



COLLEGE OF POPULATION HEALTH

PhD in Health Equity Sciences

Student Handbook

Physical Address

2300 Tucker Road NE,
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Mailing Address

MSC09 5070
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001
Phone: (505) 272-4173
Fax: (505) 272-4494
Website: [College of Population Health](#)

Table of Contents

Introduction to the PhD Health Equity Sciences Program	4
Program Background	4
PhD Program Mission	4
COPH Office Location and Staff	4
Administrative Office	4
PhD Program Support Team	5
General Information	5
What is Population Health?	5
Classroom Locations	6
COPH Student Lounge	6
E-mail	7
Faculty Mentors and Academic Advisors	7
Financial Aid Information	8
Teaching/Graduate (TA/GA) and Research (RA) Assistantships	8
Scholarships	8
Completion of the Degree	9
PhD Core Competencies	9
Credits Required	9
Transfer Credits	9
Time Frame for Degree Completion	10
Time Off from the Program	10
Informal Leave of Absence	10
Reapplication	11
Request for Extension	11
Schedules and CRNs	11
Grading System	11
Incompletes	12
Graduation Requirements	12
Submit an Announcement of Examination	13
PhD Candidacy:	13
UNM Graduation Courtesy Policy	14

Academic Integrity and Probation.....	14
Academic Integrity Policy	14
Academic Probation	14
PhD Health Equity Sciences Expectations for Academic Integrity	15
Graduate Student Grievance Procedures.....	16
Accommodation Requests	17
PhD Concentrations	17
Biostatistics	17
Community Based Participatory Research	18
Epidemiology Concentration	18
Global Health Equity and Policy Concentration.....	19
Independent Study.....	20
Requirements	20
Process	20
PhD Comprehensive Exam, Dissertation, and Graduation Requirements.....	21
Comprehensive Exam	<u>Error! Bookmark not defined.</u>24
Comprehensive Exam: Written Exam	<u>Error! Bookmark not defined.</u>24
Comprehensive Exam: Extended Abstract	<u>Error! Bookmark not defined.</u>24
Evaluation	<u>Error! Bookmark not defined.</u>24
Dissertation.....	<u>21</u>25

Introduction to the PhD Health Equity Sciences Program

Welcome to the PhD Health Equity Sciences Program in the College of Population Health (COPH) at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center (UNM HSC).

This handbook includes information you will need during this degree process. Many of your questions should be answered in this handbook, but please feel free to contact the PhD academic success team or your faculty mentor for additional assistance. See the PhD Program Support Team section below for contact information. Please feel free to contact the [program coordinator](#), your [faculty mentor](#), your [academic advisor](#), or the College of Population Health PhD co-Directors [Dr. Díaz Fuentes](#) or [Dr. Joseph](#) for additional assistance.

Program Background

The PhD Health Equity Sciences Program launched in the spring semester of 2023. The program integrates the rich history of public health, the human and social sciences, along with the newer disciplines of population health and [Health Equity Sciences](#) to provide graduates with a rigorous competency-based doctoral degree. The advanced comprehensive training prepares scholars for positions in various settings - local, state, federal, and global governmental and non-governmental agencies, public health and social justice organizations, health care provider organizations, and higher learning institutions.

The COPH will offer the following concentrations:

- [Epidemiology](#)
- [Biostatistics](#)
- [Global Health Equity and Policy](#)
- [Community Based Participatory Research and Action Science](#)

PhD Program Mission

The mission of the COPH PhD Health Equity Sciences Program is to provide leadership in graduate and community-based education and research grounded in social justice to improve the health of the diverse populations in New Mexico and the Southwest.

The PhD Health Equity Sciences Program is committed to the idea that diversity and inclusion benefit everyone by offering a rich variety of experiences, backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas that improve our collective work and reflect the wonderful diversity of our population.

COPH Office Location and Staff

Administrative Office

College of Nursing and Population Health Excellence (CONPHE) Building
2300 Tucker Road NE,
Albuquerque, NM 87131
Phone: (505) 272-4173
FAX: (505) 272-4494
Website: hsc.unm.edu/population-health

PhD Program Support Team

Co-Director, PhD Health Equity Sciences

Claudia Díaz Fuentes, PhD
CONPHE 1212
Office Phone: 505-272-9097
Email: cdiazfuentes@salud.unm.edu

Manager, Academic Advisement

Daniel Noriega-Lucero, MBA
CONPHE 1414
Office Phone: 505-272-0595
Email: dnoriegalucero@salud.unm.edu

PhD and Online Program Coordinator

Michael Miranda
CONPHE 1217
Office Phone: 505-272-9731
Email: mgmiranda@salud.unm.edu

Co-Director, PhD Health Equity Sciences

Verlin Joseph, PhD, MPH
CONPHE 1210
Office Phone: 505-272-8372
Email: vjoseph@salud.unm.edu

Student Success Director, Lecturer II

Pamela Sedillo, MPH
CONPHE 1215
Office Phone: 505-272-4494
Email: psedill1@salud.unm.edu

Assistant Dean of Education

Laura Nellums, PhD, MSc
CONPHE 1216
Office Phone: 505-272-6996
Email: lnellums@salud.unm.edu

General Information

What is Population Health?

Population health is a systems-based approach to improving health outcomes by addressing social drivers of health within a framework that includes the individual, their social network, cultural/community factors, systems of care, and policy levels. Population health embraces a multi-system understanding of the contexts of the health and disease status of diverse populations. Growing out of the combined legacies of public health and medicine and placing emphasis on social drivers, population health encourages partnerships between health systems and community organizations to achieve their mutual goal of improving health equity and social justice.

