**CLINICAL RESEARCH**

**FELLOWS’ HANDBOOK**

**University of Washington**

**Department of Pediatrics**

**&**

**Seattle Children’s**

**Compiled by: Program Directors**

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# General Information

## Purpose of this Handbook

1. To provide fellows considering a career in clinical research with some general guidelines and suggestions about getting started with their research training.
2. To answer common questions about clinical research and clinical research training.

## Goals of the Clinical Research Fellowship

**Goal:** To teach knowledge and skills necessary to conduct independent research and become a successful academic clinician-investigator. This is done in three parts:

1. Provision of a broad-based introduction to disciplines relevant to research performed by clinical investigators including such method areas as:
	* clinical epidemiology
	* health services research
	* biostatistics
	* health economics research
	* qualitative methods
	* implementation sciences
	* quality improvement measurement
2. Provision of a focused research experience emphasizing the above method areas and concentrating on 2-3 research projects with the goal of presenting at national meetings and publishing in peer-reviewed literature.
3. Structured mentoring program including primary/secondary mentor and mentoring committee.

The first item is often done largely in the School of Public Health and provides initial skills to address the **second item which is the most important part** and is done in the context of the fellow’s research project(s).

## Common Research Activities

Common research activities can include one or more of the following:

1. Analysis of existing data or meta-analysis (most likely to be completed within the fellowship)
2. Integration into ongoing research projects of other investigators (fellow needs to have unique piece to call her or his own)
3. Independent design and execution of a project (often requires more than two years, but provides opportunity to learn all steps of a clinical research project – can be very anxiety- provoking)

How is clinical research different than lab research?

1. Fellows generally play a larger role in formulating their early research questions and research design in clinical research. In basic science, a fellow’s first research question is often formulated by her or his mentor.
2. The issues concerning getting formal research training, taking classes in the School of Public Health, and getting a master’s degree are of special concern to the clinical research fellows.

## Common Pathways for Clinical Research Fellowship

There are three common pathways for clinical research training. Each pathway has advantages and disadvantages. We will describe each pathway in brief below. There also may be ways to create hybrids of these pathways and occasionally fellows may find the best option for them is another pathway not described here.

1. **Primary mentor is a trained clinical researcher**

This pathway is in some ways the “safest” option but requires that you find a research mentor who has clinical research training and is doing clinical research in an area that interests you. One advantage is that this person may have a research question and project ready to go that you can pick up. There also may be more resources available to you (office space, computer, statistical help, databases to work on).

List of some of the division mentors and their major research areas:

For more information about these or other mentors in the Division see the Division website

1. **Primary mentor is a trained clinical researcher outside the Division**

There are many highly respected clinical researchers, epidemiologists or health services researchers at the University of Washington working in relevant areas. We recommend that fellows work with these individuals along with a Division secondary mentor. Advantages include availability of resources that the Division might not have and topic areas that Division faculty may not cover.

## The Research Question (aka Specific Aims)

The most important feature of any research project is “the research question.” The art of developing good research questions is a learned skill that requires considerable time and energy to develop. The good research question is written in such a way that it is clear how it could be answered.

The best way to develop a research question is to identify a question that has come up during the clinical year or in reading about a particular field and then figure out how to answer it. A less effective way to develop an interesting research question is to identify a database (or worse, to develop a database) and *then* try to figure out what questions could be asked of the database.

We encourage fellows to have a “start-up” or “secondary” project based on a research question developed by a mentor that uses an existing database. This allows the fellow to “hit the ground running” and offers the opportunity to submit an abstract during the fellow’s first research year.

Fellows often consider 10-20 research questions before settling on one for a major project. Fellows should keep a list of potential research questions that occur to them. It is also perfectly reasonable to approach a potential mentor and ask, “Do you have research questions in your area of interest that would be appropriate for fellows?”

