

**2017-  
2018**

**STANFORD  
HEALTH  
POLICY  
PHD  
PROGRAM**

Stanford  
University School  
of Medicine



**Stanford  
MEDICINE**

A supplement to be used  
in conjunction with the  
Stanford Bulletin and the  
Stanford Graduate  
Academic Policies and  
Procedures Handbook

**STANFORD HEALTH  
POLICY PHD  
HANDBOOK**

Revised 3/2018. The department reserves the right to make changes at any time without prior notice.

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## INTRODUCTION

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Health policy is an increasingly important field of investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviors affect the accessibility, quality and cost of health care as well as population health outcomes. This field uses theoretical and empirical tools that draw from a range of disciplines and have evolved to become tailored to the questions that arise in health policy. Health policy issues are integrally related to core areas of strength at Stanford, including innovation and technological development in health care delivery and the pursuit of improved population health.

Stanford Health Policy, through the Department of Health Research and Policy at the Stanford University School of Medicine, offers a PhD program to train the next generation of leaders in health policy research. Graduates will be highly knowledgeable about the theoretical and empirical approaches that can be applied to develop and evaluate improvements in health policy and the health care system. They will be well prepared for positions in academic institutions, government, and private sector organizations with a demand for rigorous analysis of issues in health care and public health policy. As many countries confront important health policy and health systems challenges, preparing thoughtful, well-trained future leaders in health policy is essential.

Stanford offers a particularly rich place in which to offer this training. Stanford boasts one of the strongest faculties in health policy in the United States, if not the world. In addition, the presence of cutting edge health and health care initiatives at Stanford and around Silicon Valley - such as programs to spur process innovation in health care delivery, the development of advanced medical technologies, strong efforts to promote translational research, and innovative “big data” projects - make Stanford a unique environment. This milieu influences and inspires our PhD students and offers them the opportunity to have their work shaped by, and made relevant to, a world-leading science and medicine environment.

Students are expected to take four years to complete the program. This includes two years of coursework, involving both core and track specific courses (in economics or decision sciences). After passing qualifying exams, students will then focus on dissertation research with a multi-disciplinary committee of core faculty, as well as faculty from around Stanford.

## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed as a supplement to various other Stanford University publications, in particular the 2017-18 version of the Stanford Bulletin, and the Graduate Academic Policies which are the ultimate legal resources for all Stanford University policies and procedures.

## STANFORD BULLETIN

The online Stanford Bulletin is the official statement of University policies, procedures, and degree requirements. The Bulletin is composed of two parts:

Explore Degrees lists University requirements and regulations, degree requirements, and other information pertinent to acquiring a degree at Stanford.

Explore Courses is the Bulletin's online course catalog and schedule of classes.

Stanford Bulletin and Explore Courses: <http://exploreddegrees.stanford.edu/#text>

## GRADUATE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (GAP)

The Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook (the GAP Handbook) is a compilation of university policies and other information related to the academic progress of Stanford graduate students – from their application and admission to the conferral of degrees and retention of records. Copies of forms needed for various milestones (PhD Candidacy, TGR, reading committee, oral exams, etc.) can also be found here.

GAP Handbook: <http://gap.stanford.edu>

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

### PROGRAM COMMITTEE, DIRECTORS & MANAGERS

#### Program Director

Laurence Baker, PhD

#### Program Director of Education

Corinna Haberland, MD, MS

#### Education Program Manager

Misty Mazzara, MEd

#### Health Policy PhD Program Executive Committee

The Health Policy PhD Program Executive Committee is the official council that runs the program. In addition to Prof. Baker and Dr. Haberland, other members of the committee are Dr. Marcella Alsan, Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, Prof. M. Kate Bundorf, Dr. David Chan, Prof. Jeremy Goldhaber-Fiebert, Dr. Mark A. Hlatky, Prof. Michelle Mello, Prof. Grant Miller, Dr. Douglas Owens, Prof. Maria Polyakova, and Prof. David Studdert.

## FACULTY

### Core:

Marcella Alsan, MD, PhD

Laurence Baker, PhD

Jay Bhattacharya, MD, PhD

M. Kate Bundorf, PhD, MBA, MPH

David Chan, MD, PhD

Mary Kane Goldstein, MD, MS

Jeremy Goldhaber-Fiebert, PhD

Paul Heidenreich, MD, MS

Mark A. Hlatky, MD

Michelle Mello, JD, PhD

Grant Miller, PhD, MPP

Douglas Owens, MD, MS

Maria Polyakova, PhD

Maya Rossin-Slater, PhD

Joshua Salomon, PhD

David Studdert, LL.D., Sc.D., MPH

Paul Wise, MD, MPH

**Affiliated:**

With primary affiliations at Stanford University:

Margaret Brandeau, PhD  
Mark Cullen, MD  
Bradley Efron, PhD  
Alain Enthoven, PhD  
Victor Fuchs, PhD  
Steven Goodman, MD, PhD  
Jeffrey B. Gould, MD, MPH  
Henry T. Greely, JD  
Trevor Hastie, PhD  
Iain Johnstone, PhD  
Daniel Kessler, PhD  
Philip W. Lavori, PhD  
Alex Macario, MD, MBA  
Richard Olshen, PhD  
Kristin Sainani, PhD  
Ross Shachter, PhD  
Robert Tibshirani, PhD

With primary affiliations other than Stanford University:

Paul Barnett, PhD  
Ciaran Phibbs, PhD  
Anita Stewart, PhD  
Todd Wagner, PhD

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum offers courses across a wide range of health policy areas including health economics, health insurance and government program operation, health financing, international health policy and economic development, cost-effectiveness analysis and the evaluation of new technologies, relevant statistical and methodological approaches, and health policy issues related to public health concerns such as obesity and chronic disease. A significant portion of the coursework is focused on training students in quantitative analysis methods.

In addition to taking a set of core courses, students are expected to complete course work in one of two tracks:

- **Health Economics:** The focus of this track is on the economic behavior of individuals, providers, insurers, and governments and how their actions affect health and medical care.
- **Decision Sciences:** This track focuses on the use of quantitative techniques to assess the effectiveness and value of medical treatments and make decisions about medical care at the individual and/or collective level.

### Coursework - Health Economics Track

#### **Statistical Data Analysis, Econometrics, and Casual Inference:**

**Required:** one-year sequence in econometrics:

ECON 270 - Intermediate Econometrics I

ECON 271 - Intermediate Econometrics II

ECON 272 - Intermediate Econometrics III

or

MGTECON 603 - Econometric Methods I

MGTECON 604 - Econometric Methods II

MGTECON 605 - Econometric Methods III

#### **Micro-Economics:**

**Required:** one-year sequence in microeconomics:

ECON 202 - Microeconomics I

ECON 203 - Microeconomics II

ECON 204 - Microeconomics III

or equivalent, e.g. GSBGEN 675 or MGTECON 600 can be substituted for ECON 202 and/or MGTECON 601 can be substituted for ECON 203

### **Discipline-Specific Courses:**

#### **Required:**

HRP 249 - Topics in Health Economics

**+ Choose 4 courses** in the following 4 fields in economics:

Development Economics

Public Finance

Labor Economics

Industrial Organization

### **Health Policy:**

#### **Required:**

HRP 252 - Outcomes Analysis

HRP 256 - Economics of Health and Medical Care

HRP 392 - Analysis of Costs, Risks, and Benefits of Health Care

**+ Choose 3 additional health-policy-related courses**, such as:

HRP 391 - Health Law: Finance and Insurance

LAW 762 - Health Law: Improving Public Health

LAW 727 - Health Law: Quality and Safety of Care

**Practice of Research:****Required:**

HRP 201A, 201B, 201C - First-Year Core Tutorial

HRP 800 - Second-year Core Tutorial (Aut, Win & Spr)

Health Policy Research in Progress Seminar (Aut, Win & Spr)

Health Economics Seminar

MED 255 - The Responsible Conduct of Research

**Coursework - Decision Sciences Track****Statistical Data Analysis, Econometrics, and Casual Inference:**

**Required:** at least two quarters of one of the two following sequences:

ECON 270 - Intermediate Econometrics I

ECON 271 - Intermediate Econometrics II

ECON 272 - Intermediate Econometrics III

Or

MGTECON 603 - Econometric Methods I

MGTECON 604 - Econometric Methods II

MGTECON 605 - Econometric Methods III

**Micro-Economics:**

**Required:** at least one quarter-long course from among the following options:

GSBGEN 675 - Microeconomic Theory

or

MGTECON 600 - Microeconomic Analysis I

MGTECON 601 - Microeconomic Analysis II

or

ECON 202N - Microeconomics I for Non-Economics PhDs

ECON 203N - Microeconomics II for Non-Economics PhDs

or

ECON 202 - Microeconomics I

ECON 203 - Microeconomics II

### **Discipline-Specific Courses:**

#### **Required:**

HRP 263 - Advanced Decision Science Methods and Modeling in Health

HRP 206 - Meta-research: Appraising Research Findings, Bias, and Meta-analysis

**+ Choose 4 methods courses** such as:

MSE 201 - Dynamic Systems

MSE 211 - Linear and Nonlinear Optimization

MSE 223 - Simulation

MSE 252 - Decision Analysis I: Foundations of Decision Analysis

MSE 263 - Healthcare Operations Management

### **Health Policy:**

#### **Required:**

HRP 252 - Outcomes Analysis

HRP 256 - Economics of Health and Medical Care

HRP 392 - Analysis of Costs, Risks, and Benefits of Health Care

**+ Choose 3 additional health-policy-related courses**, such as:

HRP 391 - Health Law: Finance and Insurance

LAW 762 - Health Law: Improving Public Health

LAW 727 - Health Law: Quality and Safety of Care

### **Practice of Research:**

#### **Required:**

HRP 201A, 201B, 201C - First-Year Core Tutorial

HRP 800 - Second-year Core Tutorial

Health Policy Research in Progress Seminar (Aut, Win & Spr)