Students of health equity science must attain a broad set of competencies, including skills in epidemiology, the social and behavioral intervention and prevention sciences, policy analyses with a Health Equity for all perspective, quantitative, qualitative and mixed analytic methods, population health management, finance and economics, data systems, decision science, and environmental health. The UNM HSC College of Population Health embraces our public and social responsibility to work in partnership with communities, neighborhood organizations, non-profit and government agencies, the private sector, health systems, and policy entities, including tribes, local and state governments, to improve the health of the diverse populations of New Mexico, the Southwest, the U.S.-Mexico border, and tribal sovereign nations.

From big-picture thinkers wanting to solve global health problems to students aspiring to create healthy outcomes in their own neighborhoods, becoming a student at UNM Health Sciences Center's newest college is an exciting and promising career opportunity. Population health is the essence of trans-disciplinary science - not solely the combination of multiple disciplines, but rather a new science focused on answering complex questions about the sources of health and the causes of illness and disability.

The discipline:

- focuses on health improvement within populations;
- produces integrated knowledge and action regarding the societal, behavioral, biological and organizational system causes of health and disease;
- examines what creates health risks and what policies, health systems and public health practices are effective in curbing those risks;
- requires innovations in approaches to reducing disparities and improving population health;
- requires technological solutions to grass roots problems; and
- will find practitioners and scientists from different backgrounds to come together and transcend the limits of their knowledge and expertise to create this new discipline.

Graduates will develop skills to promote health equity in populations across a variety of domains that comprise the continuum from wellness to health care, from health systems to community systems, from health policy to community policies, and from economic theory to economic practices. They will find jobs in varied fields, including:

- Academia
- Local, state, federal, and global governmental institutions
- Non-governmental agencies
- Social justice organizations
- Business
- Informatics
- Engineering
- Architecture and planning
- Law
- Medicine
- Community advocacy
- Political organizations
- Policy analysis and evaluation
- Public health

Classroom Locations

The majority of classes are held on the Health and Health Sciences campus ([map](#)). Some courses are available on UNM's Main Campus, which is within walking distance of Health Sciences. Go [here](#) for an interactive map of UNM.

COPH Student Lounge

All admitted PhD Health Equity Sciences students are given access to the COPH Student Lounge in the College of Nursing and Public Health Excellence Building (2300 Tucker Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131). The lounge provides a space where students can study, have meetings, or just have a quiet place of their own. Access to the lounge is during normal business hours, 8:00am -5:00pm Monday-Friday.

The student lounge contains computers and office equipment. Students are urged to safeguard the equipment by ensuring the doors are locked when they leave the premises. There are two computers available in the student lounge. The computers are equipped with software [currently approved by UNM](#). Students can access this software, as well as application and widgets in their personal devices through the [UNM Apps store](#).

E-mail

Students must have an active @salud.unm.edu e-mail account through UNM Health and Health Sciences. Pertinent information regarding the COPH and PhD Health Equity Sciences Program is sent to students via their Salud e-mail, including upcoming events, information on jobs and assistantships, your status, requests for additional information, financial aid, and other items. Use of UNM-issued email is required for all UNM related business since it allows the University to maintain the confidentiality of student information. Due to FERPA regulations, instructors cannot communicate grades or course-related materials to non-UNM email addresses. All students are urged to check their UNM emails regularly.

Faculty Mentors and Academic Advisors

Students are assigned a faculty mentor and an academic advisor to facilitate their progress through the program. **Faculty mentors** are faculty members who welcome students to the program, discuss and support their academic and career goals, provide feedback and encouragement, assist in time management and planning, facilitate access to resources, guide students through the logistics of the comprehensive exam and dissertation process, and facilitate the students' entry into a new professional community. When a student enters the program, they will be assigned a faculty mentor based on mentor availability, student interests, and concentration. Students may change their faculty mentor at any time following the procedure described below. If a student is unsure who their faculty mentor is, they may contact the Senior Academic Advisor or PhD Program Directors to obtain this information.

Faculty Mentor Responsibilities:

- Welcome students to the program with an introductory letter or email.
- Provide professional and academic advice and support, including discussion of students' areas of research interest, identification of a dissertation committee, and alignment of coursework and research with personal and career goals, etc.
- Meet with students at least twice each semester: once at the beginning of the semester to discuss plans and goals, and a second time at mid-semester to check in and/or troubleshoot as needed.
- May serve on the student's dissertation committee if there is an appropriate match in content and methodological expertise.
- Discuss student's progress and concerns.
- Advocate for the student within COPH.
- Support the student's transition into their career as they finalize their doctoral studies.

Changing Faculty Mentors

Students may wish to change their faculty mentor due to faculty availability (e.g., faculty sabbatical or prolonged leave), academic interests or concentration changes, or other personal reasons. A student can choose a new faculty mentor at any time by emailing the PhD Program Directors to inform them. Though students are encouraged to discuss it with the program directors, all that is required is for students to inform the desired change and, if possible, who would be their alternative choice for mentor. Students are encouraged to build informal mentorship relationships with other faculty as this could facilitate the dissertation committee selection, along with obtaining support with career transition upon completing the program.

Academic advisors are CPH staff members who help students with planning and registering for courses based on the appropriate concentration Advising Checklist and with navigating the administrative side of their academic life. Students' Programs of Study must be officially approved by their academic advisors.

