

# PhD in Translational Health Sciences (THS) Doctoral Handbook

June 2022

School of Medicine  
& Health Sciences

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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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# PhD in Translational Health Science (THS)

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (GW)  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES (SMHS)  
CLINICAL RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP(CRL)

Washington, D.C.

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2022-2023 Academic Year – Revised June 2022

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## WELCOME

Welcome to the PhD program in Translational Health Sciences (PhD in THS) at The George Washington University (GW)! This program represents a transformational journey that will train you to reason and interact with others as a translational health scientist. You bring many assets to this program, and your faculty, colleagues, advisors, mentors, and a host of other stakeholders are excited to guide and accompany you on this journey. Success in the program is due in no small part to your ability to learn from others, reflect on your own assumptions, and make changes to promote personal growth

The PhD in THS is a unique, interdisciplinary program that will teach you to analyze, synthesize, and contribute to the science of translational health sciences. The program will encourage you to integrate knowledge from three scientific disciplines – collaboration science, implementation science, and translational research – and will welcome you into a scholarly community dedicated to advancing the knowledge base of translational health sciences. As such, the program values the diversity and integration of perspectives that different students bring.

Learning at the advanced graduate level requires a program that enables students to pursue topics of interest and ideas in depth. The didactic phase of the program begins with a period of intensive study with required courses, but also provides individualized learning opportunities that will help you achieve your study goals. Your plan of study is followed by an exciting time of conducting your own doctoral level translational health science research. As a doctoral candidate you will plan and execute a dissertation with the support of your dissertation chair and committee, and report on the results of that original research in your dissertation defense.

We are excited to have you join our community of scholars in translational health science!

Warmly,

Samar Nasser PhD, MPH, PA-C

Trudy Mallinson, PhD, OTR/L

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is for students enrolled in the PhD program in the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) Translational Health Sciences (PhD in THS). It outlines the policies and regulations of the program that are an addendum to those outlined in the current University [Bulletin](#), current SMHS [Bulletin](#), the University [Code of Student Conduct](#), and the University [Code of Academic Integrity](#).

This version of the Handbook supersedes all previous versions. The program reserves the right to revise the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook at any time, as needed, to facilitate the goals and mission of the program. The most updated version of the handbook will be posted in the [Student Resources](#) link on the program website. Students are expected to remain apprised of all policies and procedures and to comply with policies and procedures in the most current version. This handbook does not constitute a contractual obligation on the part of GW or SMHS. Please contact the Program Administrator with any questions concerning the information in this handbook.

### About the Division of Health Sciences

Our mission is to drive innovation and quality in health and health care delivery through education, scholarship, and service. Our vision is to be a leader in transforming health and health care delivery – locally, nationally, and globally. We value diversity and inclusion, collaboration, and innovation. Our [Strategic Plan 2020-2023](#) identifies four focus areas to champion innovation and facilitate continuous improvement in health and health care delivery:

- Investing in People
- Living Our Social Mission
- Influencing Health Professions Education, Health Care Policy, and Practice
- Catalyzing Innovation and Entrepreneurism

GW SMHS's mission is to improve the health of our local, national, and global communities by:

- Educating a diverse workforce of tomorrow's leaders in medicine, science, and health sciences.
- Healing through innovative and compassionate care.
- Advancing biomedical, translational, and health services delivery research with an emphasis on multidisciplinary collaboration.
- Promoting a culture of excellence through inclusion, service, and advocacy.

As a globally recognized academic medical center, GW embraces the challenge of eliminating health disparities and transforming health care to enrich and improve the lives of those we serve.

### About the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership

This program is within the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership (CRL) within the GW SMHS. CRL offers programs for professionals interested in obtaining a quality education, working with experienced, dedicated, and knowledgeable faculty and practitioners, and contributing to the development of new knowledge and practice within their chosen field. Our approach to education and leadership development cultivates students' skills in critical thinking and research while guiding important insights into their chosen field of study. We embrace fundamental concepts of adult learning and encourage collaboration, experiential learning, creative thinking, and self-direction.

## About the PHD in Translational Health Sciences (PHD in THS) Program

### Program of Study

The PhD in THS is a blended, low-residency program, meaning the program of study combines two formats: online and in-person learning activities. These formats are highly integrated, and each is essential to achieving student learning goals. This low-residency program uses a purposeful approach to blend technology, media, human interactions, and conventional instruction methods, which are chosen for their pedagogical value and integrated seamlessly so that all components of the curriculum form a cohesive learning experience. This mix of in-person and online learning strategies is designed to encourage students to continuously reflect, apply, and interact with others in a process of self-regulated learning.

The program of study is structured so that students interact online with course materials, instructors, and each other during most of the semester. The in-person aspect takes place during two residency weekends per semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer).

### Orientation

Orientation to the program occurs each summer for students who have been admitted to the program, usually in mid-July. This event is held on campus at Foggy Bottom, in Washington, DC, in [Exploration Hall on the GW Virginia Science and Technology Campus \(VSTC\) in Ashburn, Virginia](#), or in the [GW Arlington Graduate Education Center](#) in Arlington, Virginia. Orientation is an opportunity to meet with other cohorts of students in the program, meet program faculty, and to complete numerous tasks required to be prepared to start the program of study in the Fall. Orientation occurs in person, unless otherwise indicated by the program director. New students are expected to attend orientation and must request an exception to in-person attendance in extenuating circumstances. Students provided an exception, are responsible for making up the required learning experiences.

### Residency Weekends

Residency weekends occur twice each semester during each of the first five semesters of the program and once during the sixth semester. Students are required to attend each of the residency weekends. These weekends are scheduled to occur from Friday noon through Sunday noon during approximately the fifth and tenth week of each semester. Dates for all six semesters are posted on the [Student Resources](#) page of the program website for each cohort upon matriculation.

Students will not be excused from required residency weekends and are expected to be present for the entire residency period (noon Friday through Saturday evening). If unable to attend the residency weekend either partially or fully, students must inform the Program Director as soon as possible. Please note that this notification may not release you from the obligation of attending and your absence will result in a reduction in participation grades. Unless the residency weekend is canceled or altered by the Program Director, students may not attend the residency weekends virtually. All physical absences from each residency weekend will result in a reduction of the participation grade of all required (not elective) courses for which the student is enrolled in the respective semester.

Unless a special event is arranged, all weekend activities will be held in [Exploration Hall on the GW Virginia Science and Technology Campus \(VSTC\) in Ashburn, Virginia](#) or in the [GW Arlington Graduate Education Center](#) in Arlington, Virginia (depending upon RW needs and space requirements). Arranging transportation, lodging, and meals are the student's responsibility. Upon request, the program can provide a list of recommended accommodations and restaurants.

## Contacting the Program

- Program Administrator & Academic Advisor ([PhDTHS@gwu.edu](mailto:PhDTHS@gwu.edu))
  - Course registration, enrollment status (e.g., continuous enrollment, leave of absence, half-time/full-time certification), textbooks, Blackboard access, residency weekends, and questions related to the student experience.
- Program Director (Samar Nasser - [SNasser@gwu.edu](mailto:SNasser@gwu.edu))
  - Program curriculum, residency weekends, elective coursework
- Director of Research (Trudy Mallinson – [trudy@gwu.edu](mailto:trudy@gwu.edu))
  - Dissertation research, IRB

## Advising and Mentoring

The advising and mentoring system developed for the PhD in THS program is an important component of student success. As adult learners, it is each student's responsibility to fully engage in the advising and mentoring system by taking initiative, maintaining good communication, and completing work in a timely fashion.

The PhD in THS program distinguishes between the roles of academic advising and research mentoring. The academic advisor is a faculty member who provides coaching and guidance throughout the pre-candidacy phase. The student works with the faculty advisor to form a network of formal and informal research mentors. Research mentors may provide short-term consultation, or research immersions and mentoring as a dissertation chair or committee member.

## Academic Faculty Advisor

The faculty academic advisor will be assigned by the program immediately prior to orientation. Faculty advisors are responsible to:

1. Monitor student progress in the program and student-specific learning needs
2. Support students in developing and updating an individualized development plan
3. Direct student to available educational and research resources
4. Advise the student in the selection of electives
5. Assist the student in identifying potential dissertation chair and committee members

The faculty academic advisor may also (but is not required to) serve as a member of the dissertation committee or the dissertation committee chair, as long as other eligibility requirements are met.

After a student has begun the program, a change in advisor will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Program Director.

## Research Mentors

Research mentors work with students on research projects of mutual interest which relate to, and prepare the student for, their doctoral research. Students should carefully consider who they engage as research mentors as these individuals will generally go on to become dissertation chairs or committee members. Engaging with research mentors through independent studies is an effective way to develop a relationship with the mentor and to learn necessary skills and knowledge in preparation for conducting the dissertation research. Students are strongly encouraged to assemble a multidisciplinary research mentoring team. Students and mentors should share enthusiasm for the projects on which they collaborate. Identification of mentors should begin early in the program and before the student's



dissertation ideas are formed since research mentors should guide the student in this process. The Academic Advisor, the Program Director, and Director of Doctoral Research, and program faculty will assist the student in identifying research mentors.

### **Program Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Faculty, staff, and students in the PhD in THS program are committed to ensuring a supportive learning environment that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion and in which all students, staff, and faculty can flourish. We work actively to promote social justice, and respect the right to openly discuss past wrongs, injustices, and the role of privilege as part of our efforts to promote a just, inclusive learning space. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion also extends to the conduct of research in which students and faculty collaboratively engage with other stakeholders and study participants.

Further information about the University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion can be found at <https://diversity.gwu.edu>.

## PHASES OF THE PROGRAM: PRE-CANDIDACY, CANDIDACY, AND GRADUATION

The PhD in THS program is organized as three phases, pre-candidacy, candidacy, and graduation (See Listed Below). Successful completion of all phases is required for graduation.