MED 255 - The Responsible Conduct of Research

### Coursework Waivers

In some very rare cases, students may have taken courses that are equivalent to required courses. If a student wishes to obtain a course waiver from the program, she/he must:

- Get approval to seek a waiver from her/his advisor(s)
- Get written agreement / approval from the course instructor
- If applicable, get written agreement / approval from the instructor(s) of the next class in the course sequence (that she/he agrees the student's previous work fulfills the course prerequisites)
- Discuss (again) with her/his advisor(s), and get her/his written approval.
- Submit the above approvals to the Education Manager, the Director of Education, the appropriate Track Director, and the Program Director, who will make the final decision on whether to grant the waiver, or not.

**\*NOTE\*** Students will still be expected to complete all programmatic and university unit requirements

## ADVISING:

### Academic Advisors

All matriculating students will be assigned a faculty advisor from the group of core faculty to help them design their academic program, based on the intended area(s) of concentration, the student's preferences, and faculty availability. Students ordinarily remain with this advisor until they develop arrangements for supervision of their dissertation research.

The academic advisor will meet with the student within the first quarter of each year to discuss the student's Individual Development Plan(s) (IDP).

The student will meet with his/her advisor(s) on a regular basis (to be determined with advisor(s)).

### Thesis Advisors

Students are expected to identify a group of normally 3 thesis advisors before or, at the latest, shortly after the time that they advance to candidacy for the degree. This group will consist of one primary and at least two secondary advisors, who may or may not be the same as the initially assigned faculty advisor. The primary advisor must be from the group of core PhD program faculty, unless specific approval of the executive committee is obtained. Such approval would not be routinely granted. However, in rare cases, it may be optimal for a student's progress to implement a co-primary mentor arrangement, in which a core faculty member from health policy and another faculty member from outside the core faculty jointly serve as primary mentors. This arrangement might occur in rare circumstances with students seeking to integrate areas of science into their policy training that are outside the expertise of the core faculty.

Secondary advisors will normally be expected to come from the core faculty, but could include faculty from outside the core group upon approval of the executive committee. Students will be encouraged to seek advisors with complementary expertise as needed, and the Director of Graduate Studies and Executive Committee will monitor advising arrangements to ensure that students receive adequate supervision.

## REQUIREMENTS & MILESTONES

The minimum number of units required for a Ph.D. degree at Stanford (satisfied both through coursework and research units) is **135**.

All required (core\* & track-specific) courses **must be taken for a grade**, when that option is offered.

\*core courses include any required courses, or courses satisfying topic requirements (e.g. the 3 health-policy-related courses) which both tracks have in common.

### First Year

- Completion of first-year coursework with a minimum grade of B- in all courses and an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 (equivalent to a grade of B) (see below for GPA/Grade Requirement).
- Students are expected to enroll in exactly 18 units per quarter for each of Fall, Winter & Spring Quarters (unless otherwise approved by the student's advisor **and** program directors). These units should be in health policy relevant courses and research, but occasional outside-interest courses may be taken with approval from the student's advisor and the Director of Education.
- Individual Development Plan (IDP) meeting with primary advisor within the first quarter.
- Meeting with advisor(s) on a regular basis, to be determined with advisor(s).
- Completion of coursework in the responsible conduct of research (see below).

### Second Year

- Completion of second-year coursework with a minimum grade of B- in all courses and an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 (equivalent to a grade of B) (see below for GPA/Grade Requirement).
- Students are expected to enroll in exactly 18 units per quarter, for Fall, Winter & Spring Quarters (unless otherwise approved by the student's advisor **and** program directors). These units should be in health policy relevant courses and research, but occasional outside-interest courses may be taken with approval from the student's advisor and the Director of Education.
- Final course work (for **both** first and second year) must total at least **75 units** for both core and track specific courses.
- Individual Development Plan (IDP) meeting with primary advisor before the end of Autumn Quarter.

- Meeting with advisor(s) on a regular basis, to be determined with advisor(s).
- Completion of second-year paper and funding proposal as part of the second-year tutorial (see below).
- Taking of Written Qualifying Exam (see below, in Exams section).

## GPA / Grade Requirement

Failure to meet grade / GPA requirements (i.e. minimum grade of B- in all courses and an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 (equivalent to a grade of B) will mean the student is out of compliance with program requirements. In this case, the executive committee may ask the candidate to leave the program or may require other corrective courses of action - including, but not limited to, retaking a course. If progress remains unsatisfactory, the committee may ask the candidate to leave the program.

