12
Dissertation proposal format.....	12
Dissertation proposal presentation.....	15
Dissertation proposal assessment.....	16
Dissertation.....	17
Elements of the dissertation.....	17
Scheduling of the dissertation defense.....	17
Dissertation defense.....	18
Dissertation assessment.....	19
Eligibility for graduation.....	19
Dissertation Format.....	20
Title Page.....	20
Abstract.....	20
Acknowledgments.....	20
Table of contents.....	21
Introduction.....	21
Literature review.....	21
Methods.....	22
Results.....	22

Conclusions	23
Public health reflection	23
Appendices.....	23
Additional dissertation formatting guidelines.....	24
Font type and size.....	24
Page size, margins, and justification.....	24
Spacing and numbering	24
Tables and figures.....	25
Footnotes.....	25
Authorship on publications or other dissemination products	25
SUNY Open Access Repository	26
Responsible conduct of research	26
Required research training.....	26
Institutional review board	27
Transparency and reproducibility of data collection and analysis.....	27
Appendix A: Title Page Format.....	28
Appendix B: Table of Contents Format.....	29

Program administration

Kitaw Demissie, MD PhD

Professor and Dean, School of Public Health

Kitaw.Demissie@downstate.edu

Denise Bruno, MD, MPH

Associate Professor and Interim Chair,
Department of Community Health Sciences

Denise.Bruno@downstate.edu

718.270.2954 | PHAB 4-012

Dr. Bruno serves as Chair of the Community Health Sciences department. In addition to your faculty advisor, Dr. Bruno can answer questions on any aspects of the program to CHSC doctoral students.

Laura Geer, PhD, MHS

Associate Professor and Chair, Department of
Environmental and Occupational Health
Sciences

Laura.Geer@downstate.edu

718.221.5267 | PHAB 4-031

Dr. Geer serves as Chair of the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences department. In addition to your faculty advisor, Dr. Geer can answer questions on any aspects of the program to doctoral students in the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences concentration.

Elizabeth Helzner, PhD, MS

Associate Professor and Interim Chair,
Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Elizabeth.Helzner@downstate.edu

718.270.6732 | PHAB 4-028

Dr. Helzner serves as Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. In addition to your faculty advisor, Dr. Helzner can answer questions on any aspects of the program to doctoral students in the Epidemiology concentration.

Tracey E. Wilson, PhD

Distinguished Service Professor and Vice Dean
for Faculty Affairs and Research

Tracey.Wilson@downstate.edu

718.270.2105 | PHAB 4-009

Dr. Wilson serves as Chair of the Committee on the Doctoral Program (CDP) and can assist with general inquiries about program requirements and milestones and is available to discuss successes and barriers to program progress.

General policies and guidelines

The SPH (School of Public Health) Dissertation Handbook is a supplement to the [SPH Doctoral Program Handbook](#) and is intended to guide processes and expectations specific to the doctoral dissertation. For complete details regarding university policies, student rights and responsibilities, the academic calendar and associated deadlines, campus services, expectations for student conduct, and other essential information, consult the [SUNY Downstate Health Science University's Student Handbook](#) and the SPH Doctoral Program Handbook. SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University reserves the right to alter existing rules and regulations, and academic programs, as deemed necessary by the institution and expressly reserves the right to (1) to change or modify its schedule of tuition and fees; (2) withdraw, cancel, or reschedule, modify any course, program of study, degree or any requirement or policy in connection with the foregoing; and (3) change or modify any academic or other policy. Essential changes to information in this student handbook will be published in newsletters or other university publications. It is the responsibility of each student to ascertain current information that pertains to their program, particularly regarding satisfaction of degree requirements by consultation with the student's faculty advisor, department chair, the Office of Student Affairs, the Registrar's Office, and other offices as appropriate. In preparing this handbook, every effort has been made to provide accurate information.