1. **Pre-candidacy** – includes successfully completing coursework, comprehensive examinations, and defense of the dissertation proposal.
2. **Candidacy** – includes successfully completing the proposed research, passing the oral dissertation defense, and receiving approval of the written dissertation.
3. **Graduation** – includes submitting a written dissertation in the approved format to the program, depositing it at Himmelfarb Library, closing or revising study IRB status, applying for graduation, and other tasks.

### Pre-Candidacy Phase

This phase includes successfully completing coursework, passing comprehensive examinations, selection of the dissertation committee, and development and defense of the dissertation proposal. This is a cohort-based program for the first three years of study. Students complete the coursework in this order:

#### Course Sequence

Year	Semester	Course#	Credits	Title
Year 1	Fall	THS 8101	3	Foundations of Translational Health Science
		THS 8103	3	Principles of Collaborative and Team Science
		THS 8105	3	Translational Health Science in Complex Systems
Year 1	Spring	THS 8107	3	Program Theory and Health Innovations
		THS 8121	3	Advanced Study Design for Translational Research
		THS 8202	3	Knowledge Translation in Complex Health Systems
Year 1	Summer	THS 8123	3	Qualitative Methods in Translational Health Sci.
		THS 8125	3	Adv. Statistical Methods for Clinical & Translational Research
Year 2	Fall	THS 8109	3	Implementation Sci. and Innovation Leadership
		THS 8221	3	Mixed Methods in Translational Health Science
		Elective	3	
Year 2	Spring	THS 8203	3	Bioethical Implications of Health Research
		THS 8206	3	Translating Literature for Interdisciplinary Scholarship
		Elective	3	
Year 2				Comprehensive Exam
Year 2	Summer	THS 8961	3	Proposal Defense Preparation
Year 3	Fall	THS 8996	3	Dissertation Seminar I
Year 3	Spring	THS 8997	3	Dissertation Seminar II
Year 3	Summer	THS 8998	3	Dissertation Seminar III
Year 4				Continuous enrollment
Year 5		THS 8992	1	Directed Study
Total Cohort-based hours			54	
Total Directed Study hours (research)				Variable; until graduation

## Course Descriptions

### Year 1, Fall Semester

#### THS 8101: Foundations in Translational Health Science

The course examines the emerging field of Translational Health Sciences, which integrates knowledge across three conceptual domains (translational research, implementation and dissemination science, and collaboration and team science) within the context of current health legislation.

#### THS 8103: Principles of Collaboration and Team Science

Health, technology, social, and environmental problems impacting our world necessitates cross-disciplinary engagement and a high level of collaboration. The course examines foundational and practical principles and explores their impact on collaborative and team science engagements.

#### THS 8105: Translational Health Science in Complex Systems

This course engages learners in an analysis of health systems as complex adaptive systems, elucidating barriers and facilitators to/opportunities for change and innovation within complex health systems. Identification of diverse stakeholders and system interdependencies aims to ensure adoption of translational initiatives.

### Year 1, Spring Semester

#### THS 8107: Program Theory and Health Innovations

A translational approach to practice requires health and educational innovations that are evidence-based, have a theoretical foundation, and are based on strategies to support fidelity. The purpose of this course is to introduce program theory as the basis for designing health and educational innovations that can be tested using scientific methods, replicated in practice, and inform policy.

#### THS 8121: Advanced Study Design for Translational Research

This course provides an in-depth consideration of current issues and techniques in quantitative research methods and study designs. It is intended to provide a focused understanding of designs used in translational health research, particularly quantitative approaches. The course includes a particular emphasis on measurement (health outcomes, survey and instrument design) and methods to support decision-making in health, health care, and health policy.

#### THS 8202: Knowledge Translation in Complex Health Systems

This course introduces theories, frameworks, and models of knowledge translation to facilitate knowledge use and change in complex health systems. Focus is placed on analyzing when knowledge is ready for translation, barriers and facilitators to knowledge use, and strategies for translating knowledge for specific stakeholders and contexts.

### Year 1, Summer Semester

#### THS 8123: Qualitative Methods in Translational Health Science

The course examines qualitative methods and designs applicable to translational health science research problems. Students explore qualitative epistemology, methods, data collection, and data analysis.

#### THS 8125: Advanced Statistical Methods for Clinical and Translational Research

This course covers advanced data management and analytic techniques required for testing hypotheses in translational health research. The course includes a particular emphasis on multivariate analysis and modeling to support decision-making in health, health care, and health policy.

## Year 2, Fall Semester

### THS 8109: Implementation Science and Innovation Leadership

This course introduces implementation science as the study of processes affecting systematic uptake of evidence into routine health care, and related outcomes of quality, cost, and effectiveness. Students study a range of influences on professional and organizational behavior essential to implementing change initiatives aligned with the needs of diverse stakeholders, with special emphasis on the role of leadership in systemic change.

### THS 8221: Mixed Methods in Translational Health Science

This course introduces mixed methods as a legitimate design tradition, with a unique set of procedures for data collection, analysis, and strategies to assure rigor and accuracy. Learners will design a mixed methods study to address a translational research question.

Elective – Selected with academic advisor approval.

## Year 2, Spring Semester

### THS 8203: Bioethical Implications of Health Research

The purpose of this course is to emphasize the critical roles of ethics theories and bioethics principles in the planning, conduct, and dissemination of scientific studies. Topics covered will include scientific and academic integrity, protection of human participants in research, conflicts of interest and commitment, ownership of data and intellectual property, whistleblowing and dispute resolution, and privacy and confidentiality.

### THS 8206: Translating Literature for Interdisciplinary Scholarship

In this course, students apply theories, frameworks and models of knowledge translation, team science, implementation science, and complexity science to analyze and synthesize scholarship from multiple disciplines for an interdisciplinary group of stakeholders. Focus is on the development of an evidence-based knowledge translation portfolio and corresponding translational products to support translation across the life cycle of a research project.

Elective – Selected with academic advisor approval.

Comprehensive Exam between Semesters 5 and 6

## Year 2, Summer Semester

### THS 8961: Proposal Defense Preparation

This course guides PhD students through the process of preparing and defending a dissertation research proposal by providing a framework for individual student work with their committee members. At the same time, students draw on each other as a community of scholars for support in developing and effectively communicating their research ideas, using the mentoring process, and giving/receiving feedback. This course is designed to explore and exploit the resources necessary so that a doctoral student may create a grounded and workable plan that will lead to a successful defense of the proposal.

## Year 3, Fall Semester

### Proposal Defense

### THS 8996: Dissertation Seminar I

**Year 3, Spring Semester**

THS 8997: Dissertation Seminar II

**Year 3, Summer Semester**

THS 8898: Dissertation Seminar III

**Year 4, Fall Semester**

Continuous Enrollment

**Year 4, Spring Semester**

Continuous Enrollment

**Year 4, Summer Semester**

Continuous Enrollment

**Year 5 and beyond**

THS 8992: Directed Study

**Electives and Independent Studies**

The purpose of electives and independent study options is to enable students to be best prepared to complete their dissertation research. Electives should be selected to help students acquire skills and knowledge specific to their study question. Independent studies provide the opportunity for students to work closely with faculty with whom they anticipate working as their dissertation chair or committee members. The plan of study for an independent study must be formally detailed on the independent study form and submitted to the Program Director.

**Electives**

Elective options for your Semester 4 or Semester 5 (Fall or Spring of Year 2) are posted online under the [Student Resources](#) section. Please note that not all the courses listed are offered every semester, so students are advised to plan accordingly. Students should work with their academic advisor and the program administrator in selecting and registering for electives.

**Independent Study**

Applied activities play a critical role as students explore and translate their formal education to research, teaching, program development, and leadership in the field. An independent study is an optimal way to receive graduate credit for a mentored project. Students seeking this option are encouraged to discuss an independent study with their advisor and instructor/faculty member who can assist the student in realizing their individual goals and apply their growing knowledge in the field of translational health sciences.

Students opting for this opportunity must present a proposal for review to the Program Director, provide evidence of instructor commitment, and produce deliverables similar to that of three graduate credits within the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership.

Only one independent study may be taken during the course of study. The independent study may be taken in either Semester 4 or Semester 5 (Fall or Spring of Year 2).

## Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination assesses the doctoral student's ability to integrate material from the first five semesters of coursework. An incomplete grade in any required course or elective makes a student ineligible to take the comprehensive examination; the only exception is if a student is in the process of completing an Independent Study as an elective and has received appropriate Program Director approval to proceed with their comps.

### Timing

The comprehensive examination is administered between Semesters 5 and 6. It is composed of four (4) questions randomly selected from a larger pool of possible questions. One of the four questions will be a research methodology question.

### Format

The comprehensive examination is accessible during a defined 10-day period, which is communicated to students well in advance of the examination. Although there is a 10-day window of availability, the student has a maximum of 7 days to complete the four-question exam. Once the examination is started, access will close in exactly 7 days and the student can no longer access the examination. The questions are randomly assigned to each student and released one at a time through Blackboard. Access to subsequent questions is contingent on submission of the answer to the previous question. Once a question is accessed, a response must be submitted within 24 hours. Responses are limited to 1500 words per question, not including references, must follow criteria for written communications outlined in latest edition of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

### Outcomes

The comprehensive examinations will be graded on a Pass/No Pass basis. Grades will be released to students after Week 5 of Semester 6. A student earns an overall "Pass" for the comprehensive exam if at least three of the four exam questions are answered satisfactorily. All students are required to pass the research methodology question. A student who does not pass the examination is allowed one opportunity to retake the examination (see rubric below for clarification).