The most important criteria for any research question are:

1. The question is interesting to the **fellow and others**.
2. The question can be feasibly answered during the fellowship.
3. The question is novel.
4. The question can be restated as a testable hypothesis.
5. The question should build on the fellow’s and/or mentor’s experiences.
6. The question will be interesting (and publishable) regardless of whether the hypothesis is supported.

It is easy to think of interesting questions that aren’t feasible and feasible questions that aren’t interesting. The trick is to come up with a research question that fulfills both of these criteria. Of the first two criteria, the second is the most difficult.

## Expectations for Clinical Research Fellows

**Initial Obligations**

1. Identify a primary mentor, with the help of the Program Director (PD) and division faculty, and meet with this individual on a regular basis to review progress and plans. It is recommended fellows meet with their primary mentor every other week; not to be less than once a month. Actively seek the guidance of mentors when questions arise and check in regularly even when there are no questions.
2. Work with the PD to create a Scholarship Oversight Committee (SOC) consisting of at least three faculty members, including your mentor. Schedule meeting with SOC 2-3 times per year to review progress and goals. Complete/update the Mentoring Plan document before each SOC meeting and review at the meeting.
3. Keep a running list of all submitted abstract, publications, presentations and other research related activities. This list must be submitted prior to each SOC meeting and recorded in your ILP.
4. Complete the training in “Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects” offered by the UW Human Subjects Division, <http://www.washington.edu/research/hsd/training/>
5. Attend “Survival Skills for the Research Years” workshop. <https://medicine.uw.edu/education/research-fellows-orientation-course>

**Ongoing Obligations**

1. Complete a clinical research study within two years of research training, present the study at least once at a national meeting, and write at least two manuscripts to be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
2. Train in clinical research methodology either through the School of Public Health (either culminating in a certificate or master’s degree) or through an organized plan of study to be supervised by a specific mentor.
3. Attend and/or present at national meetings and divisional grand rounds.
4. Submit a fellowship grant application.

**Suggested Optional Activities**

1. Identify an additional mentor (often outside the division) with expertise in a specific methodological area and meet with this individual at least six times a year.
2. In addition to a major research project, identify and complete one or two secondary research project(s).

**Discouraged Activities (although special cases may exist)**

1. Taking too many elective courses in the School of Public Health, especially to the point that it interferes with your research time. This is particularly true during the first research year.
2. Writing review articles except when reviewing the same literature in prep for your research.
3. Regular teaching or extra clinical activities (other than those required).
4. Auditing courses is generally a bad idea because, unless you are an extremely unusual person, you will get very little out of the course.

## Mentors and Mentoring Committees

Halfway in the first clinical year of fellowship the Program Directors meet with each fellow to determine their general research interests and direct them to faculty whose research complements their interests. Fellows will then independently arrange to meet with these potential mentors.

Fellows are encouraged to talk to the mentees of a prospective mentor. It is important to identify a mentor with strong mentoring skills, but equally as important to ensure a personality match. Fellows should seek a mentor who will foster their productivity. Be aware of mentors who exhibit the following less-than-ideal characteristics:

1. The avoider or the overcommitted: someone who is not available or accessible.
2. The criticizer: someone who criticizes freely but never makes positive comments.
3. The pushover: someone who compliments but never gives constructive criticism.

**Primary Mentor Within the Division**

By the end of the clinical year of fellowship, all fellows should have identified one primary research mentor and verified expectations associated with that decision with the individual. This faculty member will be primarily responsible for helping develop and implement a career development plan. Mentors must be able to provide adequate resources, including time, space, supplies, expertise and effort.

Choosing a primary mentor from within the Division provides the fellow a strong advocate not only within the division, but also within the local and national community.

**Primary Mentor Outside the Division**

The Division encourages fellows to collaborate with a variety of faculty both inside and outside the Division. Choosing a primary mentor outside the Division may provide the fellow with direct access to resources and expertise the Division may not be able to provide.

The fellow may identify a primary mentor outside the Division but must also identify a secondary mentor within the Division. The primary mentor in this case will first need to meet with the PD to clearly understand their role and responsibilities.