Dissertation overview

Doctoral students demonstrate proficiency in doctoral competencies by culminating their studies with the dissertation. The dissertation is the final requirement for the doctoral program after completion of all coursework, the Applied Practical Experience (APEX), and the Qualifying Examination. During the dissertation development, students apply and integrate competencies learned in DrPH (Doctor of Public Health) coursework to a topic of public health significance. The dissertation process results in a high-quality written product and oral presentation that is consistent with advanced doctoral level study, has practical implications for public health programs, policies, practice, or systems, and which demonstrates the student's mastery of and ability to synthesize doctoral-level competencies. The dissertation has the following steps:

- **Dissertation committee:** The student will identify faculty members who will comprise their dissertation committee, including a chair. The committee must be approved by the chair of the committee on the doctoral program.
- **Dissertation proposal:** Following the guidelines in this handbook, the student will develop a written dissertation proposal. The student will present this proposal to the committee for approval in a dissertation proposal defense. The student must also submit evidence of training in the responsible conduct of research and supporting documentation of approvals to the chair of the dissertation committee.
- **Dissertation:** The student will develop a written dissertation and present it to the dissertation committee in a formal oral defense. The student will submit the properly formatted dissertation and supporting documentation of approvals from all dissertation committee members to the chair of the committee on the doctoral program.

The dissertation can take the form of a community health assessment, a research study to understand modifiable risk and protective factors for public health outcomes, a project that focuses on development, implementation, and evaluation of a public health program or policy intervention, a translational research project, or another form that involves advanced doctoral level study focused on an applied public health topic. The doctoral student must intentionally select, integrate, and apply at least three foundational and concentration-specific doctoral competencies. At least one competency must come from the

foundational doctoral competencies, and at least one competency must come from the concentration-specific doctoral competencies. Students should develop plans for any data sharing that would result from the dissertation, including plans for dissemination of research findings. Doctoral students must maintain a leadership role in the development, writing, and presentation of the final dissertation.

Dissertation credits

Each fall and spring semester, Doctoral candidates will take at least one credit of PUBH 8001 (doctoral dissertation) until they have completed the program.

The first stage of the dissertation is development of the dissertation proposal. Doctoral candidates will work with their faculty advisor to determine reasonable expectations for completion of the proposal and defense and should plan accordingly for their credits. The following guidelines apply to the credits for the doctoral dissertation:

- Doctoral candidates who have not completed an approved dissertation proposal and presentation must register for one dissertation credit each fall and spring semester (PUBH 8001) unless they are on an approved leave of absence.
- Registration for PUBH 8001 in the summer semester is not required. However, a student must be signed up for a credit in the semester in which they defend their dissertation. If the dissertation defense occurs in the summer semester, the student must sign up for PUBH 8001 during that summer semester.
- Doctoral candidates who have completed and successfully defended the dissertation proposal are eligible to register for more than one dissertation credit per semester but may not exceed the 15-credit maximum permitted for the program.
- To sign up for more than one credit of PUBH 8001 in a semester, the student should meet first with the chair of their dissertation committee to ensure that the number of credits will align with the anticipated scope of work planned for the semester. The student should then submit to the Office of the Registrar a completed and signed [Course Add-Drop Form](#). The form will require a signature by the Chair of the Doctoral Program Committee and will not be accepted by the registrar's office until all required signatures are added to the form.

- To receive a passing grade for PUBH 8001 doctoral credit(s) each semester, students are required to review their progress with the chair of their dissertation committee (or their faculty advisor if a committee has not yet been formed), complete a [Doctoral Progress Review Form](#) that reflects the progress review meeting and submit the completed and signed form by the last day of the semester to the course website for PUBH 8001.

Dissertation committee

Committee membership

Doctoral students identify faculty members for the dissertation committee after successful completion of their qualifying examination and in consultation with their faculty advisor. Students should not engage in any significant activity related to the dissertation proposal until they have a committee established, to ensure that the proposal is being developed under their committee's advisement. To facilitate identification of a committee, the student will write a summary of approximately one page that includes the anticipated dissertation focus, a working title for the project, a statement of the overall goals of the project, and proposed data sources. The student will discuss their dissertation topic with the faculty advisor, who will advise on potential dissertation committee members and a committee chair; the faculty advisor will support outreach to potential committee members.

The dissertation committee includes three members, at least two of whom hold a full-time primary faculty appointment in the School of Public Health. At least one committee member should hold a primary appointment in the candidate's concentration area and would typically serve as the chair of the dissertation committee. A third member can hold a faculty appointment in the School of Public Health or be a public health professional at another DHSU (Downstate Health Sciences University) department or another institution. A proposed member who does not hold a primary faculty appointment in the SPH should hold a terminal degree and should work in an area of public health aligned with the dissertation focus. A committee member who does not hold a primary faculty appointment in the DHSU's SPH cannot serve as the committee chair.