### Comprehensive Exam Outcomes and Remediation Options

Total # of Questions Passed	Integrative Questions	Research Methodology	Outcome	Remediation		
				Total	Integrative	Methodology
4	3	1	Pass	0	0	0
3	2	1	Pass	0	0	0
3	3	0	No Pass	1	0	1
2	1	1	No Pass	2	2	0
2	2	0	No Pass	1	0	1
1	0	1	No Pass	2	3	0
1	1	0	No Pass	1	2	1
0	0	0	No Pass	4	3	1

### Retake of the Comprehensive Examination

A student who does not earn a "Pass" for the comprehensive examination is permitted to retake the examination one time per the remediation criteria outlined above.

Following a “No Pass,” the student will be assigned to a faculty member to discuss the process for identifying deficiencies in the student’s responses and preparing for the retake examination. The student should continue all coursework while preparing for the comprehensive retake examination.

The retake examination will follow a similar format as the initial comprehensive exam. To pass the retake examination, the student must cumulatively pass at least three of the four questions (inclusive of successfully passed questions during the first attempt), one of which is the research methodology question. Retake questions will be based on the original topic list, but students will be assigned different questions from those randomly assigned during the initial examination.

The retake examination will be administered during a specified 10-day window during Semester 6. The questions will be released one at a time in a similar fashion to the first examination window. The student is allotted 24 hours to complete each question and has a maximum of one week; (7) days to submit the responses once the exam is opened. The comprehensive examination, including the retake, must be completed by the end of Semester 6.

#### **Failure of the Comprehensive Examination**

If a student earns a “No Pass” on the retake comprehensive examination, he/she cannot progress further in the program. The student will be recommended for dismissal from the doctoral program.

If a student plagiarizes any part of the exam, the student will automatically receive a grade of “No Pass” and will not be permitted to retake the examination.

## Candidacy Phase

### Overview of Selecting the Dissertation Committee

The process of developing the dissertation proposal begins with the formal selection of the chair, followed by selection of the committee members. The earliest at which a student may declare their chair is the end of the first year. All students should have declared their chair by the end of year 2. Once approval of the chair is obtained, the student works with the chair to select and approve their committee members. After collaborating with the chair and committee to develop the dissertation proposal, the student submits a written proposal and completes oral defense of the proposal. The student becomes a doctoral candidate on successful completion of the oral defense and approval of the written proposal.

### Year One (Fall – Semester 1, Spring – Semester 2, Summer – Semester- 3)

#### Advisor Meetings

- Identify mentors
- Discuss potential chairs
- Narrow research topic

### Year Two (Fall – Semester 4, Spring - Semester 5, Summer – Semester 6)

#### Confirming the Chair

- Obtain verbal agreement from chair
- Request Form PCp1: Designation of Doctoral Dissertation Chair from Director of Doctoral Research to initiate the process of confirming a committee chair
- Obtain signed approval of chair and program
- Earliest time to defend proposal is Semester 6

#### Confirming Committee Members

- Discuss potential members with chair
- Obtain verbal agreement from members
- Request Form PCp2: Designation of Dissertation Committee from Director of Doctoral Research to initiate process of confirming each committee member; a separate form is needed for each member
- Obtain signed approval of chair and program

### Selecting the Dissertation Chair, Dissertation Committee Members, and Dissertation Readers

The program is based on a model of mentorship and the principles of team science and encourages students to identify potential faculty with whom they plan to collaborate on their research project as they are applying to the program. Students are encouraged to take an independent study with their chair or potential committee members in semesters 4 or 5.

With the assistance of their advisor and the Director of Doctoral Research, students will initiate the process of designating their dissertation chair. Students should nominate their dissertation chair by the end of year one and no later than the end of year 2. The academic advisor may transition to serve as the committee chair, or the student may select another faculty member for the role. When the dissertation chair has been identified and has agreed to serve in this capacity, the student informs the Director of Doctoral Research who will initiate form PCp1: Designation of Doctoral Dissertation Chair, who reviews the nominee's CV and provides confirmation of the appointment of the dissertation chair to the student's



committee. Forms are initiated by contacting the Director of Doctoral Research. See the [Forms Table](#) to request the appropriate form.

As soon as feasible following identification of the dissertation chair, the dissertation committee should be established. The dissertation committee consists of the dissertation chair and two to four committee members. It is recommended that one member of the committee (but not the chair) be from outside GW.

Committee members provide specific expertise and guidance regarding content, conceptual approach, study design methodologies, and analytic approaches. Students must consult with their dissertation committee chair in selecting committee members.

To establish the dissertation committee, the dissertation chair formally invites committee members via email. Once agreements have been secured, the student requests the Director of Doctoral Research to initiate form PCp2: Designation of Dissertation Committee. A separate form is required for each committee member. See the [Forms Table](#) to request the appropriate form. The Director of Doctoral Research provides review of the CV and final approval for each member of the committee.

Prior to the dissertation defense, the student, dissertation chair and committee members collaborate to invite two dissertation readers to participate in the defense. These two additional examiners are selected based on their interest and expertise in the area of the candidate's research and their ability to contribute to a high-quality examination process; they may serve to provide additional stakeholder voices to the examination. In general, readers will be from outside of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and preferably outside of GW. Readers will generally hold a doctoral degree but exceptions to this may be requested when appropriate for the dissertation topic. Readers participate in the doctoral dissertation defense and provide comments on the written dissertation to the candidate; readers do not vote on the acceptability of the written dissertation or the oral defense.

To invite readers to the dissertation defense, the dissertation chair should formally invite readers to participate in that role. Once agreements have been secured, the candidate requests the Director of Doctoral Research to initiate form CP2: Designation of Dissertation Readers. A separate form is required for each reader. See the [Forms Table](#) to request the appropriate form. The Director of Doctoral Research provides review of the CV/resumé and provides final approval for each reader.

### Roles of the Dissertation Chair, Committee Members, and Readers

The role of the dissertation chair is to oversee, guide, and collaborate on:

- Securing agreement of all committee members and readers.
- Preparation of the dissertation proposal, including specifying of the research problem, the literature review, writing the translational study questions, selecting appropriate study design(s) and research methodology.
- Development of the research proposal structure and content.
- Preparation of the student for the proposal defense.
- Timely completion of the dissertation research.
- Preparation, content, and quality of the written dissertation.
- Preparation of the student for the dissertation defense process.
- Dissemination of the dissertation research.

The role of the dissertation committee member is to provide expertise to collaborate and guide regarding:

- Preparation of the dissertation proposal, including specifying of the research problem, the literature review, writing the translational study questions, selecting appropriate study design(s) and research methodology.
- Development of the research proposal structure and content.
- Preparation of the student for the proposal defense.
- Timely completion of the dissertation research.
- Preparation, content, and quality of the written dissertation.
- Preparation of the student for the dissertation defense process.
- Dissemination of the dissertation research.

The role of reader is to:

- Provide feedback on the quality, merit, and likely impact of the dissertation research on stakeholder groups.
- Provide perspective of those not directly involved in the conduct of the research.

### Qualifications of the Dissertation Chair, Committee Members, and Readers

The Dissertation Chair and Committee Members must have the following qualifications at the time of approval to the committee:

- Hold an earned doctorate (e.g., PhD, MD, JD, DPT, OTD, DrPH, DSc, EdD, etc.).
- Expertise that aligns with the student's topic area.
- Experience serving as a member of at least one dissertation committee or be mentored by a GW faculty member with experience as a dissertation chair/committee member (in the absence of prior experience).
- Maintain an active research agenda as characterized by evidence of recent (i.e., within the past year) empirically based, peer-reviewed grant submissions, publications, and presentations.

Additional Qualification for the Dissertation Committee Chair

- Hold a GW regular (non-visiting), full-time or part-time faculty appointment (research faculty appointments are acceptable).
- Emeritus and departing faculty may continue to serve as the dissertation chair, assuming the student has successfully defended their proposal.

Dissertation Readers should have the following qualifications at the time of approval to the committee:

- Readers may be chosen based on their expertise or their valued input to the research problem of the dissertation.
- Readers need not be a university professor if a more suitable professional is beneficial as part of the dissertation defense.
- Readers do not need to have an earned doctorate; an exception stating the rationale for selecting this person to act as reader is requested from the Director of Doctoral Research.
- Readers must have the professional background and experience relevant to effectively judge the quality of the candidate's research.

## Conflict of Interest

- The Dissertation Chair, Committee Members, and Readers must assert that they do not have a relationship with the candidate that poses a potential conflict of interest.
- The Proposed Dissertation Member Approval form, the defense approval form, and the dissertation approval forms all require members to assert that they do not have conflict of interest, such as being a family member or close personal friend.
- Questions about whether a relationship poses a conflict of interest should be directed to the Director of Doctoral Research.

## Change in Dissertation Committee

Once the dissertation committee is approved, the committee must be kept at its full complement throughout the dissertation process. In the event of a vacancy on the committee, an appropriate replacement must be made prior to any subsequent committee decisions.

To replace a dissertation committee member, the chair should formally invite the new committee member. Once an agreement to serve has been secured, the student informs the Director of Doctoral Research who initiates form PCp4: Change in Doctoral Dissertation Chair, reviews the nominee's CV and provides confirmation of the appointment. Forms are initiated by contacting the Director of Doctoral Research. See the [Forms Table](#) request the appropriate form.

The decision to request a change in the dissertation chair should be carefully considered. Students should consult with the Director of Doctoral Research as soon as they consider changing chairs. The decision to change the chair should include consideration of the impact on the entire committee and possible delays to program completion. Although a change in the dissertation chair is sometimes unavoidable, it is best to try and resolve conflicts with the current chair first.