**Expectations of the Primary Mentor**

The Division’s detailed Mentor Roles and Responsibilities policy is highlighted below.

1. Work with mentee to jointly complete the division’s official Mentoring Plan template. Review and update this document at each Mentoring Committee meeting.
2. The mentee provides a written summary of each meeting, including action items, and circulates these minutes to all committee members and mentor for comment and approval. Provide final copy to program administrator for retention and program director review.
3. Help fellows determine their short- and long-term goals and set a timetable for accomplishing these goals, including abstract, manuscript and grant submissions.
4. Help the fellow understand the requirements for appointment to a faculty position at an academic institution.
5. Assist in the identification of interesting and feasible research questions; identify other resources and potential collaborators that may be useful to the fellow’s projects. Help the fellow choose a mechanism for obtaining research training and offer advice in course work choices, if applicable.
6. Establish a plan to learn basic principles of scientific conduct, communication of findings to colleagues, and receipt of constructive feedback.
7. Establish a plan for trainee’s career development in professionalism and mentorship and leadership skills.
8. Provide office space, computer, additional travel funds, access to research coordinator, statistical or database support, if applicable.
9. Meet with the mentee on a regular basis. Every other week is recommended; not to be less than once a month. Ensure SOC meetings take place once every four to six months.
10. Review mentee’s CV.
11. Ensure the trainee receives feedback when presenting to lab meetings, works-in-progress sessions, research conferences, etc.

**Secondary Mentor**

While choosing a secondary mentor can be valuable, it is only a requirement if the primary mentor is outside the division or if the primary mentor is relatively junior or has a limited record of mentoring.

Co-primary mentors are discouraged due to potential confusion of roles.

**Scholarship Oversight Committee**

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Each fellow must have a Scholarship Oversight Committee (SOC). At the end of the first year, fellows will have a SOC The Scholarship Oversight Committee should consist of three or more individuals, at least one of whom is based outside the subspecialty discipline; the fellowship program director may serve as a trainee’s mentor and participate in the activities of the oversight committee, but should not be a standing (i.e., voting) member. This committee will:

Determine whether a specific activity is appropriate to meet the ABP guidelines for scholarly activity

Determine a course of preparation beyond the core fellowship curriculum to ensure successful completion of the project

Evaluate the fellow's progress as related to scholarly activity

Meet with the fellow early in the training period and regularly thereafter

Require the fellow to present/defend the project related to his/her scholarly activity

Advise the program director on the fellow's progress and assess whether the fellow has satisfactorily met the guidelines associated with the requirement for active participation in scholarly activities

Fellows are required to meet with their committee once every four months and are expected to initiate these meetings. Fellows should arrange their first committee meeting by the third month of their first research year and are advised to begin arranging each committee meeting at least two months in advance of the due date. There are several options for arranging meetings; a Doodle poll is recommended. To narrow your dates, contact program administrator to assist.

**Expectations of the Research Mentoring Committee**

1. Meet once every four to six months. Review and update the Mentoring Plan at each SOC meeting. Report on interim progress.
2. The mentee provides a written summary of each meeting, including action items, and circulates these minutes to all committee members and mentor for comment and approval. Provide final copy to Program administrator.
3. Help fellows determine their short- and long-term goals and set a timetable for accomplishing these goals, including abstract, manuscript and grant submissions.
4. Help identify interesting and feasible research questions; identify other resources and potential collaborators that may be useful to the fellow’s projects.
5. Review mentee’s CV to refine it for presentation.
6. Facilitate the fellow’s career advancement.
7. Review the requirements for appointment to a faculty position, if desired, and assist with the process of searching for a position.

## Questions for Fellows to Ask Potential Mentors

**Projects**

1. What projects are you working on and in what stage of completion are they?
2. Is there a project that I can work on and have an abstract ready for a professional society meeting in my first research year?
3. Do you have a project I can work on with the understanding that I would be first author if I complete the work involved? Can I anticipate a publication in 6-12 months?
4. Are you willing to mentor me if I work on data from one of your projects? Are you willing to mentor me if I work on a project that is not one of your projects?