Upon selection and agreement of faculty to serve on the committee, the doctoral student completes and obtains signatures for the [Dissertation Committee Nomination Form](#) and submits the signed form to the Chair of the Doctoral Program Committee. Upon review and approval, the doctoral student and program advisor will be notified. If changes to the dissertation committee are required during development of the dissertation proposal (or at any phase of the dissertation), a revised Dissertation Committee Nomination Form must be submitted for approval to the Chair of the Doctoral Program Committee.

Expectations of dissertation committee members

Dissertation committee members are responsible for reviewing complete drafts of the dissertation and providing written feedback in a timely manner to the student and with a copy to the chair of the dissertation committee. Except in extenuating circumstances, there should be no more than a four-week turnaround review time for each of the committee members to review a completed proposal or dissertation draft. Dissertation committee members must also attend an in-person dissertation proposal defense and a final dissertation defense.

Expectations of the chair of the dissertation committee

The chair of the dissertation committee assumes additional responsibilities, which include:

- Ensuring compliance with required [training](#) in the ethical conduct of research and maintaining documentation of training.
- Overseeing institutional research reviews, including submissions to the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB), serving as the Principal Investigator for the IRB application, and apart from exempt research, supervising and ensuring annual reporting and project closeout. The doctoral student is responsible for preparing materials for the IRB submission (e.g., consent form, protocol, procedures to protect confidentiality) in cooperation with the chair of the dissertation committee.
- Recommending when draft of dissertation proposal and dissertation sections are ready for committee review, coordinating with the dissertation committee to ensure timely feedback, and advising the student in responding to committee feedback.
- Meeting regularly with the student to discuss dissertation progress, setting deadlines for drafts, and supporting timely progression on the dissertation. At least two meetings in each fall and spring semester are required.
- Evaluating dissertation progress for each semester in which a student is registered for dissertation credit (PUBH 8001) by working with the student to complete and submit a [DrPH Progress Review Form](#).

- Communicating with the dissertation committee members to assess agreement on student readiness before setting a date for the dissertation proposal presentation and the dissertation defense.
- Coordinating with the chair of the committee on the doctoral program to set and announce dates for the dissertation defense.
- Moderating the proposal and dissertation defense.
- Ensuring that all paperwork that documents the outcomes of the proposal and dissertation defense is completed and submitted shortly after each outcome is assessed.

Conflicts with the dissertation committee

Disagreements sometimes arise between the doctoral student and one or more members of the dissertation committee, including disagreements about project methods, results, or interpretation of results. In such cases, it is expected that revisions will align with input from committee members with expertise most closely aligned with the area of concern, and that the committee does need to have unanimous agreement on every aspect of the dissertation. However, if consensus is not reached after working with the chair of the dissertation committee to resolve disagreements, or if a conflict or other problem arises and is impairing progress toward completion of the degree after several attempts, the student should refer the issue to the Committee on the Doctoral Program. When this happens, the chair of the Committee on the Doctoral Program may consult with the student, members of the dissertation committee, and the department chair to propose a remediation strategy. The remediation strategy could include modifying the composition of the dissertation committee. The department chair and the student will then implement the remediation strategy. Any changes to the dissertation committee at any time requires submission and approval of a revised Dissertation Committee Nomination Form. A change in membership may be accompanied by new perspectives on the dissertation approach. Dissertation committee members added after the dissertation proposal has been successfully defended should be familiar with the approved proposal's contents and aligned with the approved methods and direction.

Dissertation proposal

Dissertation proposal format

The dissertation proposal includes a project abstract, literature review, methods, identification of competencies applied, a timeline, and references. Each of these elements should be developed in sufficient detail for the dissertation committee to ensure the feasibility, significance, and rigor of the proposed project. In addition, the dissertation proposal needs to make clear how the project findings inform public health practice through application of doctoral-level competencies. There is no page limit for the dissertation proposal, although each section should be written in a narrative format and students should strive to be both concise and complete in each section. The goal of the proposal is to ensure that the student and committee members fully understand and agree with the details of the proposed project and that the resulting dissertation will meet the requirements for the doctoral degree. Each required element of the proposal is described below.

