



Maternal and Child Public Health Leadership Training Program



MPH Thesis Guidelines

The thesis is an opportunity for MCH students to consolidate and advance the knowledge gained during graduate studies, to exercise and expand the research skills learned in the program, and to develop expertise in a specialized area of interest.

Working closely with a thesis advisor, each student identifies an area or problem of interest; poses a number of potential project ideas; narrows and hones these ideas into a feasible research question or hypothesis; and then designs a study using either primary or secondary data.

The design, conduct, write-up and presentation of the thesis project is a major effort which is generally regarded by graduates as one of the most important and useful aspects of their graduate experience. A [Thesis Timeline](#) has been developed to assist MCH students in completing all the steps of this complex task in a timely manner.

Examples of acceptable designs for the thesis include: analytic studies, program evaluations, case studies, policy analyses, descriptive studies, and experiments or quasi-experiments (although rarely performed for a master's thesis). A list of [program thesis titles](#) from 2000-2009 is available.

Thesis Format

The Graduate School provides guidelines for formatting theses at [Policy and Style Manual for Theses and Dissertations](#); however, a student's faculty committee is the final arbiter of thesis appearance. The Graduate School does a [preliminary and final check](#) of the title page, signature page, quote slip, and abstract.

Forming a Thesis Committee

Your thesis committee must consist of a minimum of two members, one of whom must be a member of the MCH faculty. The Graduate School also mandates that the chair and at least one-half of the total members of the committee must be members of the graduate faculty. If appropriate, someone who is employed at the site where your research was conducted may be included as a third member of the committee.

Thesis Proposal

A formal proposal, along with a [MPH Thesis Plan](#), must be submitted to and approved by your advisor and thesis committee before you are allowed to register for thesis credits.

Proposal guidelines:

- Introduction – statement of the problem, literature review, study question or hypothesis
- *Empirical* model – description of relationships between major study variables

- Study methods – setting, subjects, data to be collected, definition of variables, and analysis plan
- Results – presentation of results including dummy tables, with preliminary results, if available
- Limitations of study
- Questions or issues (1-2) to be discussed with faculty and students

Select one article similar in design and topic to your planned research and distribute with your written proposal. This article is to serve as a model for you to follow in completing your thesis project.

Departmental Guidelines for Completing the MPH Thesis

Both the [Department of Health Services](#) and the [Department of Epidemiology](#) provide guidelines for planning, conducting and submitting the MPH thesis. We highly recommend that students review this information early in their tenure in the MCH program.

Frequently Asked Questions About Theses and Dissertation

For additional information, the Graduate School has available a [list](#) of frequently asked questions about theses and dissertations.

Master's Degree Request

Students must apply for graduation at <http://www.grad.washington.edu/stsv/mastapp.htm> and must be registered for at least 2 credits for the quarter in which they apply to graduate.

Information about deadlines and fees is contained in the Graduate School's [Policy and Style Manual for Theses and Dissertations](#).