**Mentoring Style/Background**

1. What do you consider your central responsibilities as a research mentor?
2. How would you describe your overall style (hands on/off, formal/informal, etc.)?
3. How often will we meet one-on-one? How often does your research group meet? If I need more support initially, will I be able to meet with you more frequently?
4. How many people are you currently mentoring? Do you feel you have time right now to take on another mentee? If not, would you be willing to act as a secondary mentor or a member of my mentoring committee?
5. How many fellows/students have you mentored? What are your former fellows doing now?
6. What sort of expectations do you have regarding attendance/general time management (additional training requirements, moonlighting, projects with others - including writing projects)?
7. What are your expectations or timeline for the following: grant submissions, manuscripts, reviews, abstracts, presentations, conference attendance (regional/national)?
8. What format do you use to provide feedback to your mentees?
9. How do you like to manage your schedule? Preemptively (rapid turnaround, preset dates to check on progress) or deadline oriented (crank it out closer to due date)?

**Research Environment**

1. How many people are in your research group? How is it structured?
2. Do members of your research group work together on collaborative projects? If so, how is ownership of ideas/projects determined?
3. What affiliates/colleagues do you work with that can help my education and projects (e.g., biostatisticians, database folks, collaborators at other sites or in the same field)?
4. If I work with you, where would my workspace be located? Would you have a desk and computer for me?

**Funding Questions**

1. How are most of your fellows funded after leaving the training grant?
2. If I decide to do a fourth year to finish research, when should I write a grant to fund that year and what grants might I write?
3. If I decide to do a fourth year to finish research and don't get a grant to fund it, what funding options might be available for me?
4. Do you have additional funding available for travel to professional meetings and additional research expenses?

## Milestones - Approximate Schedule of the Research Years

**Pathway for individuals participating in a degree-granting program**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AY** | **Mo#** | **Mo** | **Milestone** |
| Academic Year 1 | **Months 1-12 (Clinical Rotations - Medical Center funding/UW R-Level Salary)** |
| 1 | Jul |  |
| 2 | Aug |  |
| 3 | Sep | Meet with PD to discuss potential research mentors. |
| 4 | Oct | Begin working on application for MS/MPH with School of Public Health - **due Dec 1** (confirm date each year). Begin requesting letters of reference (will need 3-5). |
| 5 | Nov | MS/MPH application due Dec 1 (confirm date each year) |
| 6 | Dec |  |
| 8 | Feb | (Feb-Jun) Continue meeting with faculty to narrow selection of potential research mentor(s) |
| 9 | Mar | (Mar-Jun) Identify and confirm primary mentor and secondary mentor, if applicable. Work with primary mentor to identify additional SOC Committee members. |
| Work with primary mentor to identify clinical area of research questions\* |
| Identify a research project (often part of an ongoing project) to be a start-up or secondary project\* |
| 10 | Apr |  |
| 11 | May |  |
| 12 | Jun |  |
|  |  **Months 13-24 (Research – Salary level tied to NIH PGY-Level**  |
| Academic Year 2 | 13 | Jul | Meet with primary mentor to develop a detailed timeline for project |
| Meet with PD to discuss class choices and research activities |
| 1415 | Aug |  |
| Complete tuition exemption forms at least 3 weeks prior to beginning of each quarter (fall qtr starts in Sept; winter qtr starts in Jan; spring qtr starts in Mar/Apr) |
|  |  |
| Sep |  |
| Arrange first SOC meeting for the fall. Distribute Mentoring Plan to committee before meeting. |
| Complete any new compliance training for research |
| Start master's degree classes |
|  |
| 16 | Oct |  |
| 17 | Nov |  |
| 18 | Dec |  |
| 19 | Jan | Arrange SOC meeting for the winter |
| Work on major and secondary research projects\* |
| 20 | Feb |  |
| 21 | Mar |  |
| 22 | Apr | Arrange SOC for early summer |
| 23 | May |  |
| 24 | Jun |  |
|  |  **Months 25-36 (Research - Funding Tied to NIH PGY-Level)** Could opt to complete at 36 months. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | decision proactively. |
| Academic Year 3 | 25 | Jul | (Jul-Sep) |
|  |
| 26 | Aug | Write a grant for further funding (perhaps using major or secondary research project as preliminary data) |
|  |
| 27 | Sep |  |
| Arrange SOC Committee meeting for the fall |
| 28 | Oct |  |
| 29 | Nov |  |
| 3031 | Dec | Discuss possible faculty level funding if appropriate |
| Jan | Resume coursework |
| Arrange SOC meeting for the winter  |
| Work on major research project and secondary research projects\* |
| Write up secondary research project\* |
| Follow up consult with research admin staff |
| Arrange Mentoring Committee meeting for the spring |
| Analyze data from major research project\* |
|  |
| 32 | Feb |  |
| 33 | Mar | Identify short and long term term plans for continued grant funding including timeline for proposals, notify research admin staff, meet with Division Head, if needed |
| 34 | Apr | Write up major research project\* |
| 35 | May |  |
| Present final research project at SOC and for division faculty |
|  |
| 36 | Jun |  |