- **Project abstract:** A high-level summary of the project background, significance, proposed methods, competencies addressed, and anticipated public health implications.
- **Literature review:** The literature review will typically take the form of a critical review, although on occasion another type of review, such as a scoping review, may be most appropriate. Students should work with their dissertation committee to discuss the approach that is most appropriate to the project being developed. Although the literature review will be further developed in the dissertation, the literature review section of the proposal should be developed in sufficient detail to support the need for the proposed project, including information on the epidemiology of the problem being addressed and clear identification of applied public health gaps / needs that will be addressed in the project. The review should describe any applicable theoretical and/or conceptual frameworks and models that inform the questions and methods being addressed in the project and should clearly detail the planned product that will be produced during the dissertation, such as a program or policy evaluation, development and pilot testing of a public health intervention, a needs and asset assessment, or a manuscript on an applied public health topic. When applicable, a conceptual model and/or logic model should be described and included as a figure. The literature review will be expanded in the [Introduction](#) and the [Literature Review](#) sections of the dissertation.

- **Methods:** The methods section is to include a plan for data collection and analysis and align with a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods research approach. Data collection can also take the form of secondary data analysis. The section should start with a rationale for the selected research approach and study design (e.g., descriptive qualitative, phenomenology, survey, quasi-experimental) selected. Students should then describe the primary or secondary qualitative and/or quantitative data to be used and a plan for data analysis to address the aims of the proposed project.¹ Detailed methods that will be applied to produce the planned product should be provided, including a description of the population to be represented in the project, sampling and recruitment approach, inclusion and exclusion criteria, sample size considerations, and the data analytic approach. Students should also document in the proposal that they will have access to the data that they plan to use in their dissertation. The methods employed in the project will determine how results are later reported. Students should consult standard reporting guidelines during the dissertation planning phase of the project as described by the [EQUATOR network](#). Some examples of these reporting guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - [STROBE](#) for observational quantitative designs
 - [CONSORT](#) for randomized controlled trials
 - [CONSORT extension](#) for feasibility and pilot studies
 - [ASSESS](#) for implementation studies
 - [COREQ](#) and [SRQR](#) for qualitative studies
 - [JARS and MMARS](#) for qualitative and mixed methods studies
 - [PRISMA](#) for meta-analyses
 - [TREND](#) for non-randomized evaluation studies
- **Partnerships:** Students are encouraged to partner with government agencies and/or public health organizations when appropriate in the planning and execution of the project, so that the project addresses an applied public health issue. If a partnership is developed, an explicit statement confirming agreements should be included.

¹ While there is not a requirement that students collect their own data for the dissertation, work completed and disseminated prior to attainment of doctoral candidacy is not eligible to be utilized for the dissertation.

- **Human subjects' protections.** For research that includes human participants, students must include plans for ensuring confidentiality of research records if data collection is not anonymous. Students must plan and discuss IRB submission plans before embarking on any data collection or analysis in the proposal. All students must complete training on the [responsible conduct of research](#) and submit certification of training to the dissertation committee chair before a dissertation proposal presentation is scheduled. A sentence in the proposal stating compliance with the training requirement should also be included.
- **Competencies to be Addressed and Leadership implications:** The dissertation process requires intentional selection, integration, and application of at least three [foundational and concentration-specific doctoral competencies](#), at least one of which must be from each category of competency. Any concentration-specific competencies must be associated with the student's concentration area. In the proposal, include a clear description of the three selected competencies to be synthesized, provide a rationale for why these competencies are selected and how they will enhance public health leadership, and include a clear linkage of the competencies to development of the final written product that will be generated (e.g., "Applying the ADAPT-ITT framework to modify the intervention, documenting adaptations using the FRAME framework, developing an intervention manual, and conducting a feasibility test of the resulting adaptation requires synthesis of the following competencies..."). This section will later be developed and expanded in the Public Health Reflection chapter of the dissertation.
- **Timeline:** Students must create a timeline including description of major activities and milestones, anticipated due dates, and anticipated timeline for completion of the dissertation. The timeline should include a narrative description of planned activities with enough detail to allow the dissertation committee to ascertain the plan's feasibility and should also be summarized in a Gantt chart.
- **References:** Students must include a separate reference section in either AMA (American Medical Association) or APA (American Psychological Association) format.