Academic Advisor Responsibilities:

- Advise students on planning their schedule of classes to complete the program and concentration requirements.
- Provide administrative assistance with registering for classes (e.g., lifting holds).
- Officially approve students' Advisement Checklist in the UNM system.
- Provide official administrative information about deadlines for graduation (Intent to Graduate, Program of Study, Announcement of Exam).
- Serve as the liaison between the student and UNM Graduate Studies.
- Assist with administrative problems regarding registration, graduation, etc.

Before registering for classes each semester, students must work with their faculty mentor to complete a PhD Health Equity Sciences Semester Registration and Override Request. The form is available from the [academic advisor](#). Once you complete the form with your Faculty Mentor, send it back to the academic advisor to obtain the override. If the student sends the form, they must copy their faculty mentor and vice versa to ensure all parties are informed.

Financial Aid Information

Teaching/Graduate (TA/GA) and Research (RA) Assistantships

During the course of the year, assistantship contracts may be available to qualified PhD Health Equity Sciences students through faculty research and educational assistantships. Notices regarding assistantship opportunities are forwarded to students through email and posted on the CPH bulletin boards.

Students interested in RA positions should contact the faculty or staff person listed in the assistantship announcement to express their interest and include their resume or CV and other requested information. The faculty or staff person overseeing the position will initiate an interview process if the student is a good fit for the position.

Students interested in TA or GA positions should contact the Director for Academic Success, [Pam Sedillo](#), expressing their interest and including their CV. If there is a match between the student's interests, skills and courses available, students are connected with faculty for an interview. If students and faculty agree the class is a good match, the Director for Academic Success is informed to officially initiate the Assistantship contract.

Scholarships

Scholarship opportunities are forwarded to students via e-mail. It is important to check the [Graduate Studies website](#) for additional scholarship opportunities.

Completion of the Degree

PhD Core Competencies

The PhD Program requires all graduates to demonstrate specific knowledge and skills related to Health Equity Sciences. The program is guided by sets of core and concentration-specific competencies. Students who complete this program will develop **core** competencies in six major areas: Health equity theory; Research design, analysis and interpretation; Knowledge of research methodology; Engagement with diverse stakeholders and communities; Translation and dissemination; and Ethics.

Area	Competency
Health equity theory	Analyze and apply diverse multidisciplinary critical social theories of health equity within a public health context.
Research design, analysis and interpretation	Critically evaluate, design and conduct theoretically-grounded research to address gaps in health equity using rigorous designs.
Knowledge of research methodology	Demonstrate critical understanding of research using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods designs.
Engagement with diverse stakeholders and communities	Support cultural diversity when conducting research and practice through involvement, leadership and partnerships with community and tribal partners, agency staff, policy makers, and local institutions.
Translation and dissemination	Effectively communicate and disseminate research results orally and in written format to interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, and community audiences.
Ethics	Critically analyze and apply professional and ethical standards of public health.

Credits Required

The UNM Ph.D. in Health Equity Sciences (HES) is a 66-credit hour program of study broken down into core and concentration coursework and dissertation hours. Students complete 23 credit hours of core coursework, 13 credit hours of population health (PH) credits, 12 credit hours of concentration-specific coursework, and 18 credit hours of dissertation coursework. There are four concentration options: Community-Based Participatory Research and Action Science, Biostatistics, Epidemiology, or Global Health Equity and Policy. If you are unsure of your credit status, please contact the PhD program support team or your faculty mentor.

Transfer Credits

Students may transfer up to 18 approved credits into the PhD Health Equity Sciences program. To request transfer credit, the following is required:

Students requesting course transfer from another educational institution must request a review of the course to see if it is applicable to the PhD Health Equity Sciences degree at UNM. The request is made to the Directors, accompanied by syllabi for the course(s) taken at the other educational institution. The Directors will provide a written decision explaining the action(s) taken and a copy will be placed in your student file. The decision will not be made unless the course syllabi are provided. Transferred courses exceeding the 18 credits may count towards content area requirements (such as advanced methods credits), but not towards the overall 66 credit requirement.

There is no immediate transfer of courses done at the time of admission. All approved transfer credits must be included on the student's Program of Study (POS) at the time it is submitted. Once the POS is approved by the adviser and director, it is forwarded to Graduate Studies for review and final approval.

Along with the syllabi, an official transcript from the educational institution showing the credits being transferred must be sent to the PhD Health Equity Sciences academic advisor.

Students *may not* transfer any course that has been used to meet the requirements of another degree program beyond those outlined in the program's catalogue.

Time Frame for Degree Completion

As per the UNM Office of Graduate Studies, students have 5 calendar years to complete their [graduation requirements](#) from the semester in which they pass their comprehensive exam. The final requirement is generally the acceptance of the student's dissertation by the CPH Assistant Dean of Education.

Time Off from the Program

Formal Leave of Absence

It may be necessary for students to take time off from the program due to personal, financial, or other reasons. A student who is unable to continue his/her graduate studies due to extenuating circumstances may request a formal leave of absence. The written request, together with a memo of support from the PhD in Health Equity Sciences Directors, is forwarded to the Dean in the Graduate Studies office, who will make the final decision. A formal leave of absence is determined on a semester-by-semester basis and is generally limited to a maximum of one calendar year. The time approved for a formal leave of absence is not counted in the time limit to complete the degree, as long as the student is not enrolled in any course at UNM. To request a formal leave of absence, follow the instructions below:

Meet with your PhD in Health Equity Sciences faculty mentor or the Directors to explain your situation. Write a letter addressed to the Dean of Graduate Studies requesting a formal leave of absence. Include when you plan to resume your studies. The letter is forwarded to the PhD in Health Equity Sciences Directors for review. If the Directors agree to the student request, a memo of support will be submitted to Graduate Studies along with your written request. Both the request and the support memo will be placed in your student file.