\*Major and secondary research project timelines will vary by individual. Fellows should work with their SOC Committee to outline a detailed plan to attain goals.

## Additional Research Years

Many fellows interested in going into academic medicine as a physician-scientist elect to do a third research year. A third research year (fourth year of fellowship) is sometimes a necessity for being competitive in the academic job market for physician-scientists. The goals of this third research year should be worked out between the Division, the fellow and her or his research mentor well in advance. Fellows who remain in the program for additional training beyond the second research year (3rd year of the ACGME program) are required to develop a funding plan with their mentor and fellowship program leadership and division head.

The Division will consider requests for supplemental salary support for continued training beyond a third year of research training if an individual fellow is clearly progressing toward an independent research career, as evidenced by presentations, publications, and the receipt of individual funding.

**Clinical Research Activities**

## Writing a Grant During Research Training

Fellows are expected to write at least one grant during their research training years. These grants may be to support their salary, to provide funding for research activities, or both. There are many different potential sources for research funding. Some of the common ones are listed below. Fellows should discuss the pros and cons of applying for a grant during the 1st research year and the potential funding sources with their mentors.

When writing a grant, be aware that you need to allow time for the following:

To complete this sequence in a reasonable timeframe, you should plan to have a first draft of your grant done two months prior to the deadline. Notify potential readers well in advance.

1. Administrative review, approvals, and completion of forms – this process takes two weeks prior to the grant deadline with all grants required to be completed, finalized and ready to submit three BUSINESS days prior to the grant proposal deadline.
2. Internal scientific review in the following sequence:
	1. Your mentor(s)
	2. Other faculty members and fellows in the Clinical Research Training Track
	3. Your Scholarship Oversight Committee

Note: Many fellowship or career development awards require letters of recommendation.

* Ask potential writers in advance if they are able and willing to write a letter of recommendation.
* Provide an up-to-date CV or biographical sketch, draft of the grant or aims with title, any required forms or directions for submission as well as a due date.
* Be prepared to write a draft of the recommendation for your writer – this is a common practice.

Writing a Grant to Fund Transition to a Faculty Position

Fellows interested in a career as a physician-investigator in academic medicine will often write a grant during their 3rd research year that will bridge them into a faculty position. This type of “career development” award may come from the NIH (such as a K23 award), or a foundation. Fellows should be talking with their mentor(s) and division leadership early in their research training, but no later than the start of their 3rd research year about these grants. Most career development awards require a commitment for a faculty appointment, but this does not preclude them from being transferred to other institutions.



*Inouye, Annals Intern Med 2005; 142:274-282*

## Clinical Research Works-in-Progress Sessions

The Fellows College has its own Research Works-in-Progress session or Chalk Talks. The basic information for the conference is as follows:

**What Day:** Every other month on Mondays

**What Time:** 12-1:15pm

**Where:** Zoom or conference room to be determined

**Why:** To provide fellows doing research a format to present research proposals and preliminary results and receive feedback and to provide fellows with experience critiquing the work of others.