## Development and Defense of Dissertation Research Proposal

### Overview of the Dissertation Proposal Process

The proposal serves at least three purposes:

- It allows the student to demonstrate that they understand the complexity and translational nature of the problem to be addressed and that they have a full and complete grasp of the related literature.
- It allows the student to demonstrate that they can design a relatively complex series of studies to address the primary aims of the study with sufficient detail that the committee is confident in the student's ability to then enact the research plan.
- It ensures the student, chair, and committee members agree about the framework of the proposed research and roughly the scope of the study to be submitted for dissertation defense.

The general format for the Doctoral Dissertation in Translational Health Sciences is provided in the Guide to the Written Dissertation for the PhD in THS ("the Guidelines") which available on the program [website](#). In collaboration with the chair and committee, additional material such as a specific aim page, short grant, PowerPoint presentation may also form part of the proposal defense materials. These materials are at the discretion of the chair and committee as fits with the student's research career goals. Oral defense is an important component of the proposal defense process. The student should be able to demonstrate they can clearly articulate the rationale for their study.

## Dissertation Proposal Defense Preparation

All students must take THS 8961 Proposal Defense Preparation in Semester 6. The seminar provides guidance on the various steps of dissertation proposal preparation, dissertation research, and dissertation writing. The dissertation proposal is usually defended in Semester 7 or 8 as part of THS 8996 or THS 8997.

## Dissertation Proposal Defense Procedures

- Chapters 1 through 3 are the primary focus for committee review. The student works with their Dissertation Chair and committee members throughout the development of Chapters 1 to 3. Other materials such as a specific aims page or short grant may also be developed. Refer to the Guidelines for specific directions in formatting these Chapters.
- The Dissertation Chair, in collaboration with committee members, determines when Chapters 1 through 3 and other materials are ready for circulation to the full committee for review. In general, students should provide the proposal materials to the committee members 4 weeks ahead of the defense to allow sufficient time for review.
- After each committee member reviews the proposal materials, the dissertation chair should poll the committee to gauge whether each member regards the proposal is ready for defense.
- The dissertation chair requests the Director of Doctoral Research to initiate form PCp5: Request for Dissertation Proposal Defense. This form should be circulated for signatures at least 1 week prior to the proposed defense date.
- The overall format of the proposal defense is at the discretion of the Dissertation Chair. In general, the student should give a brief oral presentation (about 10 minutes). The chair and committee members will ask the student questions that demonstrate mastery of the conceptual model, the translational nature of the study question, and about the research design.
- The student may record the defense to review comments and notes for needed revisions.
- The chair will note the outcome of the proposal defense on Form PCp6: Outcome of Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Examination. The Director of Doctoral Research initiates this form which goes to the dissertation chair prior to the defense. The outcome of the Oral Examination can be Pass or Fail. The outcome of the Written Proposal can be Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. Conditional Pass is given when more than minor edits are needed, and additional review of the proposal is required by the chair and/or committee members. The student must pass both the oral defense and the written proposal to proceed to candidacy. Form PCp6 will be completed within one week of the proposal defense.
- If revisions are needed to the proposal, details of the revisions and the date by which the revisions will be received by all members of the committee will be noted on Form PCp6.
- On receipt of the completed revisions, the chair and committee review and make a final determination as to the outcome of the proposal. This decision is recorded on Form PCp7: Final Approval of Requested Proposal Revisions.

While the proposal includes the first 3 chapters of the dissertation, approval of a proposal does not mean Chapters 1 through 3 are finished. Revisions should be anticipated throughout the dissertation process.

## Other Considerations for the Dissertation Proposal

### Narrowing Down a Dissertation Topic and Research Questions.

In Year 1, students are strongly advised to focus on exploring research problems (rather than research topics or questions) of most interest. Students should work with their advisor, instructors, potential chair, and colleagues to examine health issues and problems that might lead to dissertation topics and to explore some more deeply through course assignments. Throughout the first-year students will be introduced to concepts, situations, and outlets that will strengthen and narrow their areas of interest.

By the end of the first year (Semester 3), students should settle on a more focused area of interest, continue to gain considerable knowledge of the area as part of an ongoing dialogue with advisors, mentors, and their committee chair to identify important gaps that might be filled by dissertation research. Each gap will suggest one or more potential research questions which will be refined within year 2 (Semesters 4-5).

### Suitability of Research Questions

Only a small portion of research questions will prove suitable for dissertation research. Through consultation with the dissertation chair, the feasibility and suitability of the questions will be explored and finalized in Semester 6 when the student prepares their dissertation proposal.

### Suitability of the Study Design

Throughout the course of study students will learn that research methods, study design, and data collection methods flow from the research questions and their conceptual model, not the other way around. Students are encouraged to utilize and collect data that demonstrate best practices in translational health science not ones that are most expedient or with which they are most comfortable.

### Using Secondary Data

Secondary data may be available through any number of sources. Students should explore the appropriateness of using this type of data as part of their design and analysis in the dissertation. Students must consult with their advisors, dissertation chair, and committee regarding secondary data.

### Team Involvement on Dissertations

Translational health science research is not an independent endeavor. Indeed, the dissertation committee plays an integral role in modeling team collaboration in the conduct of the research project. As such, it is very important for the dissertation chair and committee members to work collaboratively with the student/candidate to establish the roles different individuals will take in the project and how those efforts will be appropriately acknowledged either as authors or as contributors within the written dissertation. Dissertation questions and sources of data may be embedded in a larger team project. However, the overall development of a research design, data collection/acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data are the primary responsibility of the student/candidate and should reflect the candidate's competency to perform research of a doctorly prepared research professional. Students can propose research that is related to work they are doing as part of their "day jobs" but the dissertation chair and committee must always have full academic freedom to guide the direction and quality of the dissertation research.

### Completing Dissertation Research Activities

Assistance with tasks related to completion of the dissertation like transcription services, technical assistance, and statistical coaching, may be required to adequately execute the dissertation project in a timely manner. These are all typical and permissible resources to utilize as part of the dissertation process. The dissertation chair, as the Principal Investigator of Record for the student's dissertation research, is responsible for ensuring that work contributing to the dissertation is reflective of the candidate's material involvement in, and competency in carrying out, the research activities.

### Ethical Responsibility for the Conduct of Dissertation Research

The Dissertation Chair, and not the student/candidate, is the Principal Investigator of Record, and is responsible to the GW Institutional Review Board for the conduct of candidate's research. Students/candidates should be aware that no part of the recruitment of study participants, data collection and/or acquisition of secondary data involving human subjects, or analysis of such data can occur until after approval for the study has been obtained by the Office of Human Research. The candidate, dissertation committee chair, and committee members may not submit a proposal to the GW IRB until after successful proposal defense.

Upon approval of the dissertation proposal, the student may begin preparing for IRB submission through [GW iRIS](#). Students must include the Director of Doctoral Research and the Chair of CRL in the approval chain. Students are advised that they need to add these signatories manually as part of setting up the application in GW iRIS.

### Overview of Admission to Candidacy

Being granted candidacy is an important step in progress toward achieving a PhD in THS. Candidacy indicates that the student has completed most program requirements, achieved a level of expertise in a particular area, and described a collaborative plan for research that has been approved by the dissertation committee.

### Requirements for Candidacy

To qualify for candidacy, a student must satisfy the following requirements:

- Successfully complete all the required pre-candidacy coursework
- Be in good academic standing in the program
- Pass the written comprehensive examination (following Semester 5)
- Pass the proposal defense
- File PCp6 Outcome of Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Examination and PCp7 Final Approval of Requested Proposal Revisions (if required)

## Development and Defense of the Dissertation

### Guidelines for the Written Dissertation

Detailed guidelines for completing the written dissertation are provided in the Guide to the Written Dissertation for the PhD in THS (“the Guidelines”) which available on the program [website](#). The dissertation chair and other members of the committee may provide further guidance on the structure and the content of the dissertation.

The dissertation is written in good, formal English. Candidates should discuss editing needs with their dissertation chair. The dissertation chair and committee should not be expected to provide help with editorial formatting and grammatical errors.

The Guidelines provide details about the required formatting of all pages, including the preliminary pages, appendices, tables, and figures. All dissertations must follow these Guidelines. The Guidelines also provide details about how the student is to deposit their approved dissertation in the GW Himmelfarb repository (GW Research Commons).

In the semester prior to the dissertation defense, the candidate submits portions of the written dissertation to the program for review to ensure the format meets program requirements. The candidate submits the Front Matter, Chapter 1, any tables and figures, and the Appendices. Feedback will be provided within 4 weeks. It is the candidate’s responsibility to ensure all remaining portions of the dissertation follow these requirements.

### Dissertation Defense Planning and Procedures

Determining readiness for dissertation defense rests with the dissertation chair in consultation with the committee. In general, this means the chair, in consultation with committee members, has determined the written portion of the dissertation is acceptable (even if changes will be requested after the defense) and that the candidate is adequately prepared to defend the conduct of the research and interpretation of findings in a public forum. Full details on preparing for and planning the Dissertation Defense can be found in the Guide to Planning the Dissertation Defense available on the program [website](#).

Candidates should be sure to check with the program administrator for each semester’s deadlines for submitting materials and scheduling defenses. Candidates who do not follow the recommended dates, cannot be reasonably assured of graduating in the semester the defend. All necessary materials should be provided to the dissertation committee (members and readers) at least 30 calendar days prior to the scheduled defense. In general, students hoping to attend the Spring graduation and Commencement events should plan to defend no later than the first week of March. There are numerous steps that must be completed after the defense. All steps must be completed to be cleared for graduation. Candidates are advised that, staff and many faculty are out of office in June, the last three weeks of December, and in August, so these can be challenging times to schedule defenses.

### Conducting the Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense is a formal proceeding led by the dissertation chair. The format of the defense is at the discretion of the chair. Guidance is provided in the Guide to Planning the Dissertation Defense.