## First-Year Tutorial

This is a year-long seminar series for the first year Health Policy PhD students. Students, with the course director, will meet with individual faculty and discuss issues and research in their areas of expertise. Major themes will include health insurance, healthcare financing & delivery, health systems & reform, disparities in the US & globally, health & economic development, health law & policy, resource allocation, efficiency & equity, healthcare quality, and the measurement of the efficacy & effectiveness of interventions.

### Logistics:

- Students will enroll in HRP 201A, 201B, & 201C during the Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters, respectively.
- Assignments and course requirements will be determined by the course director each quarter.

## Second-Year Tutorial

The Second-Year Tutorial is an individualized course in which PhD students meet and work one on one with their advisor (or research mentor) throughout the academic year. The goal of the Second-Year Tutorial is to provide students with advanced training in research and to assist them in developing the skills to succeed in obtaining research funding. Hence, the two products of the yearlong course are a **second-year paper** and a **funding proposal** which will be due by the end of the Spring Quarter.

**Logistics:**

- Students will enroll in HRP 800, under their specific advisor, for 3 units in each of the three regular academic quarters (Fall, Winter & Spring) during their second year.
- Meetings should occur, on average, twice a month. However, they can be more frequent if the student and/or advisor feel it would be beneficial.
- Expectations and progress milestones will be determined by the advisor and student.

**Requirements:**

- The students will meet the course milestones (set together with the advisor).
- The second-year paper will be a substantive, novel, scholarly project. The specific scope will be determined by the student and her/his advisor. Normally, the second-year paper would be of a style and length comparable to a journal article or a dissertation chapter. It will be due by the end of Spring Quarter.
- The funding proposal can be informed by the material in the second-year paper, or can be on a different topic. If possible, the student and advisor will identify an appropriate call for proposals from a research sponsor which will then define the length and types of materials which must be developed. A final draft of the proposal is due to the advisor by the end of Spring Quarter, unless the student and advisor agree to meet the sponsor's (earlier) application deadline. The expectation is that the proposal will be submitted to one or more research sponsors if a suitable funding opportunity is available.

**Third and Fourth Years**

- Advancement to Ph.D. Candidacy (see below).
- Taking and passing the departmental Ph.D. Oral Exam (see below).
- Individual Development Plan (IDP) meeting with primary advisor before the end of Autumn Quarter.
- Meeting with advisor(s) on a regular basis, to be determined with advisor(s).

**Responsible Conduct of Research**

- By the end of the first year, students will obtain training in the responsible conduct of research. This will be satisfied by MED 255: The Responsible Conduct of Research
- This will involve a minimum of eight hours of formal, in-person instruction and will occur at least once during their graduate studies and at least every four years.

- Students will also obtain human subjects research training as needed for research projects in which they are engaged. Human subjects training is required when students engage in direct interactions with human research participants or have contact with data about identifiable humans (this may include datasets that lack direct identifiers but can be linked back to identifiable persons using a key). Stanford provides online training using the CITI curriculum.
- Student research projects require institutional review board (IRB) review if they constitute human subjects research. It is the student's responsibility to notify his/her advisor(s) of all research activity that involve interactions with humans or contact with person-level data so that the advisor can assist in navigating human subjects requirements.

### PhD Candidacy Requirements:

- Approval by advisor(s).
- Satisfactory completion of coursework in first two years (maintaining GPA of B (3.0) or better and course grades B- or better). Final course work must total at least **75 units** for both core and track specific courses.
- Satisfactory completion of program requirements (such as Individual Development Plans, Responsible Conduct of Research coursework, etc.).
- Submission, and approval by advisor, of the Second-Year Paper.
- Passing of the written qualifying exam.
- Submission of PhD Candidacy form - <https://registrar.stanford.edu/resources-and-help/student-forms/graduate-student-forms>
- Candidacy is valid for five calendar years (through the end of the quarter in which candidacy expires), unless terminated by the department for unsatisfactory progress. An extension of candidacy may be obtained for a maximum of one additional year.
- It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the required paperwork and committee meetings required by Stanford.

### Terminal Graduate Registration (TGR)

- Terminal Graduate Registration (TGR) is reached when PhD students have completed the University's residency requirement, been admitted to candidacy, completed 135 units of work, and submitted the Doctoral Dissertation Reading Committee form.

- TGR greatly reduces the tuition rate. When enrolling under TGR status, a student may only enroll in only 1-3 units of non-required coursework (with PI's knowledge), in addition to the zero-unit TGR course (HRP 802).
- It is the student's responsibility to be aware of when he/she is eligible for TGR. Ideally, this will be Winter Quarter of the third year.
- To be considered for TGR status, the student must submit the TGR form to the Registrar prior to the beginning of the quarter for which the request is being made.