Informal Leave of Absence

A student who is admitted and completes at least one semester of graduate studies in the program is allowed three consecutive semesters (stop-out periods), including summer, without taking classes and without submitting a formal request. Taking time beyond three semesters requires that you submit a request to the Dean of Graduate Studies. An absence of more than three semesters, *including summer sessions*, will result in a student being automatically dropped from the program unless they have an approved official leave of absence. Students who have not received an official leave of absence and who do not enroll by the registration deadline of the third semester must apply for readmission to their degree program and to UNM. The time lost during such "stop-out" periods **is counted in the time to degree limits** unless students have received an official leave of absence from CPH and the Office of Graduate Studies. If a student took informal leave for 3 or fewer semesters and wishes to extend the program duration beyond the specified time, they must [petition](#) to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Reapplication

If a student has not been enrolled for three consecutive semesters, they are automatically dis-enrolled from UNM. To register for courses, you must reapply to the UNM and the PhD Health Equity Sciences Program.

- Students must submit a reapplication in the normal time frame allowed for new registration. Please refer to the latest UNM schedule for the filing deadlines.
- If students do not meet the time requirements for reapplication, the application will not be approved until the following semester. Students may be readmitted to the program during any semester.
- Students who do not meet the time requirements and whose admission is delayed for a semester may continue to take courses under the non-degree process, with a Faculty Mentor assigned to them. Non-degree students are not eligible for TA/GA/RA positions.
- If students meet all requirements above, approval is automatic at the program level.

Request for Extension

If a student is unable to complete their degree in the required period of time, they may petition Graduate Studies for an extension of time. To do so, the student must do the following:

- Submit a program of study to the PhD Health Equity Sciences academic advisor two semesters prior to the seven-year period. This must be on file and show your coursework and anticipated graduation.
- Write a memorandum addressed to Graduate Studies stating the reason for not being able to complete the program within the post-comprehensive exam 5-year period requirement. Please be specific and brief.
- Submit the memorandum to the PhD Health Equity Sciences academic advisor. The PhD Health Equity Sciences Directors will review the request. If it is approved, it will then be submitted to UNM Graduate Studies along with a memorandum of support for the student.
- A decision from Graduate Studies is returned to the student and the PhD Health Equity Sciences Program. A copy is also retained in the student folder.

For additional information pertaining to continuous enrollment and academic Leave of Absence, review the Catalog's "[Graduate Program Student Information and Policies](#)."

Schedules and CRNs

Students will receive a PhD in Health Equity Sciences Program course schedule prior to the beginning of each semester via email. A semester schedule is also posted on LoboWeb, as well as the UNM Course Schedule website: schedule.unm.edu. Some courses are restricted, and permission of the instructor is required. After students have received approval to register for restricted courses using the Advisement Checklist, the academic advisor will perform an override, which will enable them to register for the course. Students will be notified via email when this is completed.

Grading System

All graduate students in the PhD Health Equity Sciences Program are expected to maintain a 3.0 GPA. The following grading system is used:

A+ = 4.33	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33
A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	F = 1.99 or lower

Graduate Students cannot be assigned a grade of D or lower

Students may include a total of 6 credits of C, C+ or CR on their program of studies, whether those courses are in or out of their major course of study. Courses offered only on a CR/NC basis and required by the graduate program are excluded from this limitation. Students must become familiar with UNM's Office of Graduate Studies [coursework requirements](#).

Incompletes

According to UNM Policy, the grade of "I" is assigned *only when circumstances beyond the student's control prevent completion of the coursework within the official dates of a semester or summer session.*

According to academic policy, incomplete grades must be completed before a student is eligible to graduate from the University of New Mexico. Students should not re-enroll or re-register (for credit) in a course in which an incomplete has been received to resolve the "I" (incomplete) grade. If an instructor requires the student to repeat the class in order to resolve the Incomplete, the student must register for the course on an audit basis.

Incomplete grades received must be resolved no later than one year (twelve months) from the published end day of the semester in which the grade was assigned. Incomplete grades not resolved within the time frame stated in this policy are converted automatically to an F (failure) grade.

Students resolving Incompletes in their semester of graduation must have the process completed (including the reporting of the grade to the Records and Registration Office) by the appropriate deadline. Students are responsible for informing instructors that they are graduating and that the grade(s) must be reported by the appropriate deadline. Failure to complete the process as described could result in the postponement of graduation until the following semester.

The instructor of record reports the final grade for the course in which the Incomplete was assigned to the Records and Registration Office.

A faculty member may choose to give a student an incomplete for a course. The student has 1 year to resolve the Incomplete, or it will default to an "F." It is highly recommended that all incompletes are cleared the following semester. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their incompletes and complete the work. Exceptions may be considered for extenuating circumstances with approval of the instructor, director and the UNM faculty senate. Students are not allowed to graduate with an "I" on their student record.

Graduation Requirements

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the general University requirements and due dates have been met for graduation. Students who plan to graduate should consult the UNM Graduate Studies webpage (grad.unm.edu/home/) and meet with the PhD Health Equity Sciences academic advisor and/or their faculty mentor if they have questions.

Students are also responsible for following the Advisement Checklist to ensure the completion of the required PhD Health Equity Sciences core courses and concentration courses.

In order to graduate, the student must do the following:

Submit an Announcement of Examination

The Announcement of Examination form ([available here](#)) is completed online by the student through the Graduate Studies website two weeks prior to the comprehensive exam, and again at least two weeks before their dissertation defense. The deadline to complete this form is two weeks before the examination.