**Format:** Projects in any stage of development may be presented ranging from research ideas to preliminary results. Presentations are 8 minutes with 5 minutes for questions/feedback.

**School of Public Health**

## Important Questions about a Master’s Degree

#

1. **Should I get a Master’s Degree?**

For almost all clinical research fellows planning to pursue a career as a physician-scientist, the answer will be yes. The main reason to get the degree is that it will be one way that potential employers can recognize that you have training in clinical research (although it is less important than publications and grants). Also, for most fellows, once you obtain the basic course work that you need anyway to be a competent clinical researcher, you will be approximately 75% of the way toward the degree.

1. **Should I get a Master of Public Health (MPH) or a Master of Science (MS)?**

Most fellows should get the Master of Science. The MPH program has a practicum requirement. For physician-fellows, this practicum may not be a good use of your time. However, if you think you might be interested in a job in public health or government (i.e. a state or county TB clinic), the MPH might be better for you.

1. **Should I get a degree from the Department of Epidemiology or Health Services?**

The choice of a department depends on your interests. While most fellows do research that fits into the category of clinical epidemiology which is the intersection of these two departments, it is important to make sure that your School of Public Health department will value the kind of research you want to do. If measuring the incidence of a disease in a population lights your fire, join Epidemiology. If studying the way health care is delivered is up your alley, join Health Services. If you are in the middle, talk it over with your mentors.

1. **Who pays the tuition?**

Discuss with your PD. There is a faculty/staff tuition exemption program if fellows want to take classes but are not on a Training grant.

Program: <http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/pod/policies/tuition-exemption.html>. Fellows not paid on a Training Grant wishing to pursue a master’s degree will be required to take advantage of the tuition exemption program each quarter to offset expenses. Not all courses are eligible for Tuition Exemption most notably thesis credits; please see <http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/APS/22.01.html>

Note: if individuals do not finish the degree within two years, they will be responsible for tuition in the third year. You may be asked to apply for the K30 Program as another option to pay your tuition.

Figure 1:

**Clinical**

**Epidemiology Epidemiology Health Services**

## Example Academic Calendar

**2020-2021 Dates of Instruction**

A complete listing of the academic calendar, application and registration deadlines can be found at: <http://www.washington.edu/students/reg/2021cal.html>



## Example of Some Core Courses for Physician-Fellows

Master of Science (Epidemiology: General Track)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Course Number/Activity*** | ***Course Name*** | ***Suggested Quarter*** | ***Credits*** |
| **EPI 512\*** | Epi Methods I | 1st Autumn | 4 |
| **EPI 513\*** | Epi Methods II | 1st Winter | 4 |
| **EPI 510**Prerequisite for EPI 514 | Epi Data AnalysisMay be waived if substantial SAS programming. | 1st Winter | 3 |
| **EPI 514\*** | Application of Epi Methods | 1st Spring | 4 |
| Biostatistics Requirement\***2****BIOST 511\* BIOST 512\* BIOST 513\****or two courses:* **BIOST 517\* BIOST 518\*** | *Complete either sequence:*Med Biometry I Med Biometry II Med Biometry IIIApplied Biostat I Applied Biostat II | 1st Autumn 1st Winter 1st Spring1st Autumn 1st Winter | 44444 |
| **EPI Electives Courses3** | 6 credits total; each course min. 2 cr. (See Lists p.2.) One elective MUST be “Disease/Exposure (D/E) Focus” | 1st/2nd Year |  cr cr |
| **SPH Electives Courses4** | Two SPH courses or other graduate courses with significant public health content; each course min. 2 cr. | 1st/2nd Year |  cr cr |