Dissertation proposal presentation

When the dissertation committee believes the written proposal is ready, an oral presentation will be scheduled. The presentation must be scheduled at least two weeks before the presentation and two hours should be reserved for the proposal presentation. At a minimum, the dissertation proposal defense audience includes all members of the dissertation committee, the department chair of the student's concentration, and the chair of the doctoral program committee or a delegate of that committee. In agreement with the candidate, the chair of the dissertation committee can invite members of the public (i.e., students, faculty members, preceptors, etc.) to attend the proposal defense. Although the defense can be scheduled for hybrid attendance, it is expected that the student and all dissertation committee members will attend in person. The dissertation proposal defense requires that all dissertation committee members be present and should be rescheduled if one or more members is not present at the arranged time. The proposal presentation has three components:

- Introduction of the doctoral student by the dissertation committee chair.
- An uninterrupted presentation by the doctoral candidate of the proposed dissertation elements, lasting no more than 45 minutes and including information on each of the required proposal elements.
- A question-and-answer period with the doctoral student, lasting no more than 45 minutes. During the discussion, the order of questions is:
 - Dissertation committee members
 - Department chair
 - Chair of the committee on the doctoral program
 - Other invited audience members

In a closed session discussion immediately after the presentation, the dissertation committee members will decide whether the dissertation proposal is approved or requires substantial revision.

Dissertation proposal assessment

It is expected that the dissertation committee will have reviewed each of the proposal drafts with sufficient care prior to scheduling the oral presentation, and that any major concerns that could result in a student failing this stage of the dissertation process would have been resolved prior the defense. However, in some cases, added information arising from discussions with audience members could result in a proposal not being accepted. No later than one week following the proposal presentation, the chair of the dissertation committee must submit a completed [Dissertation Proposal Form](#) to the chair of the committee on the doctoral program, documenting the outcome of the proposal review, and with a copy to the doctoral student. Students should be familiar with the Dissertation Proposal Form during development of the proposal, as it contains rubrics that the committee will use to assess essential elements of the proposal. If the proposal assessment outcome is to “not accept / fail,” then the dissertation proposal must be revised, and another proposal presentation scheduled once revisions are addressed. The outcome of the second presentation must be documented in an additional Dissertation Proposal Form. If the proposal assessment outcome is to “approve” or to “approve pending minor revisions,” no further action is required after submitting the completed Dissertation Proposal Form

Dissertation

Elements of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of the following order of elements, which will have been planned in detail as part of the dissertation proposal. Details on each element are provided in the [Dissertation Format](#) section of the handbook, acknowledging that specific contents of the different elements will vary based on accepted reporting standards for the dissertation form selected.

- [Title page](#)
- [Abstract](#)
- [Acknowledgements](#)
- [Table of contents](#)
- [Introduction](#)
- [Literature review](#)
- [Methods](#)
- [Results](#)
- [Conclusion](#)
- [Public health reflection](#)
- [References](#)
- [Appendices](#)

Scheduling of the dissertation defense

When the dissertation committee members and the student agree that the written dissertation document is complete and requires no further substantive revision, the chair of the dissertation committee will write to the chair of the committee on the doctoral program to request scheduling of the dissertation defense. The dissertation defense announcement is sent in an email and an accompanying calendar invitation is sent to all SPH faculty, professional staff, and students. The announcement must be sent one month ahead of the planned defense date and will include the student's name, department, dissertation title, brief abstract of no more than 250 words, the physical location, and date and start and end time for the defense. All dissertation defenses are scheduled in an

in-person format for 90 minutes. The doctoral student and all dissertation committee members must be physically present for the defense and the defense should be rescheduled if one or more members are not present at the start of the arranged time. The dissertation committee may also decide to provide a synchronous online option for other SPH faculty, professional staff, and students to attend. If this option is selected, the announcement should also include a link by which to join the event. As described more fully in the [SPH Doctoral Student Handbook](#), all dissertation defense announcements must be distributed by March 1 and all dissertation defenses scheduled by April 1 in a given academic year, to be eligible for graduation in that year.