Deadlines for completing all requirements for the PhD Health Equity Sciences degree are November 15 for Fall graduation, April 15 for Spring graduation, and July 15 for Summer graduation. Graduation will be [delayed](#) if these deadlines are not met.

PhD Candidacy:

The [UNM Office of Graduate Studies](#) provides the following graduation requirements:

- Students must follow the UNM [Catalog](#) in place at the time of their admission, plus any additional requirements.
- Students should check their academic records (LoboWeb) at the end of each term to ensure that their status, degree program, grades and GPA are correct and in compliance with UNM policies.
- Students must meet the general degree requirements published in the UNM [Catalog](#).
- Students are required to pass a doctoral comprehensive examination. The [Announcement of Examination form](#) must be submitted to Graduate Studies a minimum of two weeks before the scheduled date of the examination. Students must be enrolled and complete a minimum of one hour of graduate credit in the term they take the comprehensive examination and must be in good academic standing.
- Students must submit an [Application for Candidacy \(AC\)](#) listing all the courses that are applying to their degree. The form should be filed the term the student passes the comprehensive examination and no later than the last day of the term before the student intends to graduate.
- Students are Advanced to Candidacy (All But Dissertation/ABD) by the Dean of Graduate Studies in the term when all the following criteria have been met:
 1. The doctoral comprehensive examination has been passed;
 2. Graduate Studies has approved the Application for Candidacy; and
 3. Language/skill requirement (if appropriate) is satisfied.
- Students must notify the degree program of intent to graduate the term prior to the term of graduation. Students should confirm additional deadlines with their program.
- Students must defend their dissertations. An [Announcement of Examination form](#) must be submitted two weeks prior to the dissertation defense date. After passing the dissertation defense, doctoral students must electronically submit their dissertations within ninety (90) days or by the term graduation deadline, whichever comes first.
- Students must satisfy degree requirements (defended and submitted dissertation) by the deadlines of July 15 for Summer graduation, November 15 for Fall graduation, or April 15 for Spring graduation. If the date occurs on a weekend or holiday, the deadline is moved to the end of the next business day.
- Students must complete a minimum of 18 hours of dissertation/699. Once students begin enrollment in 699, they must enroll in 699 every term (summer term is excluded, except if the student is graduating in the summer) until the dissertation manuscript is accepted by Graduate Studies.
- Students must meet all [dissertation requirements](#). Please refer to the [Graduation Checklist for PhD students](#). The dissertation must be submitted no later than 90 days after passing the dissertation defense or the term graduation deadline, whichever comes first. Manuscript formatting guidelines are available through the [Preparing Your Manuscript Tutorial](#) and the [Formatting Guidelines page](#).

- Students who miss the term graduation deadline, but complete degree requirements by the last day of that term may choose to follow the [Courtesy Policy](#).

UNM Graduation Courtesy Policy

University regulations require that the student must be enrolled and complete a minimum of one hour of graduate credit in the term he/she completes degree requirements. Should the student miss the graduation deadline but complete all degree requirements on or before the last day of that term, the student is not required to register for the next (graduation) term. The degree program must submit the student's name on the proposed graduation list for the actual term of graduation.

Academic Integrity and Probation

Academic Integrity Policy

The PhD Health Equity Sciences Program will refer to the [University Pathfinder Policy on Academic Dishonesty](#), which can be found at the link below. One purpose of this policy is to clearly delineate mutual expectations of faculty and students and to more clearly define academic dishonesty.

The Pathfinder states:

Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or otherwise fails to meet the standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in coursework may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without the University; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records.

The Faculty Handbook states:

When a violation of the regulation occurs in connection with a course, seminar, or any other academic activity under the direction of a faculty member, that faculty member is authorized to take whatever action is deemed appropriate, but no penalty in excess of an "F" in the course and the involuntary withdrawal of the student from the class may be imposed. Whenever this penalty is imposed; the instructor may report the case in full detail in writing to the Dean of Students, who may impose additional sanctions or refer the matter to the Student Conduct Committee for a determination of whether additional sanctions are warranted.

Academic Probation

Students will be placed on academic probation if their cumulative GPA falls below 3.0. If the student's GPA falls below 3.0, Graduate Studies will notify the student that they have been placed on probation. The student is then given the opportunity to improve their grades during the next 12 credits taken. If the student does not improve their GPA, they will be disenrolled from UNM.

Students in a probationary status are not allowed to hold an assistantship or graduate while on probation.

PhD Health Equity Sciences Expectations for Academic Integrity

As a community of scholars:

- It is expected that the coursework a student conducts and submits (or presents) will be that of the individual student unless a student receives prior permission from the instructor to collaborate on the coursework. Submitting work as if it is an individual product when it is not is academic dishonesty.
- In the absence of a contrary directive from the instructor, students may collaborate, assist, and help each other. Unless a faculty member specifically assigns a group project, all final class projects must be each student's work and the assistance must be cited (e.g., as personal communication.) All students who knowingly participate in the misrepresentation of a student's work will be academically dishonest.
- It is expected that faculty and staff will not hinder the academic progress of students in other classes by assisting one or more students in producing and/or submitting group and/or duplicated work as if it were produced independently. Such behavior violates provisions of the *Faculty Handbook* and will be sanctioned as outlined in the handbook.
- It is expected that students will cite and enclose in quotes any product copied, or materially taken, from others. It is expected that written submissions are those of the student unless otherwise clearly quoted and appropriately cited. Duplicating, in whole or in part, another's work product and submitting that work as if a student had produced it independently is academic dishonesty. Examples include, but are not limited to, duplicating in whole or in part: exams produced by others; paper(s) produced by others (on behalf of the student or not) and whether or not the paper(s) were previously submitted; non-original material obtained from web sites or generated by an artificial intelligence (AI) algorithm; and/or publications. If in doubt, consult UNM's AI resource [webpage](#).
- It is expected that students will complete examinations without duplicating the exam answers of other students or using course materials or notes or otherwise gaining an unfair advantage over other students who are also taking the exam. Such behavior hinders the academic work of fellow students, claims credit for work done by the student, and is academically dishonest. However, if the exam is expressly designated as an open-book or take-home exam by the instructor, the use of course materials or notes is allowed.
- It is expected that a student will be responsible and discuss re-submissions of work from other courses or research/project continuations with the faculty prior to submitting any potentially redundant work.
- It is expected that faculty will clearly state course and exam objectives. If the student believes clarity is lacking, it is the responsibility of the student to request clarification in a timely manner. Faculty should provide clarification in writing whenever possible to avoid misunderstanding(s).
- It is expected that students maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. If a student fulfills university expectations of maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters, yet is having difficulty in a class, the student may expect faculty to consider available options that may assist the student, which may include, but are not limited to: deadline extensions, auditing, incomplete grades, or withdrawals.
- It is expected that if a faculty or staff member witnesses or learns of an instance of possible academic dishonesty, he/she should promptly report the incident to the instructor in charge of the class where the alleged academic dishonesty occurred.
- It is required that an incident of academic dishonesty will be dealt with as outlined in the *Pathfinder* and the *Faculty Handbook*.
- It is expected that Academic Freedom will be upheld as defined in the *Faculty Handbook*.
handbook.unm.edu

Responsible Conduct of Research

Responsible conduct of research (RCR) is the process researchers and scholars follow to ensure that their work is original, honest, and well-intended. This ensures that the research outcomes can be trusted and may contribute to generalizable knowledge. Often RCR coincides with professional practices and ethics and regulatory compliance. All professional scientists and scholars must conduct themselves with integrity, honesty, and professional expectations. RCR is not just doing research but doing it well.

There are many options for receiving RCR training at UNM. These include:

- Completing the PH 690 Professional Development Seminar.
- Completing the CITI Program Biomedical Responsible Conduct of Research Course or Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research Course.
- [Completing a UNM RCR Certificate Program](#)

The [Academic Integrity and Research Ethics \(AIRE\)](#) website is available to help all researchers develop training plans. The UNM Health Sciences Center [Human Research Protections Office](#) is another excellent resource for information about research ethics. Graduate Studies also conducts workshops throughout the year on RCR and issues relating to research ethics. Please check their calendars for updated information about these workshops.

Professional conduct in the use of Artificial Intelligence:

The College follows [UNM Guidelines](#) regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence, including, but not limited to, the use of appropriate citations and disclosure in the use of this technology. Students must follow any relevant guidelines provided by each of their instructors in the use of AI for their classes.

Graduate Student Grievance Procedures

Graduate students are expected to abide by the university values and guidelines for professional practice, academic integrity, and responsible conduct of research; they are also protected by those same values and guidelines. Academic grievances include, but are not limited to, issues related to progress toward the degree, improper implementation of academic procedures, and unfair treatment. When possible, graduate students should try to resolve their complaints directly with the parties involved. If the complaint cannot be resolved at that level, the student may meet with college/school administrators (COPH PhD Health Equity Sciences Directors, Assistant Dean for Education, Dean or Dean's designate) or the Dean of Graduate Studies to discuss the concerns, clarify the rules and procedures that should be followed, and explore constructive means to resolve the problem. If a formal grievance is necessary, the graduate student should follow the procedures stipulated in the UNM *Pathfinder* and the UNM [Faculty Handbook](#). If a grievance or complaint involves alleged discrimination or sexual harassment, it must be directed to the UNM Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO).

The *Pathfinder* states:

The UNM Student Grievance Procedure is intended to provide Procedures for the resolution of disputes of an academic nature between students and University faculty, as well as Procedures for handling student disciplinary matters. The following categories of disputes or disciplinary matters are provided for in the articles indicated. Any question about these Procedures should be directed to the Office of the Dean of Students.

This article sets forth the procedures that should be followed by a student who believes that he or she has been unfairly or improperly treated by a faculty member or academic program/department in connection with the academic process. For example, it applies to disputes over the assignment of grades, decisions about program or degree requirements or eligibility, or claims that course requirements are unfair.

Any student grievances concerning decisions made by University personnel, outside the academic process, for which specific procedures are not established, shall be resolved between the student and the office or department involved. If no resolution is reached, the parties may appeal to the appropriate Dean or Director and then to the appropriate Vice President. Appeals should be filed in writing within one week of the decision.

The Faculty Handbook states:

The University of New Mexico promotes a working, learning, and social environment where all members of the UNM community, including but not limited to the Board of Regents, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and volunteers work together in a mutually respectful, psychologically-healthy environment. UNM strives to foster an environment that reflects courtesy, civility, and respectful communication because such an environment promotes learning, research, and productivity through relationships. Because a respectful campus environment is a necessary condition for success in teaching and learning, in research and scholarship, in patient care and public service, and in all other aspects of the University's mission and values, the University is committed to providing a respectful campus, free of bullying in all of its forms.