## Sample Two-Year Curriculum

**MS Program in Health Services**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AUTUMN** | **WINTER** | **SPRING** | **SUMMER** |
| **BIOST 517**:Applied Biostatistics Il**EPI 512**:Intro to Epidemiology I**HSERV 511**:Intro to Health Services/Public Health**HSERV 592**:Seminar | **BIOST 518**:Applied Biostatistics II**EPI 513**:Intro to Epidemiology II**HSERV 583**:Economic Evaluation of Health**HERV 592**:Departmental Seminar | **HSERV 584**:Assessing Outcomes in Health*Elective Course Elective Course***HSERV 592**:Seminar | **HSERV 600**:Independent Study |
| **AUTUMN 2** | **WINTER 2** | **SPRING 2** |  |
| *Elective Course Elective Course***HSERV 700**:Thesis**HSERV 592**:Seminar | **HSMGMT 514**:Health Economics*Elective Course***HSERV 700**:Thesis**HSERV 592**:Departmental Seminar | *Elective Course***HSERV 700:**Thesis**HSERV 592**:Seminar |  |

## Course Registration and Other Course-Related Activities

**Applying to the School of Public Health**

If you are interested in the master’s degree, you need to formally apply to the Department that you are most interested in (Epidemiology or Health Services – websites listed below). You will need to apply during the winter of your first (clinical) year. Ask some of your senior fellows for an example of their application from a previous year. **Application deadlines are usually in November or December for the following summer quarter. You must take this application process seriously as you are not guaranteed acceptance.**

<http://depts.washington.edu/epidem/> <http://depts.washington.edu/hserv/>

**Registering for courses**

Refer to your degree’s requirement sheet for a list of required courses. General course information is also available from the UW catalog, the UW Time Schedule (published quarterly), your faculty advisors and other fellows with direct experience with the courses. See Clinical Research Track website for summaries, suggestions, and recommendations for course selection. Check the schedule the quarter before registration to see whether your desired course requires an add code. If so then contact the appropriate department to get this.

**Dropping and adding courses**

If you wish to drop or add a course after you have registered, please notify your SPH Department **immediately**. Fees to add and drop courses increase as the quarter progresses, and you may not add or drop a course after the deadline.

**Applying for Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory (S/NS) grading option**

If you are registered for a course that is graded (4.0-0.0), you may apply to take the course Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory. With the S/NS option, any grade above 2.7 will be converted to an “S” and any grade below that will be converted to an “NS.” An “S” is passing. In order to apply for the S/NS option you need to:

1. Be sure that you will meet your requirement of 18 graded credits, if you choose this option (check with your SPH Department to make sure).
2. Go to Schmitz Hall, Rm. 225, before the 10th day of class and submit a non-STAR transaction form (if you make the change after the first week of class, you will be charged a fee by the Registrar’s office).

<http://depts.washington.edu/registra/forms/regtranform.pdf>

**Elective Courses**

You should take any elective courses (i.e. not required for the program or your degree) in the quarters preceding your final quarter (usually spring quarter of your second research year). Your last quarter you will be registered for **only two credits**. Be sure that elective courses do not interfere with your research.

**Graduation**

Students must apply for their master’s degree at the Graduate School within the **first two weeks** of the quarter in which they expect to complete their degree requirements. The filing of the application is the sole responsibility of the student. The Graduate School will approve the application when all requirements for the School have been met. If there are discrepancies, the applicant will be notified, otherwise the application will be forwarded to the appropriate graduate program. Master’s degree applications are valid for two consecutive quarters, and if requirements for the degree are not completed during the quarter of the initial application, the student’s application may be retained by the graduate program coordinator for the quarter immediately following. Upon completion of departmental requirements, the master’s degree application is signed by the Supervisory Committee and returned to the Graduate School.

**Thesis**

Your thesis will be one of your research projects in a format very similar to the way you would submit it for publication. However, there are specific format requirements. When you have completed your thesis, before having your committee sign off on it, you will need to have it checked by the Graduate School thesis advisors for correct formatting. Once the thesis has met all format requirements it will be accepted by the Graduate School. **Do not wait until the last day that the thesis is due**.