## Exams

### Written Qualifying Exam:

- As part of their advancement to PhD Candidacy (as listed above), students must take and pass a written qualifying exam. This will be offered approximately **2 weeks** after the end of Spring Quarter in the students' second year.
- Material will cover broader health policy concepts (such as ones covered in the First Year Tutorial) as well as track specific topics in Economics and Decision Sciences.
- Students will be provided with a list of suggested readings no later than the start of Winter Quarter of their second year.
- The exam will be "take home" (exam time length - 72 hours).
- Questions will be in short and long essay format. There will be two to three general Health Policy questions, and two to three track specific questions.
- The exams will be evaluated and graded by core faculty.
- In the event of a student failing the written exam:
  - The executive committee may require a corrective course of action.
  - The student will be permitted to retake the written qualifying exam one time, at a time determined by the executive committee.
  - Students who are SGF recipients must retake the exam by the first week of Fall Quarter of their third year.
  - Failure to pass the written qualifying exam a second time will mean the student cannot proceed to PhD Candidacy and their place in the program will terminate.

### Oral Exam:

- In accordance with University policy (see: <http://gap.stanford.edu>) students must take and pass an Oral Examination as part of the PhD degree requirements.

- The Oral Examination (colloquially known as “the proposal defense”) will be focused mainly on the student’s dissertation proposal. As well as examining feasibility and understanding of the dissertation proposal, it assesses the candidate’s command of the field of study.
- Students are required to take the Oral Exam after passing their Written Qualifying Exam, and when the advisor believes that the student is ready.
- The Oral Exam must be taken and passed no later than the end of Spring Quarter of the student’s third year.
- The student’s Oral Exam committee must be chaired by an **out-of-department chairperson**. The other members of the Oral Exam committee are the student’s **primary advisor** and at least **3 core faculty members**.
- All committee members are normally on the Stanford University Academic Council, and the chair must be a member. Emeritus faculty are also eligible to serve as examiners or chair of the committee.
- Further details can be found on the Explore Degrees website here: <http://exploreddegrees.stanford.edu/graduatedegrees/#doctoraltext>, and at the GAP website here: <http://gap.stanford.edu/4-7.html>
- Forms (required by the university) can be found here: <https://registrar.stanford.edu/resources-and-help/student-forms/graduate-student-forms>
- The University Oral Examination form should be submitted to the Education Program Manager/Student Services Officer at least two weeks prior to the examination date.
- Students must provide committee members with a written abstract & summary of their dissertation proposal 3 weeks ahead of their Oral Exam date - exact length to be agreed upon with the student’s primary advisor (estimate: 2000 - 5000 words in length).
- In general, the primary advisor should read and approve the proposal document **before** it is sent to the committee. This is to ensure that the student and the advisor have a clear and shared understanding of the proposed work plan, and that it has been captured by the student in the written proposal document.
- Because it can be difficult to find times when all committee members can attend an Oral Exam, the student should schedule the Oral Exam at least **two months** prior to the anticipated date. Given the format (below), the committee members should be asked to set aside 2.5-3 hours if at all possible.
- Format:
  - 1) A **30-minute** presentation of the dissertation proposal. The presentation will be open to the public, and will be followed by a brief question-and-answer session.

- 2) A **60-minute** closed question-and-answer session, with the student and the examination committee. The focus will be on the content of the talk and the depth areas.
  - 3) A **15-minute** committee closed discussion
  - 4) A **15-minute** non-public feedback session with candidate
- Students should meet with all members of the committee as often as is possible in the months leading up to the exam. They must understand the proposed scope of work, agree with the thesis statement and evaluation plan, and believe that the work, if successfully completed, is worthy of a Stanford PhD.
  - Students should develop the Oral Exam presentation in consultation with the thesis advisor. Advisors can help determine what points to make in the presentation and what can be saved for Q&A.
  - The style of the presentation and Q&A session should be scholarly and rather formal, akin to a presentation at a faculty workshop. The presentation should be accessible to someone who has a technical background but knows little about the precise project or topic. Project goals and motivations, as well as technical methods, should be clearly explained. Much of the discussion is likely to center on the methodological approach. The presentation should close with a summary of what remains to be done before the dissertation will be complete, including a detailed time line of tasks, milestones, and anticipated completion dates.
  - Thesis Proposal Defense Oral Presentation Guidelines:
    - 1) What is the health policy problem that motivated your research?
    - 2) Why is that problem important to solve?
    - 3) What other research has been previously attempted to solve the problem?
    - 4) What are the limitations of the existing approaches described in the previous research mentioned in #3?
    - 5) What are your hypotheses about how to overcome the limitations in #4, and how well do you predict it will resolve the problems described in #2?
    - 6) Describe in depth the details of your research aimed at the level of expertise of your committee, including any challenges you face or anticipate and how you plan to address them.
    - 7) How will you show that the research described in #6 resolves the problems described above?
    - 8) How do you propose to complete your research and evaluation during the time remaining before you graduate?
    - 9) What are the potential contributions to the health policy community?
  - After the presentation, the committee will recommend one of four outcomes, which is communicated to the student at that time and then to the Executive Committee. At the

next Executive Committee meeting, the recommendation will be considered and voted upon. The possible outcomes are:

- 1) pass unconditionally
  - 2) pass conditionally (with specification of the conditions needed to pass, such as additional coursework, or substantive changes in the proposed research)
  - 3) fail with option to retake
  - 4) fail without option to retake
- Should the student not pass his/her Oral Exam, depending on the Executive Committee's decision after reviewing the outcome, the student may retake the exam, may have additional corrective courses of action asked of him/her, or may be asked to leave the program. While each case will be reviewed individually, it is unlikely that the Executive Committee will allow a student to retake the Oral Exam more than one time.

## Thesis / Dissertation Preparation

- University regulations specify the composition of the examination committee and the format of the dissertation defense. Students should refer to the Registrar's Directions for Preparing Doctoral Dissertations, available online, for specific information (including help sessions and FAQs) - <https://registrar.stanford.edu/students/dissertation-and-thesis-submission>
- These guidelines should be read carefully before final preparation of the manuscript to avoid costly and time-consuming revisions.
- The student's thesis / dissertation should include an acknowledgement of funding sources (SGF, NSF, NLM, etc.).

## Dissertation Topics

- Must be guided and approved by student's advisor(s).
- Must concern or have clear implications for health policy, broadly defined – i.e. should relate to the structures, systems, organizations and/or policies that produce, or are closely related to health.

## Dissertation Format and Student's Intellectual Role

- Content must be guided and approved by student's advisor(s).
- As a whole, the dissertation must demonstrate mastery of the methods taught in the program.

- The dissertation ideally will consist of three separate papers, but may be a monograph.
  - Regardless of format, the written research products must be structured to articulate a clear question, set of methods and an evidence-based answer.
  - A monograph would need to be of comparable depth, breadth and sophistication to the combined work represented by three papers.
  - For a three-paper dissertation:
    - There will be a lead paper (“job market paper”) in which the student demonstrates intellectual leadership and mastery of the full range of skills required to complete the paper, including identification of the study question, study design, analysis, presentation and interpretation of results, and write-up.
    - The other two papers may be more collaborative in nature. However, in these efforts, the student is expected to play a major intellectual role - equivalent to lead investigator and consistent with her/his discipline-specific expectations for authorship. Students are encouraged to discuss authorship with their advisors early in the process of planning papers.
    - At least two of the papers should involve original data analysis.
    - The papers will often be thematically linked, but this is not a requirement.

### **Dissertation Proposal**

- Content must be guided and approved by the students’ advisor(s).
- Will be presented and defended in the student’s Oral Exam (see Exams, Oral Exam section for full expectations and requirements related to the exam). Students must pass the Oral Exam to proceed with their dissertation work.
- Students must provide Oral Exam Committee members with a written Dissertation Proposal at least 3 weeks before their Oral Exam date. The exact length of the Dissertation Proposal must be agreed upon with the student’s primary advisor, but will typically be in the range of 2000 - 5000 words in length. Ideally, the student will submit a draft of the Dissertation Proposal to the primary advisor (and possibly other dissertation committee members) prior to 3 weeks before the Oral Exam date in order to receive and incorporate feedback ahead of the Oral Examination.
- For a three-paper dissertation, the Dissertation Proposal should reflect the following:

- The proposal for the lead paper should be at a mature stage of development, possibly including preliminary results but certainly reflecting well-explored dataset(s) and details as to methodological approach.
- The proposal for the second paper should describe the data to be analyzed, confirm its availability, and describe the methodological approach.
- The third paper proposal may be briefer, laying out potential sources of data / information and a methodology in general terms.
- All paper descriptions should identify testable research questions and hypotheses, provide a literature review that highlights what is innovative about the proposed work, and describe anticipated challenges. The proposal should also lay out a proposed timeline for completing the major steps toward dissertation completion.
- For a monograph, the proposal should be at a mature stage of development, and will ordinarily include preliminary results. The dataset(s) should be well explored, the methodological approach described in detail, testable research questions and hypotheses identified, an in-depth literature review presented that identifies gaps in what is known and the contributions and innovations of the proposed work, and anticipated challenges and strategies for overcoming them described. The proposal should also lay out a proposed timeline for completing the project.