Defenses are open to faculty, staff, and the public who may attend in person (see Guide to Dissertation Defense for more details) and via videoconferencing. Family members may attend, but candidates should realize that the shortcomings and limitations of their work will be discussed.

The committee considers the quality of both the written dissertation and the oral defense of the dissertation in granting approval of the dissertation. Readers participate in the discussion regarding the quality of dissertation and defense but do not vote on the final outcome. The chair will note the outcome of the dissertation defense on Form CP3: Outcome of Written Dissertation and Oral Examination. The Director of Doctoral Research initiates this form which goes to the dissertation chair prior to the defense. The outcome of the Oral Examination can be Pass or Fail. The outcome of the Written Dissertation can be Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. Conditional Pass is given when more than minor edits are needed, and additional review of the dissertation is required by the chair and/or committee members. The candidate must pass both the oral defense and the written proposal. Form CP3 will be completed within one week of the dissertation defense.

If revisions are needed to the proposal, details of the revisions and the date by which the revisions will be received by all members of the committee will be noted on Form CP3.

On receipt of the completed revisions, the chair and committee review and make a final determination as to the outcome of the proposal. This decision is recorded on Form CP4: Final Approval of Requested Dissertation Revisions.

A student whose is unable to make the required revisions to the written dissertation in time to meet the deadlines for degree clearance may enroll in Continuous Enrollment (CE) in the subsequent semester.

#### **An Unsuccessful Final Oral Examination**

Candidates are allowed one oral dissertation defense. If the candidate fails the defense, s/he is dismissed from the doctoral program.



## Graduation Phase

### Final Tasks Related to the Written Dissertation

After successful dissertation defense, students recommended by faculty for conferral of the PhD in THS, begin the process of being cleared graduation. A student may not attend graduation if any of the following tasks are incomplete. A complete graduation checklist must be filed with the program.

### Final Approval of Written Dissertation

After final approval of the written dissertation is received (Form CP4), the candidate must submit a copy of the dissertation to the program for final review of formatting. The student must complete all requested formatting changes prior to submitting the dissertation electronically for archiving.

In general, students should plan to about 4 weeks revising their dissertation and finalizing formatting after the dissertation defense and one additional week for final format review. Students have one week after receiving final format approval to deposit their dissertation electronically for archiving.

### Electronic Archiving of the Written Dissertation

All students are required to submit an electronic version of their approved dissertation to the GW Himmelfarb Library Health Sciences Research Commons (HSRC) repository. The repository will provide graduates with a permanent URL, which allows the work to be Google searchable, and allows capture of usage metrics. Students submit a copy of the dissertation and the HSRC Non-Exclusive Distribution License to the Metadata and Scholarly Publishing Librarian, at [hsrc@gwu.edu](mailto:hsrc@gwu.edu)

- Dissertations are deposited in: Health Sciences Research Commons > School of Medicine and Health Sciences > Clinical Research and Leadership > Doctor of Philosophy in Translational Health Sciences Dissertations
- [https://hsrc.himmelfarb.gwu.edu/smhs\\_crl\\_dissertations/](https://hsrc.himmelfarb.gwu.edu/smhs_crl_dissertations/)

### Revising IRB Status

Students must provide evidence that they have closed or revised the IRB status related to their study to the program administrator.

The student and chair should determine together how they will revise the IRB status of the project. Options include: i) closing the study; ii) revising the study to indicate change study personnel; or iii) revising other aspects of the study protocol to enable continued use of the data.

If the student is closing the study, go to <http://humanresearch.gwu.edu/>, complete the Study Closure form to terminate their research and submit to the Principal Investigator (PI) (i.e., dissertation chair) for signature.

Closure forms are not required for exempt studies. An email to the program administrator should state the IRB project number and exempt status determination.

### Exit Survey and Contact Information

Students must complete a program exit survey and provide the program administrator with contact information for follow up after graduation. The program administrator will also confirm with the student that they have completed all coursework, program requirements, and have no financial encumbrances.

## Graduation, Commencement, and Recognition Reception

### Important Dates in Applying for Graduation

Students may apply for graduation once they have scheduled their dissertation defense but no later than:

- Spring = 3rd week of March (March 15)
- Summer = 3rd week of July (July 15)
- Fall = 3rd week of November (November 15)

To reasonably assure graduation in the same semester as the defense, students should understand the timeline and all required steps for graduation. Check the website, Guide to Dissertation Defense, and with the program administrator for dates.

Students will find the online application to graduate form in GWeb Instructions:

<https://registrar.gwu.edu/online-graduation-application-instructions>

### Clearance for Graduation

Clearance is verification that the student has completed all the necessary requirements to be awarded the degree. Students who fail to complete all graduation tasks by two weeks prior to the last day of the semester will not be cleared to graduate. **Students who are not cleared will not be allowed to attend graduation, commencement, or the recognition reception.**

### Graduation Checklist

A completed graduation checklist must be filed with the program not later than two weeks before the last day of the semester. Requirements include:

- Dissertation deposited in Health Sciences Research
- Revision of IRB status
- Completed Exit Survey
- Contact information
- Completion of all course work

### Commencement, Graduation, and PhD in THS Recognition Reception

These events occur at the end of the Spring Semester. Students who indicate on the graduation application that they plan to attend Commencement, will begin receiving communications regarding these events (tickets, parking, obtaining regalia, etc.). Regardless of these communications, **students not cleared to graduate will not be allowed to attend these events.**

Before [diplomas](#) are ordered by Graduation Services, students are first cleared to graduate by the school. Diploma delivery is typically 6-8 weeks after awarding if mailed within the US, or 8-10 weeks for international mailing.

- [Degree Conferral Dates:](#)
  - Spring = Date of Commencement Ceremony
  - Summer = August 31
  - Fall = January 8

Graduates unable to complete all required activities in the semester in which they apply to graduate, will need to re-apply in next semester. Students must be continuously enrolled in the semester in which they apply to graduate.

## MILESTONES

The required milestones for successful progress within the pre-candidacy, candidacy, and graduation phases of the program are described below. There are (7) pre-candidacy milestones, (5) candidacy milestones, and (3) graduation milestones. Many of the milestones have required forms that must be filed with the program. Consult the [Forms](#) section of this handbook for more details.



Figure 1: Successful Progress within the PhD in Translational Health Sciences Program

### Pre-Candidacy Phase Milestones

For coursework within the PhD in THS program, students complete all 18 units (3 credits per unit = 54 credits total), the Comprehensive Exam, and dissertation proposal defense, in semesters 1 – 9 (3 years). For course details see [Pre-Candidacy Course Sequence](#).

Note: For students who take a leave of absence (LOA) during the pre-candidacy phase, the length of the LOA does not count towards the three years of this phase.

1. Students must successfully pass and complete 18 units of coursework, as outlined in [Course Grading and Advancement](#). Failure to do so will prevent the student from progressing forward with their Comprehensive Exam, proposal defense, or the Candidacy portion of their program of study.
2. Students must successfully pass their Comprehensive Exams, as outlined in the [Comprehensive Examination](#) section of this handbook. Failure to do so will prevent the student from progressing forward in the program.
3. Students must successfully pass their Dissertation Proposal Defense, as outlined in the [Overview of Dissertation Proposal Process](#) section of this handbook. Failure to do so will prevent the student from progressing forward in the program.
4. Students are advised to focus on exploring research problems (rather than specific research topics) of most interest during semesters 1-3 (first year). (See [Narrowing Down a Dissertation Topic and Research Questions](#))
5. Students should settle on a more focused area of interest, continue to gain considerable knowledge of the area as part of an ongoing dialogue with advisors, mentors, and their committee chair to identify important gaps that might be filled by dissertation research by the end of semester 3 (end of year 1). Each gap will suggest one or more potential research questions which will be refined within semesters 4, 5, & 6 (year 2). (See [Narrowing Down a Dissertation Topic and Research Questions](#))
6. Students may declare their dissertation committee chair beginning semester 4 (start of year 2). All students should have declared their chair no later than the end of semester 6 (end of year 2). (See [Dissertation Committee, Proposal Development, and Defense](#))
7. Students should plan to have each of their dissertation committee members approved by the end of semester 6 (end of year 2). (See [Overview of Process for Identifying Dissertation Committee](#))

## Candidacy Phase Milestones

In this phase of the PhD in THS program, candidates are required to complete the following milestones of their dissertation research (See [Candidacy](#) for additional details):

1. Obtain IRB approval to conduct the research – Typically completed during semesters 7 or 8 of their studies and within 1-2 months of proposal defense.
2. Conduct the research and write the dissertation – drafting of the chapters begins in semester 6 but the bulk of the dissertation writing begins after proposal defense and continues until successful approval of the dissertation.
3. Successfully complete the oral dissertation defense – Typically completed after semester 9 (year 4). Although deciding when the candidate is ready to defend is the role of the dissertation committee, in general, candidates should expect to spend at least 4 semesters conducting their research and defending their dissertation.
4. Engage dissertation readers – in preparation for the proposal defense, candidates should engage 1-2 dissertation readers. Readers are engaged after approval for scheduling the defense is received.
5. Submit an approved written dissertation – Following the dissertation defense, candidates will most likely need to make some revisions to the written dissertation.

## Graduation Phase Milestones

In this phase of the PhD in THS program, graduates are required to complete the following milestones in order to graduate:

1. Deposit an approved copy of the dissertation proposal to the [Himmelfarb Library Research Commons \(HLRC\)](#).
2. Close or revise IRB study status (See [Final Tasks Related to the Dissertation](#)) – Graduates should close their dissertation study and appropriately destroy study records per their approved protocol. If the graduate, chair and committee plan to continue working with the data after graduation, appropriate modifications to the study personnel must be made. Appropriate storage of study records and data must be completed. IRB changes must be submitted prior to graduation. Exempt studies do not need to be closed.
3. File intent to graduate form – graduates must file the intent to graduate for with the university in the semester in which they intend to graduate. Due dates for filing this form will often occur before the dissertation defense has occurred. Due dates for each semester can be found [Online Graduation Application Instructions](#) website.