The PhD Health Equity Sciences Program will utilize the following procedure for student grievances:

- The students should first try to resolve the grievance informally by discussing the grievance with the instructor as soon as possible.
- If the student and faculty member cannot reach an agreement, the student should discuss the grievance with PhD Health Equity Sciences Directors.
- If the grievance is still not resolved, the student should discuss the grievance with the CPH Assistant Dean for Education, who will escalate the issue to the Dean if needed.

Accommodation Requests

UNM is committed to providing courses that are inclusive and accessible for all participants. In accordance with University Policy 2310 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as the instructor is not legally permitted to inquire.

Students who may require assistance in emergency evacuations should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow. To contact the Accessibility Resource Center, visit their [website](#), or contact Kelly Cano Martinez at (505) 277-0316, kcanomartinez@unm.edu.

PhD Concentrations

Biostatistics

This shared concentration will provide instruction on using advanced statistical concepts and procedures to measure health-related constructs and analyze data sets ranging from small-scale research project outputs to large population-scale epidemiological databases. Students successfully completing this program will be able to: (a) quantitatively address a novel or complex problem by developing an innovative statistical methodology or adapting existing methods to a new problem; (b) demonstrate mastery of advanced statistical theory and applications; (c) understand and implement innovative statistical approaches emerging in the literature to biomedical and public health or social issues; (d) communicate the results of statistical analyses to individuals with varying degrees of statistical knowledge; (e) recognize strengths and weaknesses of proposed approaches, including alternative designs, data sources, and analytic methods; (f) determine the data best suited to address public health or social issues, program planning, and program evaluation; and, (g) contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of biostatistics by submitting an article for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Community Based Participatory Research and Action Science

The PhD concentration in “Community Based Participatory Research” (CBPR) is based on a foundation of community health, empowerment, and participatory approaches to promote social justice and health equity. Students will complete course work in conceptual and theoretical foundations of CBPR, community/patient engaged research, and multi-level community health interventions and theories of change, from psycho-social-behavioral to community, structural and policy strategies. Research courses include quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, Indigenous, decolonizing and critical methodologies; analysis of power dynamics; and collective reflection and evaluation of partnered actions. Offered is a mentored approach to CBPR and action-oriented research across the lifespan, geographic and social identity diversities, health issues, and socio-political policy contexts, with opportunities for community engagement at local, tribal, national and global levels.

Competencies for CBPRAS:

1. Collaboratively assess community and population context and readiness for change at the individual, interpersonal, community, institutional, socio-political, and policy levels in order to develop scientifically rigorous and community-driven public health interventions.
2. Collaboratively develop and apply appropriate research- and practice-based theory, and methodologies for designing, implementing, managing, evaluating, and disseminating community and structural health interventions.
3. Integrate participatory research and action science theory, practice, and engagement methodologies to create and sustain partnerships to contribute to health equity outcomes.
4. Incorporate strategies to promote community self-determination in research, emphasizing community strengths; and engage in self-reflexivity around positionality and power to act with cultural respect and accountability.
5. Describe and apply multiple ways of knowing from diverse academic and community perspectives into translational and transformational policy, program, and practice actions that improve health equity.

Epidemiology

The concentration in Epidemiology provides students with rigorous training in advanced epidemiologic methods and fosters the development of independent, innovative, and impactful public health scientists who are prepared to address critical public health challenges both in research and applied epidemiology. This concentration emphasizes the mastery of quantitative and data-driven approaches to study the patterns, causes, and effects of health and disease in populations. Coursework includes theoretical foundations of epidemiology, advanced statistical modeling, causal inference, and specialized training in areas such as infectious disease epidemiology, chronic disease epidemiology, environmental epidemiology, and social drivers of health. Students engage in hands-on research with access to robust datasets and interdisciplinary collaborations, working closely with faculty who are leaders in their fields. Graduates are well-prepared for influential roles in academic research, public health practice, teaching, and health policy development. They are equipped to design and conduct innovative studies that contribute to evidence-based interventions and policies, addressing some of the most pressing health disparities and urgent public health issues of our time. Local, national, and global research opportunities ensure that students are trained in diverse health contexts and populations, allowing them to develop a nuanced understanding of epidemiologic challenges across geographic, social, and cultural dimensions.

Competencies for the Epidemiology Concentration:

1. Evaluate epidemiologic study designs and select and implement the most appropriate design to address a specific study question, considering the best methodology, ethics, and centering community priorities and health equity considerations.
2. Apply appropriate epidemiologic methods and community engagement approaches to analyze, synthesize, and interpret epidemiologic data related to public health issues.
3. Apply the concepts of causal inference for the estimation of valid effects, considering sampling, effect modification, and sources of error, bias, and confounding to improve the validity and public health relevance of epidemiologic studies.
4. Evaluate and critique relevant epidemiologic literature, articulate strengths and limitations, assess empirical evidence and identify emerging concepts in epidemiology.
5. Communicate the results and implications of epidemiologic studies orally and in written formats for academic and non-academic audiences.
6. Demonstrate epidemiologic expertise in a content area.

Global Health Equity and Policy

The concentration in Global Health Equity (GHEP) prepares students in multi-disciplinary research competencies and skills to tackle complex global public health issues that can be applied to their research, practice and policy careers. Based in deep roots in the communities we serve and in principles of social justice and human rights, we encourage transdisciplinary course work in a wide variety of global health-related areas such as: trauma related migration, international drug and sex trafficking, political and economic determinants of health, comparative primary care systems, design and evaluation of prevention strategies from a social justice approach (HIV/AIDS, obesity, vaccines, maternal and child health), community resiliency interventions to tackle violence, causes of diseases and health outcomes. Students will also engage in virtual and/or place-based observatories for conducting independent and mentored research in support of effective and evidence-based health policy, planning, decision-making, and action in public health and health systems.