Dissertation defense

The dissertation defense consists of four components:

- Introduction of the student by the chair of the dissertation committee.
- An uninterrupted presentation by the doctoral student of the dissertation elements, lasting no more than 45 minutes and including information on the practice-based public health topic addressed in the dissertation, background on the applied public health issue that was addressed in the dissertation, the methods and results, a set of conclusions and recommendations, and a concluding reflection that discusses both the competencies synthesized during the project and how the dissertation process supported public health leadership growth. Students should carefully time their presentation to ensure that the public health problem's background and definition is succinctly communicated to allow sufficient time for a complete discussion of the methods, results, and conclusions.
- A question-and-answer period with the doctoral student, lasting no more than 45 minutes. During the discussion, the order of questions is:
 - Dissertation committee members
 - Department chair
 - Chair of the committee on the doctoral program
 - Other audience members

- A closed session discussion with the dissertation committee members will involve a decision on whether the dissertation is approved as is or with minor modification, or alternatively, if it requires additional substantial revision.

Dissertation assessment

It is expected that the dissertation committee will have reviewed each of the dissertation drafts with sufficient care during the development stages and will have approved the entire dissertation prior to recommending scheduling of the dissertation defense. As such, it is expected that any major concerns that could result in a student failing at this stage would have been previously resolved. However, in some cases, added information arising from discussions with audience members could result in a dissertation requiring additional revision. No later than one week following the proposal presentation, the chair of dissertation committee must submit a completed [Dissertation Approval Form](#) to the chair of the committee on the doctoral program, documenting the outcome of the written dissertation and oral defense, and with a copy to the doctoral student. Students should be familiar with the Dissertation Approval Form during development of the proposal, as it contains rubrics that the committee will use to assess essential elements of the proposal. If the assessment outcome is to “not accept / fail,” then the dissertation must be revised, and another oral defense scheduled once revisions are addressed. The outcome of a second defense must be documented in an additional Dissertation Approval Form. If the proposal assessment outcome is to “approve” or to “approve pending minor revisions,” no further revision to the Dissertation Proposal Form is required.

Eligibility for graduation

For a student to graduate, the final committee-approved version of the dissertation must be sent to the chair of the doctoral program committee along with a completed and signed Dissertation Proposal Form. The dissertation must be completely accurate regarding the [dissertation format](#). Students who submit all required documentation before April 15 of a given academic year are eligible to graduate in that academic year. Refer to the [SPH Doctoral Student Handbook](#) for additional details on graduation and commencement requirements and timelines.

Dissertation Format

Title Page

The title page is the first page of the dissertation. Center the dissertation title and single space if the title is more than one line; capitalize the significant words in the title. The title page should not have a page number. Refer to [Appendix A](#) for the format to be utilized for the title page, and with the following guidelines for citing degrees and affiliations of the student and committee members:

- For the student's degrees held, list lower degrees first and exclude certificates.
- List the committee chair first, followed by remaining committee members.
- For committee members within the SPH, list the department but not the university.
- For committee members within the SPH, do not list administrative titles (e.g., Assistant Dean)
- For external committee members, list the department and university or the job title and place of employment.

Abstract

The abstract is the second page of the dissertation. It should not exceed 500 words and should state the applied public health issue addressed and the central research question examined, the methods and procedures used, and provide the main results and conclusions. The word 'Abstract' should be centered and in bold at the top of the page and this page should otherwise adhere to other general formatting requirements. There should be no page number on the abstract page.

Acknowledgments

The acknowledgement section should reference any grant that supported the work. Otherwise, the acknowledgement page is optional. If included, the acknowledgement should appear as third page of the dissertation. The word 'Acknowledgments' should be centered and in bold at the top of the page and this page should otherwise adhere to other general formatting requirements. There should be no page number on the acknowledgements page.

Table of contents

Following the acknowledgement page (if included) or the abstract page, insert a table of contents. The table of contents should start on a separate page, with the words Table of Contents centered at the top of the page and in bold. There should be no page numbers on the table of contents. Each of the following sections should be referenced in the table of contents, in the format below. If Appendices are included in the dissertation, each should be listed separately in the table of contents and identified alphabetically (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.). It is strongly recommended that the [table of contents function](#) in Word be used to create the table of contents based on the headings of each section in the document. A separate listing of tables and figures is not required. Although the section headers are required to be included in the table of contents and in the order provided, additional subsections may be added in consultation with the dissertation committee. Refer to [Appendix B](#) for the format to be utilized for the title page.

Introduction

The introduction and problem statement builds upon the work conducted in the dissertation proposal and provides a broad overview of the project. The introduction and problem statement should include a broad introduction to the public health issue being addressed in the dissertation, provide a current literature review that serves to identify the gap or need that is addressed in the dissertation, identifies the resulting research question, provides information on the methods and approach, describes the major findings arising from the project, briefly summarizes the conclusions of the project, and discusses how the dissertation project supported development of public health leadership skills.