## Time to Completion

### Acceptable Program Progress

Students working on their dissertation research between Semesters 10-12 will use continuous enrollment as needed (up to three semesters). The candidate will be required to enroll in THS 8992: Directed Research starting Semester 13 and each subsequent semester. This one credit course is required each semester until the dissertation is successfully defended or program time limits are reached, whichever comes first. Candidates will be charged the prevailing per credit rate and associated fees each semester of enrollment in THS 8992.

In the event a student fails to meet one or more of the PhD program milestones, the Directors will work with the student's advisor or dissertation chair (depending on program phase) and the PhD Academic Progress Committee (APC) to determine the appropriate action item(s). In the case that the advisor/chair is one of the Directors, the Department Chair shall serve on the APC. Action item(s) may range from a remediation plan up to dismissal from the program. If the APC determines that the student should be offered an opportunity for remediation, a documented learning plan will outline specific steps and a timeline for the completion of each. The student will be notified in writing of the expectations and will be provided a timeline. This notification will include a clear statement that failure to adhere to the plan will place the student at risk of immediate dismissal from the program.

More information on Dismissal and Dismissal Appeal may be found in the Health Sciences Bulletin under the Academic Standing section:

<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/medicine-health-sciences/#regulationstext>

### Eight Year Limit

Students must defend their dissertations within eight years from the term of admission to the doctoral program. The first nine semesters constitute the initial three years of coursework, comprehensive exams, and dissertation preparation and research; therefore, five additional years are permissible for completion. Exceptions to the eight-year limit are rarely given and only with compelling evidence that the student has made all practical efforts to complete within eight years.

Extensions require approval by the Director of Doctoral Research and the Program Director. In the event the Director of Doctoral Research or the Doctoral Program Director is a member of the student's dissertation committee, the decision will be made by the Chair of the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership.

Students must defend their dissertation proposal within 2 years of completing the proposal preparation course. Failure to defend the dissertation proposal within this time frame will be grounds for dismissal from the program. Students who have not defended their proposal within the time frame will be referred to the APC.

### Master of Science in Health Sciences

Students who do not successfully defend their dissertation within the allotted eight-year time frame and are not granted an extension will be referred to the APC. The APC will consider the students eligibility for the [MSHS in Clinical and Translational Research](#).

Students who do not defend their dissertation proposal within the allotted time frame will be referred to the APC. The APC will consider the students eligibility for transfer to MSHS. The APC will determine if the student may complete additional study to complete the MSHS.

## FORMS

All forms are routed using AdobeSign. Please contact the Director of Doctoral Research by email to initiate the form. In the email, provide the information as specified below for the form you are requesting.

	Form	Purpose	Requested by	Signed by	Provide DoDR with this information:
Pre-Candidacy Phase – Didactic Semesters					
PCd1					
Pre-Candidacy Phase – Proposal Semesters					
PCp1	Designation of Doctoral Dissertation Chair	Select a chair	Student	Student Chair DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Student name &amp; email</li> <li>o Proposal topic</li> <li>o Chair name &amp; email</li> </ul>
PCp2	Designation of Dissertation Committee	Add committee members	Student	Student Chair Committee member DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Committee member name &amp; email</li> <li>o Separate request for each member</li> </ul>
PCp3	Change in Doctoral Dissertation Committee Member	Remove & replace committee members	Student	Student Chair Committee members DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Committee member name &amp; email (retiring)</li> <li>o Committee member name &amp; email (new)</li> </ul>
PCp4	Change in Doctoral Dissertation Chair	Remove committee chair	Student	Student Outgoing chair Incoming Chair Department chair DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Committee Chair name &amp; email (retiring)</li> <li>o Committee Chair name &amp; email (new)</li> </ul>
PCp5	Request for Dissertation Proposal Defense	Schedule proposal defense	Student	Student Chair Committee members DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Full proposal title</li> <li>o Date and time of proposal defense</li> </ul>
PCp6	Outcome of Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Examination	Results of proposal defense and modifications needed	Chair	Chair Committee members DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o DoDR will send to chair on day on proposal defense</li> </ul>
PCp7	Final Approval of Requested Proposal Revisions	Approval of any requested revisions	Student	Chair Committee members DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Request form be initiated</li> </ul>
Candidacy Phase					
CP1	Request for Dissertation Defense	Schedule dissertation defense	Student	Student Chair Committee members DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Full dissertation title</li> <li>o Date and time of dissertation defense</li> </ul>
CP2	Designation of Dissertation Readers	Invite readers to participate in dissertation defense	Student	Student Chair Committee members DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Reader name &amp; email</li> <li>o Separate request for each reader</li> </ul>
CP3	Outcome of Written Dissertation and Oral Examination	Results of dissertation defense and modifications needed	Chair	Chair Committee members DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o DoDR will send to chair on day on dissertation defense</li> </ul>
CP4	Final Approval of Dissertation Revisions	Approval of any requested revisions	Student	Chair Committee members DoDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Request form be initiated</li> </ul>
Preparing for Graduation					
PG1	Request to Graduate	Request to graduate	Student	Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o GW Banner</li> </ul>
PG2	Graduation Checklist	Assures student met all graduation requirements	Student	Program manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Program Director</li> </ul>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Registration Policy

#### Maintaining Continuous Registration

As per the guidelines provided in the [SMHS Bulletin](#), PhD students are required to maintain continuous registration from their first semester of enrollment through successful defense of their dissertation. Maintaining continuous registration means that the student is enrolled in at least one class every Fall and Spring semester until graduation. Summer is generally considered an optional term, but due to the PhD program schedule it is required until the dissertation phase is reached. The course can be independent research, internships for which credit is granted, and dissertation research. Based on the cohort-nature of the PhD program of study, students will be required to register for a fixed number of courses in the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters through the pre-candidacy phase. Once a student transitions into candidacy, Summer becomes an optional term. There is a \$35 registration fee for each semester.

#### Failure to Maintain Registration Each Semester

Failure to maintain continuous registration, including being granted a leave of absence or continuous enrollment, is considered breaking enrollment, and will result in the student being withdrawn from the university. If a student breaks enrollment, they will have to reapply for admission to resume their studies. Readmission is not guaranteed. Students who break enrollment and must reapply for admission are subject to the current criteria, regulations, curricula, and tuition rate at the time of readmission.

Under very specific circumstances, continuous registration may be maintained by registering for Continuous Enrollment (CE) or a Leave of Absence (LOA). Each is briefly described below.

#### Continuous Enrollment (CE)

GW considers students continuously enrolled when registered for continuous enrollment and engaged in activities pertaining to the preparation and advancement of their doctoral dissertation, or when necessary, the completion of outstanding work in courses in which a grade of Incomplete was received. For PhD in THS students, CE takes place upon the completion of the didactic work Year 4 (Semester 10-12). CE status is generally limited to 3 semesters.

Registering for Continuous Enrollment (CE) is the student's responsibility. The CE registration form is provided Program Administrator approximately 5-6 weeks prior to the semester for which CE registration is required. This form must be completed and submitted back to the Program Administrator for certification by the School. Submitting the form in the same semester or upcoming semester the student is seeking the CE does not require supporting documentation. Students seeking to petition for a CE for a previous semester must provide documentation supporting the petition to be reviewed by department staff and approved/denied after review by the School.

#### Leave of Absence (LOA)

A doctoral candidate who, for compelling reasons, is temporarily unable to continue his or her program of study may request a Leave of Absence (LOA). If the request is approved, the student will be placed on a LOA in the approved semester. The LOA status is for a full Academic Year (note: LOAs are not required for Summer terms), and this time counts towards the eight (8) year time limit. Students who request a

one-year leave of absence must submit a Leave of Absence/Continuous Enrollment Registration form for each of the two semesters. After reaching the one-year limit, doctoral students seeking a LOA in additional semesters must petition the Dean for Health Sciences for approval. Students should consult with their advisor regarding registration in the semester prior to when they wish to use a LOA. Students seeking to petition for an LOA for a previous semester must provide documenting supporting the petition to be reviewed by department staff and approved/denied after review from the Dean's office.

During an LOA, faculty members are not to help students with the dissertation. In addition, student rights to use University facilities is suspended while the leave is in effect. Students should monitor their GW email periodically while away from the program to not miss important registration or account notifications.

### Deceleration

The doctoral program is cohort-based, meaning that students are expected to follow the program of study Year 1 through Year 2 (Semester 1 to Semester 6). Content and assignments in Year 1 and 2 courses are highly integrated so deceleration of any type, including individual course drops or withdrawals, is not feasible. Students who are having difficulty maintaining a full workload should speak to their advisor about other options (see [Leave of Absence](#)).

### Registration Procedures

Students will work with the Program Administrator to register for courses each semester. The Program Administrator will contact students individually during the course registration period to facilitate enrollment. However, it is the student's responsibility to register in a timely manner each semester.

### Course Drops and Withdrawals

Students in the pre-candidacy phase should speak to their academic advisor before dropping or withdrawing from a course (see Deceleration, above).

#### Drop vs. withdraw

A dropped course is removed from the student's record and typically incurs a refund. A withdraw results in a grade of W and does not include a refund. The Health Sciences drop/refund dates are available through Health Sciences [Student Services](#) and is updated each semester.

After the add/drop period, PhD students need approval from their faculty advisor, Department Chair, and Health Sciences Dean's Office for course drops. Both a Course Drop/Withdraw Petition and a Registration Transaction Form must be submitted for review. If the student is requesting to drop all courses, a request for a LOA should be included to maintain enrollment.

