



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

Department of Epidemiology

MS Student Handbook

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University of Washington School of Public Health

Department of Epidemiology



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This handbook describes the academic requirements and policies for the Department of Epidemiology Master of Science degree. The contents of this handbook are a supplement to the requirements and policies of the [University of Washington](#) , the [UW Graduate School](#), and the [UW School of Public Health](#). Epidemiology students are responsible for knowledge of, and adherence to, the policies and requirements of all four entities.



The Department of Epidemiology reserves the right to update the information published in the Handbook as necessary. All information is correct at the time of publication.

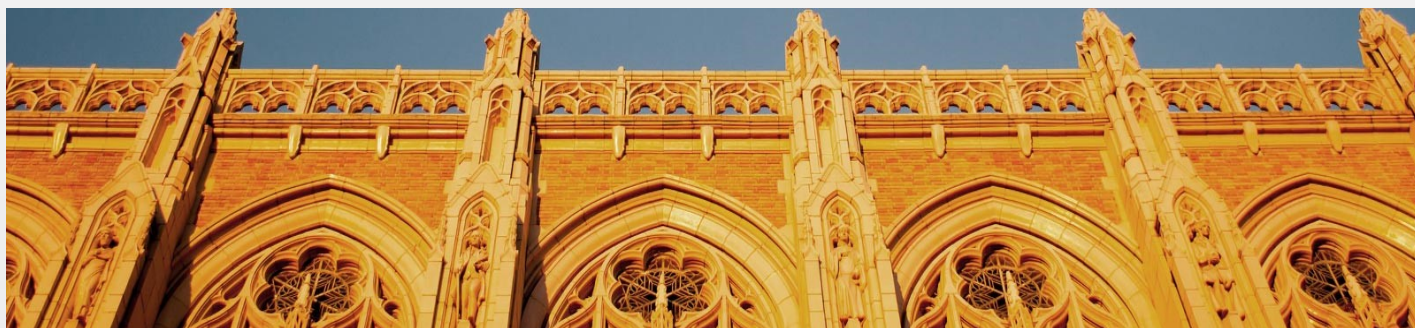
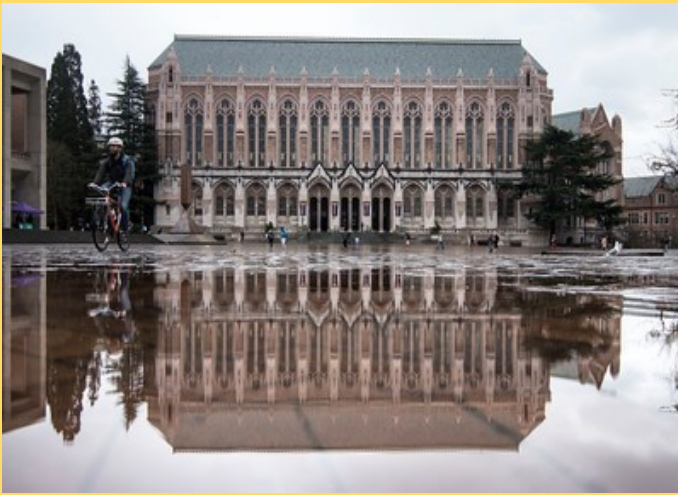


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The MS program offers research training in epidemiology. The program includes course work in epidemiology and biostatistics, and a research-based thesis is required. This program offers focused preparation in epidemiologic principles and methods for students interested in master's level research careers, or for those who plan to pursue a doctoral degree.

The UW School of Public Health lists a set of Core Competencies for all SPH students on their [Competencies for All Degrees](#) website.

In addition to the Competencies for All Degrees, the Department of Epidemiology defines a set of competencies for Epi MS students. They are listed in the Appendix of this handbook.

Both Master of Science degree tracks share the following credit and GPA requirements:

1. At least 60 total credits are required
2. At least 18 credits must be numerically-graded, UW graduate courses.
3. Minimum passing course grade: 2.7

A student who receives a grade lower than 2.7 in a required course must retake the course and earn a 2.7 or better in order to graduate. A student who receives a grade below 2.7 in an elective course is not required to retake it; however, the course will not count toward a degree.

4. GPA required to graduate: 3.0

A student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to graduate. If a student falls below a 3.0 GPA for a quarter, the Graduate Program Director will review their academic record and decide whether to take "No Action", write a "Warn Letter" or place the student on probation until both the quarterly and cumulative GPA are restored to 3.0.



MS Epidemiology: General Track Course Requirements

The MS General Track offers in-depth training in epidemiologic methods for students preparing for a research focused career. The degree may be tailored to the student's specific interests through elective coursework and the thesis.

All courses with an * must be taken for a numerical grade.