Literature review

The literature review also builds upon the work conducted in the proposal development through a comprehensive analysis of the public health program being addressed, identifies the gap or need that will be addressed in the dissertation and describes how the resulting project will inform or change public health practice. The literature review should provide relevant evidence that the topic being addressed in the dissertation has applied public health relevance, and should describe how successful

completion of the dissertation may influence public health practice in a specific organization or public health setting or will inform more generally the understanding of a problem through development of public health concepts, methods, or knowledge of modifiable risk and protective factors for public health outcomes in a given population, setting, or context. This section should also include the project aims and a brief introduction to the approach used to address them. The literature review section should also introduce as appropriate any organizational partnerships or stakeholder engagement involved in the project. Finally, the literature review should include specific reference to any theoretical frameworks and models applied to inform the methods, measures, or other elements of the project. There is no page limit on the literature review.

Methods

This section should expand on the methods section from the dissertation proposal and include all relevant sections described in it. The specific format and structure of the methods will depend upon the form of the dissertation project and the research design employed and may also involve conformance to any specific requirements for planned dissemination outlets, such as journal submission requirements. Each element of the methods must be defended in terms of rationale for the approach. Any changes to the methods approved in the proposal should be explicitly stated and a rationale for the changes provided. This section should also include a section on human subjects' protection when relevant.

Results

This section should include the full results of the study and should include all relevant details related to data collection and analysis, including information on screening, eligibility, and enrollment, information on missing data, and reporting on any adverse events that may have occurred over the course of the project. The results section should include all tables, figures, and/or graphics relevant to the findings from the data analysis. Reporting elements may differ depending on the study design and based on the data analytic strategy planned in the dissertation proposal.

Conclusions

This section should summarize the findings resulting from the overall research questions. The findings should be framed in the context of the strengths and limitations of the methods applied and contextualized in terms of the internal and external validity of the project. Include a discussion of how the knowledge gained in the dissertation can impact practice at the public health organization level the organization and / or to public health practice in general. Provide any recommendations that stem from the project, ensuring that these recommendations do not extend beyond what was achieved in the project. This section should not provide any new data or results not previously included in the methods or results.

Public health reflection

This section should articulate the competencies applied and synthesized in the dissertation and reflect on the activities that applied them. This section should specifically summarize how the activities applied in the process of planning, implementing, analyzing, and writing the dissertation contributed to the student's professional growth as a public health leader.

References

The start of this section should include the word References at the top of the page. Either [AMA](#) or [APA](#) reference style is acceptable for the dissertation. Doctoral students should consult with their dissertation committee on the appropriate reference style. In some cases, journal requirements for students utilizing a manuscript format may require other reference and citation formats. Students are strongly encouraged to use standard reference management software to develop their dissertation proposal and dissertation, such as [Endnote](#), [Mendeley](#), or [Zotero](#).

Appendices

For some dissertations, including appendices may be helpful. An appendix typically includes supplementary or detailed information that provides important context or detail but that might detract from the narrative if embedded directly in the methods, results, or other section of the dissertation. Appendices are optional, but if included, each appendix should appear on a separate page, and

referenced alphabetically at the top of the page, centered and in bold (e.g., Appendix A, Appendix B). The dissertation should specifically reference any included appendices at the point in the narrative in which the supplemental information would be most informative (e.g., “the search string utilized to identify articles for the systematic review is included in Appendix A”).

Additional dissertation formatting guidelines

Font type and size

- For text, use Times New Roman, 12 pt.
- For footnotes, table and figure titles, equations, and captions, use Times New Roman, no smaller than 8 pt.

Page size, margins, and justification

- Page size should be 8.5 x 11 inches.
- Margins should be 1 inch for top, bottom, left, and right margins.
- Do not include page borders or other decorative formatting.
- Left-aligned justification is recommended throughout with paragraph indentation.

Spacing and numbering

- Except for information communicated in footnotes, table and figure titles, captions, and quotes, the document should be double-spaced.
- Footnotes, table and figure titles, captions, and quotes that are more than line should be single-spaced.
- Do not include an extra space between paragraphs.
- Page numbers should be centered in the footer section and should begin after the table of contents and appear starting on the first page of the literature review. The first page of the literature review should denote the true page number (i.e., if the table of contents ends on page 4, the first page number in the dissertation should appear as page number 5).