Withdraw requests prior to the deadline only require a Registration Transaction Form, but students should consult with their advisor prior to submitting the request. Requests to withdraw after the deadline require the same petition process as dropping a course after the deadline.

Failure to attend classes or unofficial notification to the instructor does not constitute dropping a course and may result in a transcript notation of Z (unauthorized withdrawal) or a failing grade. Courses can be dropped only through the add/drop procedure described above.



## Course Grading and Advancement

### Grading Policy

The following grading system is used: A, Excellent; B, Good; C, Minimum Pass; F, Fail. At the discretion of the program and individual faculty, "+" or "-" (plus or minus) grades also may be assigned. Except for courses that specifically state that repetition is permitted, a student enrolled in a program for a graduate degree or certificate may not repeat a course in which a minimum grade of C was received, unless a petition to do so is approved by the senior associate dean for health sciences (or delegate) upon recommendation of the respective program director. For graduate courses where a grade of C- or below was received, the course must be repeated for credit. If a course is repeated, the first grade remains on the student's record and is included in the cumulative GPA. Symbols that may appear on the transcript include CR, Credit; AU, Audit; P, Pass; NP, No Pass; I, Incomplete; IPG, In Progress; W, Authorized Withdrawal; Z, Unauthorized Withdrawal. These symbols are not considered in determining the GPA.

### The Grade-Point Average

Scholarship is computed in terms of the grade-point average, obtained by dividing the number of quality points by the number of credits for which the student has registered, both based on his or her record in this university. The grade-point average is computed as follows: A, 4.0; A-, 3.7; B+, 3.3; B, 3.0; B-, 2.7; C+, 2.3; C, 2.0; F, 0.0 for each credit hour for which the student has registered as a degree-seeking student. Grades of C-, D+, D, and D- are not used for doctoral students. In the case of a student who is allowed to repeat a course, the first grade received remains on the student's record and is included in the grade-point average. Courses marked AU, CR, I, IPG, P, NP, R, W, or Z are not considered in determining the average, except that course marked I will be considered when a final grade is recorded. With the exception of Consortium courses, grades in courses taken at other institutions are not considered in computing the grade-point average.

### Unauthorized Withdrawal

The symbol of Z is assigned when students are registered for a course that they have not attended or have attended only briefly, and in which they have completed no graded work. At the end of the academic year, students' records are reviewed; if there is more than one Z per semester, a student's record will be encumbered until released by the student advising office. The symbol of Z is not a grade but an administrative notation.

Except for courses that specifically state that repetition for credit is permitted, a candidate for a degree at GW may not repeat a course in which a grade of C for graduate students or better was received, unless required to do so by the department concerned. A Registration Transaction Form must be submitted to the Health Sciences Student Services for processing, accompanied with a written statement by the Program Director authorizing the repeat registration.

### Incompletes

The symbol I (Incomplete) indicates that a satisfactory explanation has been given to the instructor for the student's inability to complete the required work of the course during the semester of enrollment. At the option of the instructor, the symbol I may be recorded if a student, for reasons beyond the student's control, is unable to complete the work of the course, and if the instructor is informed of, and approves,

such reasons before the date when grades must be reported. This symbol may be used only if the student's prior performance and class attendance in the course have been satisfactory. Any failure to complete the work of a course that is not satisfactorily explained to the instructor before the date when grades must be turned in will be graded F, Failure. If acceptable reasons are later presented to the instructor, that instructor may initiate an appropriate grade change. The work must be completed within the designated time period agreed upon by the instructor, student, and school. Incomplete work must be made up by a date agreed upon by the instructor and the student but no later than the last day of the examination period for the semester immediately following the semester or summer session in which the notation of I is assigned. An extension of one additional semester can be requested by the student and may be approved by the Program Director.

Students who are granted an Incomplete must work with their instructor to develop a learning contract. This document includes the work to be completed, due dates, and acknowledgement by the student and instructor that failure to complete work by the stated due dates will result in a grade of F).

When work for the course is completed, the instructor will submit a grade change form to the Office of the Registrar. The final grade will replace the symbol of I. If work for the course is not completed within the designated time, the grade will be converted automatically to a grade of F, Failure, 0 quality points, and the grade-point average and academic standing recalculated (see the [University Bulletin](#)).

### Good Academic Standing

To maintain good academic standing within the PhD in THS program, the student must receive a grade of B or higher for each course.

### Academic Probation

Students who receive a grade below "B" for a given course will be notified that they are on academic probation and will work with the program director and academic advisor to ensure a plan is in place for their continued academic success in the program.

### Dismissal

A doctoral student who has received two or more grades below "B" (3.0) may be recommended for dismissal.

A student who has been found guilty by the Academic Integrity Council for the following infractions: cheating; fabrication; plagiarism; knowingly furnishing forged or false information to any agent of the University for inclusion in an academic record; academic dishonesty; violation of the rights and welfare of animal or human subjects in research; and misconduct as a member of either School or University committees or recognized groups or organizations, will be dismissed from the program.

Additional conditions for dismissal and the full policy may be found in the Regulations section of the SMHS [Bulletin](#).

## Academic Integrity and Ethical Conduct

### Academic Integrity

GW SMHS faculty and students have the joint responsibility for maintaining the academic integrity and guaranteeing the high standard of conduct of the institution. An ethical code is based upon the support of both faculty and students who must jointly accept the responsibility to live honorably and to take action when necessary to safeguard the academic integrity of this University.

Students enrolled in doctoral programs in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to The George Washington University's mission as an institution of higher education and in accordance to [the Code of Academic Integrity](#). A student is obligated to refrain from acts which he or she knows, or under the circumstances has reason to know, impair the academic integrity of the University. Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to: cheating; fabrication; plagiarism; knowingly furnishing forged or false information to any agent of the University for inclusion in an academic record; academic dishonesty; violation of the rights and welfare of animal or human subjects in research; and misconduct as a member of either School or University committees or recognized groups or organizations.

All members of the GW community are responsible for immediately informing the instructor, Department Chair, the Office of Academic Integrity, and/or the Academic Integrity Council of any suspected violations of its Code of Academic Integrity. The Academic Integrity Council, composed of four students and two faculty members, is responsible for implementing its Code of Academic Integrity according to the procedures set forth therein. This includes formal hearings of suspected violations. Students and faculty should become familiar with the Code of Academic Integrity, copies of which are provided in student and faculty publications and materials, posted on the GW website, and can be obtained at the Office of Academic Integrity.

All Academic Integrity violations (even first offense) will go before the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities. If the violation is confirmed, then the student will be dismissed from the program.

### APA Ethics Code Section 5.01

APA Ethics Code section 5.01—Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements—specifically addresses the issue of designations, stating that "Psychologists do not make false, deceptive, or fraudulent statements concerning (1) their training, experience, or competence; (2) their academic degrees; (3) their credentials..."

Therefore, it is strongly recommended that student refrain from using "PhD(c)" or "PhD(C)", because these letters can be confused for other degrees. Rather than using PhD(c) next to one's name, it is recommended that students use "advanced graduate student" to describe themselves and include a sentence on their cover letters or CV that explains they have completed all their coursework but are still writing their dissertations.

### Conflict of Interest (COI)

COI exists when the faculty member has personal financial interest in the research on which the student is working (either as part of lab work or as part of the dissertation) and from which the faculty member stands to gain financially.

Each faculty member serving as a mentor or thesis or dissertation advisor to a graduate student is responsible for disclosing in advance any COI that might in any way be pertinent to the research conducted by the student. In doing so, the faculty member should use criteria as outlined in appropriate form, regardless of whether a company/entity is sponsoring research at the University.

All individuals serving as a dissertation chair, committee member, or reader will be asked to certify that they do not have a COI at the time they are appointed to the committee. However, since COI can arise at any time, it is the responsibility of the chair, committee member, or reader, to notify the Director of Doctoral Research whenever new COI arises. The Director of Doctoral Research will review the COI and determine the extent of potential harm to the doctoral student. If the harm is minimal, this will be noted on the Proposed Dissertation Member Approval form, Dissertation Proposal Approval form, or Dissertation Approval form, whichever is appropriate. If the COI is perceived to have the potential to harm the graduate student, the Director of Doctoral Research will not sign the form and will notify the Chair of the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership. The Chair of CRL is responsible for determining the solution. If the Director of Doctoral Research has COI, the CRL Department Chair will sign the forms. If the Department Chair of CRL has COI, the Vice Dean for SMHS will be notified and responsible for determining the solution.

## Student Appeals Processes

### Grade Appeals

PhD candidates have the right to appeal any University decision made regarding their academic record. All appeals follow the same informal and formal attempts as resolution. Grade appeals include an additional aspect of the formal process, which is specified in the Regulations section of the [SMHS Bulletin](#) called Appeal Procedures for Cases of Alleged Improper Academic Evaluation. In the PhD in THS, students who wish to appeal their grade should first attempt to resolve the issue with the faculty member. If this is not successful, the student should complete the first section of the [Appeal Form for Cases of Alleged Improper Academic Evaluation](#) form within 10 days of the grade being posted and send this to the Program Director. The program director will speak with the student about the case. The form will be sent to the faculty member who will respond to the student's questions in Section 2 of the form. The form will be sent to the Academic Progress Committee (APC). The form will be provided to the student and the faculty member. If a mutually satisfactory agreement is not reached the decision may be escalated to the Dean for Health Sciences. Directions for this procedure are provided in the SMHS Bulletin.

### Academic Integrity Appeals

After a decision has been confirmed by the relevant dean or designee, the respondent may file a written petition of appeal with the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities (SRR) within five (5) business days of the outcome.