Competencies for the Global Health Equity and Policy Concentration

1. Analyze the core conceptual and theoretical constructs relevant to the fields of Global Health and Health Systems, Services, and Policy, including main disciplinary and transdisciplinary components and competencies, key theoretical and methodological approaches to research, and current research and policy priorities.
2. Identify historical development, influential health-related policies, agenda-setting forces, and critical issues in the context of key outcomes and their colonial, economic, social, cultural, and political determinants.
3. Critically analyze the historical and structural factors influencing equitable health sector reforms domestically and globally, including crucial health-related policies that shape health systems, funding models, health systems delivery and evaluation, health workforce dynamics, and health outcomes.
4. Access, analyze, and synthesize global health and health systems databases and studies, assess the quality of data, data collection, and reporting, and summarize key indicators in the fields.
5. Design, conduct, and interpret research in global health and/or health policy, applying disciplinary and/or transdisciplinary approaches and selected theoretical and methodological frameworks at the micro, meso, and/or macro levels.
6. Assess and synthesize evidence, interventions, implementation, policy, and practice in the fields.

Independent Study

Requirements

Students in the PhD Health Equity Sciences Program are eligible to enroll in independent study credits, which count toward the completion of their degree. Students must develop a plan and sign an Independent Study Contract with a faculty member who will provide mentorship during the independent study.

Process

1. The student contacts the faculty member the semester prior to the independent study. If the faculty member is not their assigned Faculty Mentor, students must discuss with their Faculty Mentor how the independent study could benefit their academic progress.
2. The student and faculty member teaching the course will sign an Independent Study Contract. This is a signed, negotiated agreement between the faculty member and the student which identifies the important conditions and terms under which the independent study is to be conducted. This contract includes:
 - student and faculty member's name
 - the purpose of the independent study
 - the responsibilities of the faculty member and student including the schedule of meetings
 - the reading list and other content of the study
 - the number of credits
 - the criteria for assigning grades
 - the products
 - the dates by which the products will be delivered to the faculty member

The faculty member must approve and sign the contract before the student can register for independent study credits. The student sends the signed contract to the academic advisor of the PhD Health Equity Sciences Program to receive the call number for registration. The student completes this process within the sign-up period for classes in the semester in which they will begin their independent study. (*The normal sign-up period is generally the first two weeks of the semester.*)

The final product of the independent study must be delivered to the faculty member *at least one week before the end of the semester in which the independent study takes place*. It is expected that, in most cases, an independent study will be completed within one semester. As with any other course, if the student anticipates that he will not be able to complete the contracted work, he/she **must negotiate a revised contract with the faculty member prior to the time grades are due** to receive an incomplete for the semester.

The contract for Independent Study is available from the Education Support Team. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure this is completed in a timely manner and submitted in time to register for the semester.

PhD Dissertation

Dissertation

The doctoral final oral examination, or dissertation defense, is the last formal step before the dissertation manuscript is submitted and the doctoral degree awarded. The focus of the final examination is the dissertation and its relationship to the candidate's field of study. Its purposes are:

1. To provide an opportunity for candidates to communicate the results of their research to a wider group of scholars;
2. To afford an opportunity for the members of the examination committee, as well as others (faculty, students, staff, etc.), to ask relevant questions;
3. To ensure that the research reflects the independence of thought and accomplishment of the candidate rather than excessive dependence on the guidance of a faculty member; and finally,
4. To ensure that the candidate is thoroughly familiar not only with the particular focus of the dissertation, but also its setting and relevance to the discipline of which it is a part.

At least two weeks before the final examination is held, and no later than November 1 for Fall graduation, April 1 for Spring, or July 1 for Summer, the major graduate unit must notify Graduate Studies of its scheduled date by submitting the [Announcement of Examination form](#). In order to defend during the intersession, the student must be registered for the following semester. The student is responsible for providing each member of the dissertation committee with a complete copy of the dissertation in ample time for review prior to the examination.

The presentation and examination phases of the exam are open to the University community and are published in various sources; the deliberation phase is only open to the committee. At the conclusion of the examination, the dissertation committee members confer and make one of the following recommendations, which must be agreed upon by at least three of them:

- That the dissertation be approved without change;
- That the dissertation be approved subject only to minor editorial corrections; or
- That the dissertation be rewritten or revised before approval.

If the committee chooses either the first or second recommendation, they may decide that no further meetings are needed. In the second instance, the director of the dissertation is responsible for seeing that all necessary corrections are made before the dissertation is submitted to Graduate Studies. If the third recommendation is made, the full committee may elect to meet again to determine that their concerns have been addressed.

For the dissertation, the student may select one of two formats:

- The traditional dissertation is a single written document (authored by the student) presenting original scholarship.
- The non-traditional manuscript-based dissertation (hybrid dissertation) is a collection of related scholarly articles which have been prepared, submitted for publication, or published in peer-reviewed journals. These dissertations will present a minimum of three articles as separate chapters, and

must also include an abstract, introduction, and conclusion section tying the articles together. The articles must report original research that is primarily the student's or to which they have made a significant contribution. The student must also be the first author (or joint first author) on at least two of the manuscripts.

- For either format, students will include a chapter situating their research within Health Equity Sciences. This should demonstrate their theoretical and methodological understanding of this field, gained through their core and concentration courses. In addition, the student should discuss how a health equity framework has been applied in their doctoral research.