Tables and figures

Table and figures should be formatted and placed in a format consistent with the selected product being utilized in the dissertation and aligned with AMA or APA guidelines. Generally, tables and figures should be original to the information generated in the dissertation. If a table, figure, or other graphic is required that is not original, students are responsible for making sure that the use of copyrighted material does not violate any author rights or established contracts or licenses. All required permissions must be obtained in advance and appropriately referenced in the dissertation. Students should consult with the chair of their dissertation committee if they have questions about copyrighted material use.

Footnotes

Footnotes are sometimes useful to include in the dissertation to acknowledge copyrighted information, refer a reader to more detailed information provided in an appendix, and occasionally to refer the reader to alternative sources of information that would not otherwise be represented in the narrative, tables and figures, or appendices. Footnotes should not be used as a substitute for proper citation of the literature. Footnotes should be numbered consecutively in the dissertation, should be referenced numerically in superscript in the body of the dissertation, and should appear at the bottom of the page in which the footnote is first numerically referenced and be single spaced. It is strongly recommended that students use the [footnotes function](#) in their word processor such as Word to insert any footnotes into the dissertation.

Authorship on publications or other dissemination products

Students who choose to submit work for publication based on their dissertation should discuss the authors and authorship list order with the dissertation committee members in advance of submission. The student would typically serve as first author on all publications. Other considerations regarding authorship eligibility and order should be guided by standards established by SUNY DHSU's [Authorship and Publication Policy](#).

SUNY Open Access Repository

All students who successfully complete requirements for the DrPH should work with the chair of their dissertation committee to deposit their final approved dissertation to the [SUNY Open Access Repository \(SOAR\)](#) prior to graduation.

Responsible conduct of research

Required research training

Doctoral students are required to adhere strictly to all ethical standards and requirements related to the conduct of research and should work with their faculty advisors to ensure compliance with all research requirements prior to engaging in any research. This requirement includes:

- Compliance with responsible conduct of research training through the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative \(CITI\)](#) website. First time users of the CITI training modules will register and should read the [CITI Instruction Page](#) before beginning the training.
- Students must complete the required CITI training modules prior to the dissertation proposal presentation can be scheduled and submit the certificate documenting successful completion of the basic courses to the chair of the dissertation committee.
- All doctoral students must successfully complete the following two modules, regardless of whether their dissertation research activities are deemed by the Institutional Review Board as exempt, expedited, or as requiring full review.
 - Group 1: Biomedical research investigators and key personnel – Basic course
 - Group 2: Social behavioral and education research investigators and key personnel – Basic course.

Institutional review board

The Institutional Review Board & Privacy Board (IRB) is a Downstate committee established to review and approve human research and to ensure that all human research is ethically conducted and protects the rights and welfare of research participants. The IRB approves each research protocol or plan according to criteria based on policy, applicable laws, regulations, codes, guidance, and best practices. Although some research conducted during the dissertation may qualify for IRB exemption, only the IRB can make that determination upon review. Therefore, no research activities can be conducted related to the dissertation prior to submission of an application to the [DHSU Institutional Review Board](#), and notification that the application is either approved or granted exemption.

Transparency and reproducibility of data collection and analysis

It is expected that all data collection and analysis will be conducted in a transparent and reproducible manner. Doctoral students should save their original raw data in a secured manner, maintain notes, syntax, codebooks, and other information related to variable creation and analysis, and be able to provide any statistical output that serves as the source of results reported in the dissertation and as described in the IRB protocol for their project.

Appendix A: Title Page Format

Title of Dissertation

by:

Name of Doctoral Graduate

BA in Communications, May 2010, SUNY Stony Brook

MPH in Biostatistics, May 2015, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University

Dissertation submitted to

The Faculty of the School of Public Health
of the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Public Health

May, 2023

Dissertation thesis committee members:

Jane Doe, PhD

Professor of Epidemiology

James Smith, MD, DrPH

Associate Professor of Biostatistics

Smith James, PhD

Director of Evaluation and Research
New York City Department of Health

Appendix B: Table of Contents Format

Table of Contents	
Introduction	4
Literature review and aims	15
Methods	35
Results	50
Conclusions	67
Public Health Reflection	94
References	98
Appendix A	112
Appendix B	115