Appeals of the decision of the Academic Integrity Panels (AIP) or of the sanction imposed by the relevant dean or designee may be based only on the following grounds:

1. There was a material deviation from the procedures of this Code that affected the outcome.
2. There is new and relevant information that was unavailable at the time of the proceeding, with reasonable diligence and effort that could materially affect the outcome.

Appeals will be reviewed by the Provost or a designee. The Provost or a designee will then make a decision on the appeal, based on the appeal petition and the reports of the AIP and the relevant dean or designee. The appeal decision will typically be rendered and provided to the instructor of record and the respondent within 10 business days of the appeal materials being received by the Provost.

The decision of the Provost or designee in connection with the appeal shall be final and conclusive and no further appeals will be permitted. The dean of the respondent's home school at the University shall also receive final notice of the case outcome.

All Academic Integrity violations (even a first offense) will go before the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities. If the violation is confirmed, the student will be dismissed from the PhD in THS program.

### **Mistreatment of Health Sciences Students**

The School of Medicine and Health Sciences is committed to maintaining a positive environment for study and training, in which individuals are judged solely on relevant factors such as ability and performance and can pursue their educational and professional activities in an atmosphere that is humane, respectful, and safe. The [Code of Conduct in the Learning Environment](#) establishes the expectations of faculty, residents, students, other health professionals, and staff in the learning environment. If a student believes he/she has been mistreated he/she has two options to address that mistreatment, consultation and formal complaint. Both procedures are outlined in the [Mistreatment Policy and Procedures](#). Students may choose from several resources for consultation including faculty and the designated student Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson can be contacted via email at [Ombudsperson\\_HS@gwu.edu](mailto:Ombudsperson_HS@gwu.edu).

### **Student Accounts and Financing a Graduate Education**

Health Sciences admission decisions are made without regard to financial need. Descriptions of available financial assistance for the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership are available on the Department website ([CRL Tuition and Financial Aid](#)) and Health Sciences' [Tuition and Loans](#) webpage. An additional source of aid is available at the GW Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships website (<http://www.gwu.edu/~fellows/>).

NOTE: Please review the [eligibility factors](#) for details on financial aid eligibility. Students following the program of study will be considered full-time students from Semester 1 - 5, and half-time students in Semester 6. Students will be below half-time status starting Semester 7. Please contact [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#) directly for specific information about financial aid eligibility.

Students utilizing federal financial aid must also be aware of [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\) regulations](#) for graduate students. These are minimum academic standards that must be met in order to receive federal financial assistance.

#### **Billing**

The PhD in THS is a set-tuition program. The tuition is divided over nine semesters:

Semesters 1 - 5: Students will be charged approximately 16 percent of the total program tuition each semester (example: if total tuition is \$70,000, students will be charged \$11,200 each semester for the first five semesters).

Semesters 6 - 9: Students will be charged approximately 4 percent of the total program tuition each semester (example: if total tuition is \$70,000, students will be charged \$2,800 each semester for four semesters)

### **Directed Study (THS 8992)**

Students must enroll in THS 8992 Directed Research starting Semester 13. This one credit course is required each semester until the dissertation is defended or program time limits are reached, whichever comes first. Students will be charged the prevailing health sciences graduate per credit rate and associated fees, as publicized on the [Health Sciences website](#), each semester of enrollment in THS 8992.

The George Washington University bills by semester. Statements are available approximately 4-6 weeks prior to the start of the Fall and Spring semesters and approximately 3-4 weeks prior to the Summer semester. An email notification is sent when the bill is ready to view. GW does not mail paper statements; all billing is done electronically through the [Student Accounts eBill system](#).

Students always have access to their [eBill](#) and Student Account status through [GWeb](#). Students are strongly encouraged to check their Student Account regularly to ensure the account is in good standing.

Students can add Authorized Users (e.g., parent, relative, spouse) so they may also review account activity and/or make online payments.

### **Due Dates**

Payment for each term is due on the first day of the semester or upon registration for any courses added after the first day. If an outstanding balance remains after the start of the semester, a monthly statement including late payment fees and finance charges will be sent. This statement will have a new due date. Please remit payment by this date to avoid additional late payment fees and finance charges. Students are not dropped from classes for non-payment.

### **Late Payment**

Failure to meet payment deadlines results in an administrative hold, late fees, and finance charges. The administrative hold will remain on the account until the balance is paid in full. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that payment arrangements are made in a timely manner.

### **Financial Hold**

A financial hold can be placed on a student's account for a variety of reasons. The Student Accounts Office applies financial holds for outstanding balances, returned checks, and invalid addresses. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their account for holds. Financial holds may prevent a student from enrolling in courses until resolved.

### **Monthly Payment Plans**

The university has partnered with ECSI to offer an interest-free monthly payment plan available to all students. Specific information regarding these payment plans may be found online through the [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#).

## Student Health Insurance

GW offers voluntary comprehensive health insurance through Aetna Health (information can be found at the GW [Colonial Health](#) website). In accordance with the Affordable Care Act, benefits offered include:

- An unlimited lifetime maximum benefit
- Prescription benefit coverage
- Preventative services covered at 100% (at preferred providers)
- Contraception covered 100% (at preferred providers)

Note: Students may opt out of GW's insurance plan through any private plan that [meets University criteria for coverage](#).

## Tuition Awards and Scholarships

GW SMHS offers limited tuition award and scholarship assistance for students in Health Sciences. These resources come from a variety of different endowed and restricted scholarship funds as well as through research or contracted training grants. To qualify, an applicant must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, be enrolled full-time in an approved program of study, and demonstrate exceptional potential for success in their program as evidenced by their post-secondary academic achievement, professional experiences, and leadership in the community. No additional scholarship application is required for consideration.

Tuition awards and scholarships are credited to the student's account at the beginning of each semester after the student has registered for the required credits. These awards cover the cost of tuition for coursework that is credited towards the student's degree program, up to the total amount of the award. Any part of the tuition award that is not used within the academic term stated reverts to the department and cannot be converted to cash.

The student has full responsibility, unless the award letter states otherwise, for covering the costs of the following charges upon registration: registration fee, Student Association fee, tuition charges above the tuition award, late registration fees, special course-related fees, and the health insurance fee. The student will also be liable for any payment due and charges for courses that are (1) not on the student's program of study, or (2) not taken for credit. Consortium courses are allowed if the particular course is not offered at GW and if the consortium course is included in the student's official program of study documented.

### Award Termination

All or part of a tuition award or scholarship may be terminated at any time if the conditions of the award as described in the award letter are not met or if poor academic performance warrants it. This also includes course registration situations in which a student drops a course once the semester has begun and does not replace it with another approved course carrying the same number of credit hours. In this case, the tuition award will be withdrawn, and the student will be liable for any payment due. In some cases, the entire award is withdrawn. The George Washington University reserves the right to terminate a tuition award or scholarship immediately and without prior notice if, in the judgment of the Department Chair or awarding department and in concurrence of the Senior Associate Dean for Health Sciences, such action is warranted.

## Tax Implications

It is the responsibility of the student to understand the federal and state income tax implications of receiving a tuition award or scholarship. The University has no tax withholding or reporting requirements related to the tuition component of a tuition award or scholarship. The Tax Department's website (<http://taxdepartment.gwu.edu>) provides general information to assist students in determining tax liability and reporting obligations. Because tax liability depends on a student's particular circumstances, students are advised to contact a personal tax advisor or the IRS with any questions or concerns.

## Student Loan Implications

It is the responsibility of the student to understand the student loan implications of receiving a tuition award or scholarship. If the student has applied to borrow any sum, and have financial awards, then an adjustment may be made to the loan amount. It is recommended that the student consult with a representative from the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) for additional information.

The [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#) is located in the Student Services Hub ([George Washington University Marvin Center](#), Ground Floor), 202-994-6620, [finaid@gwu.edu](mailto:finaid@gwu.edu).

## Important Information Regarding Federal Student Loan Eligibility

Federal regulations require students to maintain good academic standing and make [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\)](#) in order to remain eligible to receive federal student loans. The federal standard for making satisfactory academic progress is measured three ways: cumulative GPA, Percentage of Credits Earned (PACE), and maximum time frame. For details regarding any of these policies and for evaluation of SAP, visit the [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#).

## Full-Time/Half-Time Certification

Students who intend to register for less than the number of credit hours required in the Fall and Spring semesters (full-time = 9; half-time = 4.5 credit hours), and who need to be certified as in full or half-time status must complete the [Half-Time/Full-Time Certification Form](#). The requirements and limitations of this certification are listed on the first page of the form. The form should be completed and submitted to the Office of Student Services ([hsp@gwu.edu](mailto:hsp@gwu.edu)) after student registration and academic advisor approval.

Note: Students enrolled in Summer Semester classes are considered half time as long as they are enrolled in at least 3 credits. They will not need to complete and submit the Half-Time/Full-Time Certification Form for the Summer Semester.

Students registered for CE may be certified as half-time and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.



**STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM****Ph.D. in Translational Health Sciences (THS) Program Handbook**

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (GW)  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES (SMHS)  
DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP (CRL)

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I am in receipt of the Ph.D. in Translational Health Science (THS) handbook, which contains pertinent information relevant to the School of Medicine and Health Sciences as well as the PhD in THS program curriculum, policies, and procedures. I understand that I am responsible for reading the contents of this handbook, all its stipulated academic requirements, and for complying with all policies and procedures put forth in this document.

I understand that the program reserves the right to revise the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook at any time, resulting in an updated handbook being posted on the [Student Resource](#) page of the PhD in Translational Health Sciences website. I understand that any updated version supersedes prior versions and that I am responsible for reading, reviewing, and complying with the most current version.

**X**

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Student Signature

DATE: August 9, 2022