### **Preparation of Dissertation Manuscript(s)**

- Must be guided and approved by the students' advisor(s).
- The monograph or three papers should be of publishable quality and of a length appropriate to fully exploring the complexities of the issues tackled. Articles in leading health economics and health services research journals, including their appendices, provide a reasonable exemplar for each paper in a three-paper dissertation. Methodological details may be presented in the main papers or (if publication in a journal with tight word limits is contemplated) in a technical appendix.
- Students should refer to the Registrar's Directions for Preparing Doctoral Dissertations, available online, for specific information (including help sessions and FAQs) - <https://registrar.stanford.edu/students/dissertation-andthesis-submission>. These guidelines should be read carefully before final preparation of the manuscript to avoid costly and time-consuming revisions.
- The student's thesis should include an acknowledgement of funding sources (SGF, NSF, NLM, etc.).

- Students should discuss appropriate deadlines with their advisors, but are expected to provide at least a preliminary and a final draft to committee members. For three-paper dissertations, this applies to each paper, and ordinarily provision of these drafts will be staggered over time. All preliminary drafts should be provided with sufficient time for committee members to receive and incorporate feedback. The final draft should be provided at least 4 weeks before the University Dissertation / Thesis Submission Deadline for the quarter the student is planning on graduating (see <https://registrar.stanford.edu/students/dissertation-and-thesis-submission>).

### Dissertation Approval

- Must be obtained from the student's thesis advisors / reading committee.
- Must be obtained before the final presentation.
- Must follow requested university format, protocols & deadlines (see <https://registrar.stanford.edu/students/dissertation-and-thesis-submission>).

### Final Presentation

- The final presentation is required for graduation.
- The final presentation is a summary of the work accomplished on the PhD research, and should occur when the student is still matriculated.
- The final presentation should emphasize the research that has been completed since the thesis proposal defense presentation.
- The final presentation will run for approximately one hour, including time for questions.
- The student's final presentation must be scheduled during the regular academic quarter, and may not be scheduled during finals week or during the break between quarters. We note that there is no mandatory attendance by the committee (although this is encouraged) and therefore there should be no particularly onerous scheduling constraints, other than allowing interested members of the Stanford Health Policy community to attend at a time when they could reasonably be expected to do so.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Graduate school is professional training and as such, is an active partnership between the student and the department. When most effective, the department and the student share responsibility for the student's academic progress.

The department is expected to share information about degree requirements, local policies and procedures and helpful resources. The student also has responsibilities, such as knowing relevant policies and procedures and engaging in professional conduct and communication. It is the responsibility of each student to familiarize himself/herself with the location and content of Stanford University policies and procedures that pertain to the degree program and seek clarification as needed. Additionally, it is the student's responsibility to review the Graduate Handbook on an annual basis.

All students need to enter phone numbers and email addresses into the AXESS System. Please keep this current. The information will be used for the graduate student phone list and you will receive important program information through email. Note that your Stanford email address is considered your official email address for department and University notifications.

## HONOR CODE & FUNDAMENTAL STANDARD

### **Honor Code:**

A. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;

2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

B. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.

C. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

**Fundamental Standard:**

The Fundamental Standard is an aspirational statement of Stanford's ideal of civic and moral community. Although the spirit of the Fundamental Standard remains unchanged since 1896, these aspirational learning goals for all Stanford students elaborate its basic values today:

Students are expected to respect and uphold the rights and dignity of others regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socio-economic status.

Students are expected to uphold the integrity of the university as a community of scholars in which free speech is available to all and intellectual honesty is demanded of all.

Students are expected to respect university policies as well as state and federal law.

For the purposes of clarity, students should be aware that they may be subject to discipline at Stanford University for acts of misconduct including:

- Violation of university policy
- Violation of a specific university directive
- Violation of an applicable law
- Physical assault
- Sexual misconduct, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking
- Theft of property or services
- Threats
- Hazing
- Hate crimes
- Alcohol- and drug-related violations, including driving under the influence
- Intentional or reckless property damage
- Seeking a university benefit to which a student is not entitled
- Falsifying a document
- Impersonating another
- Computer violations
- Knowingly or recklessly exposing others to significant danger

For additional information about the Honor Code and the Fundamental Standard, visit:

<https://communitystandards.stanford.edu/student-conduct-process/honor-code-and-fundamental-standard#fundamental-standard>

## GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

The department encourages applications for awards that can support student funding. We expect students to apply for funding from external sources such as the NSF GFRP or AHRQ Dissertation Awards, and/or for Stanford-based funding such as fellowships available through the VPGE Office. The department will assist in the preparation of these applications.

## STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIPS & EMPLOYMENT

See: <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-7> for University requirements and protocols.

### Teaching Assistantships

The program strongly encourages students to undertake teaching assistantships, especially for the program's core courses in the students' third year and beyond. The purpose of a teaching assistantship is to help students to understand the process of organizing and delivering a course as an intellectual academic exercise, and learn about course administration and logistics. Students should also be aware of any restrictions on their time as determined by the sources of their funding and/or visas.

### Research Assistantships

Research Assistantships can be beneficial to both students and faculty, however, students should discuss potential positions with their advisors to insure proper fit with his/her research interests. Students should also be aware of any restrictions on their time as determined by the sources of their funding and/or visas.

### External Employment

The program does not prohibit employment outside Stanford University while students are enrolled. In certain circumstances, such employment may enhance productivity and learning opportunities, particularly when it coincides with areas of research relevant to the student's studies. However, external employment also has the potential to delay degree completion and create conflicts of interest. Therefore, careful consideration is required before a student commits to any external employment. Students should also be aware of any restrictions on

their time as determined by the sources of their funding and/or visas, and should be aware of the following program rules:

- Students must obtain approval from their advisor and the program director before committing to any external employment. Ordinarily, this will be done in person. Students must disclose the size and duration of the expected time commitment and whether a written employment or consulting agreement is involved. The student and advisor will discuss the commitment's relevance (if any) to the course of study, how degree completion may be affected, and any conflicts of interest that may arise. Failure to obtain this approval before engaging in off-campus work is a cause for concern about progress towards degree.
- Students will be strongly advised to engage in no more than eight hours per week in external employment while enrolled.

Students who engage in external employment should also be aware that extensions of time and funding for degree completion (i.e. beyond four years) may not be granted if delays in progress are determined by the student's advisor and the Executive Committee to have been attributable to commitments associated with the external employment.

### Additional rules

Additional rules and restrictions on employment—both inside and outside Stanford University—may apply to students on fellowships, students supported by faculty grants, and international students. Before engaging in such employment, students who fall into any of these categories should check with the Student Services Officer, relevant fellowship guidelines, and/or the Bechtel International Center for more information.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION & USEFUL SITES

### DIVERSITY

The Stanford University School of Medicine and the Health Policy Program are committed to fostering a diverse community in which all individuals are welcomed, respected, and supported to achieve their full potential. While race and ethnicity are commonly cited in relation to diversity, we recognize that there are many different aspects to identity, including culture socioeconomic and educational background, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, life experiences, hobbies, and interests. We value diversity because we believe that interaction with people with unique backgrounds and life experiences allows us to reach a greater level of innovation in education, research and clinical care.

The program works with multiple groups and offices across campus to facilitate student access, support, and connectivity. These include, but are not limited to:

Stanford Biosciences: <https://biosciences.stanford.edu/prospective/diversity/index.html>

Stanford Diversity and Access Office: <https://diversityandaccess.stanford.edu>

Stanford Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education:  
<https://vpge.stanford.edu/diversity-initiatives/overview>

Stanford Office of Accessible Education: <https://oae.stanford.edu>

Stanford Graduate Life Office: <https://glo.stanford.edu>

Stanford Student Affairs: <https://studentaffairs.stanford.edu>

### FOR NEW STUDENTS

Find the resources you need to begin your graduate career at Stanford:

<https://vpge.stanford.edu/gradgateway>

## SAFETY

Stanford's Department of Public Safety offers many resources and services to students and community members.

Main site: <http://web.stanford.edu/group/SUDPS/index.shtml>

Public Safety Services: <http://web.stanford.edu/group/SUDPS/safety-report/public-safety.shtml>

Safety Related Services – including the Sexual Assault & Relationship Abuse Education & Response Program and 5-SURE, Students United for Risk Elimination:

<http://web.stanford.edu/group/SUDPS/safety-report/related-services.shtml>

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

There are a multitude of health and wellness resources available to you at Stanford, and we encourage you to take full advantage of them.

<http://biosciences.stanford.edu/current/benefits/health-wellness-resources.html>

## BIOSCIENCES PROGRAM

The Biosciences Program offers great resources and contacts to School of Medicine PhD students

<http://biosciences.stanford.edu/index.html>

## FINANCE & TAX RESOURCES

Useful information about finances and taxes for students can be found at:

<https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current/benefits/stipend-salary-resources.html>

## OFFICE OF ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

The Office of Accessible Education (OAE) is the campus office designated to work with Stanford students with disabilities, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels (including the

professional schools). The OAE provides a wide array of support services, accommodations, and programs to remove barriers to full participation in the life of the University.

<https://oae.stanford.edu/>

## OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION

The Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education (VPGE) office works collaboratively across the university to ensure that every graduate student receives the best possible educational experience. VPGE's initiatives and resources enrich students' academic experiences at Stanford by advancing diversity, preparing leaders, and positioning Stanford at the forefront of innovation in graduate education.

<https://vpge.stanford.edu/>

## GRADUATE LIFE OFFICE

The Graduate Life Office (GLO) is a division of the Office of the Vice Provost for Student Affairs. They serve the entire graduate student population at Stanford and their families. GLO deans are a source of comprehensive, impartial guidance and information related to all aspects of your life as a graduate student.

<https://glo.stanford.edu/>

## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE CAREER CENTER

The School of Medicine Career Center provides critical support for the exploration of career options, development of professional skill sets, and connections to opportunities.

<http://med.stanford.edu/careercenter/>