EPI METHODS

EPI 512*	Epi Methods I (4 cr)	Autumn, Year 1
EPI 513*	Epi Methods II (4 cr)	Winter, Year 1
EPI 510	Epi Data Analysis (3 cr)	Winter, Year 1
EPI 514*	Application of Epi Methods (5 cr)	Spring, Year 1

BIOSTATISTICS

Choose either this 3 course sequence ([which is the best choice?](#))

BIOST 511*	Med Biometry I (4 cr)	Autumn, Year 1
BIOST 512*	Med Biometry II (4 cr)	Winter, Year 1
BIOST 513*	Med Biometry III (4 cr)	Spring, Year 1

Or this 2 course sequence

BIOST 517*	Applied Biostatistics I (4 cr)	Autumn, Year 1
BIOST 518*	Applied Biostatistics II (4 cr)	Winter, Year 1

THESIS AND SEMINAR

EPI 700	Thesis (max 18 cr total recommended, 9 cr minimum)	Variable
EPI 583	Epi Seminar (minimum 3 cr total, 1 cr per quarter)	Variable

EPI ELECTIVES

6 credits total from the electives (marked M or D/E or NI or I) on the [Epi Course Planning Sheet](#)

- At least one elective must be Disease/Exposure Focus (marked D/E on the list)
- Each course must be at least 2 credits

SPH ELECTIVES

Two School of Public Health courses of at least 2 credits each. Non-SPH courses containing significant public health content can be used to fulfill this requirement, with approval from the Graduate Program Director.

MS Epidemiology: Clinical Research Course Requirements

The Clinical Research Track in Epidemiology is chiefly intended for (but not limited to) health professionals who have already completed clinical training and who plan to conduct research with patients in health care settings as a significant part of their future career. The track builds on the MS program in Epidemiology, adding several specific course requirements that are particularly relevant to clinical research.

All courses with an * must be taken for a numerical grade.

EPI METHODS

EPI 512*	Epi Methods I (4 cr)	Autumn, Year 1
EPI 513*	Epi Methods II (4 cr)	Winter, Year 1
EPI 510	Epi Data Analysis (3 cr)	Winter, Year 1
EPI 514*	Application of Epi Methods (5 cr)	Spring, Year 1
EPI 542	Clinical Epidemiology (2 cr)	Spring, Year 1
EPI 573	Biologic Measures (3 cr)	Autumn, Year 2

BIOSTATISTICS

BIOST 517*	Applied Biostatistics I (4 cr)	Autumn, Year 1
BIOST 518*	Applied Biostatistics II (4 cr)	Winter, Year 1
BIOST 524	Design Med Studies (3 cr)	Spring, Year 1

ETHICS AREA

Choose one of the following two options.

BRI Lecture Series	3 lectures & 3 discussions: Preregister in May . If some missed, attend lectures online by October 31 (0 cr)	Autumn, Year 1
BH 536	Research Ethics (3 cr)	Years vary

THESIS AND SEMINAR

EPI 700	Thesis (18 cr total recommended, 9 cr minimum)	Variable
EPI 583	Epi Seminar (minimum of 3 cr total, 1 cr per quarter)	Variable

EPI ELECTIVE

One elective course of at least 2 credits from the elective s on the [Epi Course Planning Sheet](#)

- Must be Disease/Exposure Focus (marked D/E on the list)

OTHER COURSES

Additional courses may be specified by committee.

Master's Thesis

The master's thesis should be evidence of the student's ability to carry out an epidemiologic investigation and to present the results in clear and systematic form. The thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School by the end of the quarter in which degree requirements are completed or by the deadline specified in the [Graduate Registration Waiver Fee](#).

Recommended Timeline: Some Epidemiology master's degree programs have thesis deadlines that may be a little earlier than this timeline suggests. For example, in the Maternal and Child Health Program students have to present on a thesis topic and submit a proposal in the 1st Spring quarter. However, both are expected to be preliminary. As another example, a student hoping to submit an abstract of a thesis project to a conference may have an earlier timeline than the one below.

Activity	1 st Fall	1 st Winter	1 st Spring	Summer	2 nd Fall	2 nd Winter	2 nd Spring
Meet with faculty, advisor and others, to learn about research opportunities; attend Epi Expo and other events and seminars with faculty							
Meet with faculty to discuss a thesis project; pick project and thesis Chair/committee (see next page for Chair/committee eligibility requirements); complete the Human Subjects form and the required Human Subjects Division IRB training/review . Submit forms to the Epi Students Canvas site.							
Write and submit a thesis proposal , that has been approved by your committee, via the Epi Students Canvas site							
Bulk of the data analysis; regularly meet with Chair and, if necessary, other members of your committee							
Write thesis							
Electronically submit your thesis							
Pay attention to all of the things you have to do to graduate in June - lots of steps!							



ere is the definitive master's thesis development and writing guide for [Epi students](#).

Master's Thesis

Master's Thesis Committee

(Membership = Chair plus 1 or more additional faculty. The Department recommends a total committee membership of between 2 and 4 but it may be larger if necessary as judged by you and your Chair.)

Chair: Usually the Chair will be the faculty member who is providing the data, or other resources, you will use for your thesis. A faculty member must fulfill 3 basic criteria in order to serve as Chair of an Epi Department master's thesis committee.

1. The Chair must be a [core Epidemiology faculty member](#).*
2. The Chair must have an earned doctoral degree (or foreign equivalent).
3. The Chair must be a member of the [Graduate Faculty](#). Don't assume your potential Chair is a member of the Graduate Faculty. Search at the linked Graduate Faculty page to be 100% sure. Faculty who need to obtain Graduate Faculty status should contact Angie Buck, the Department's Academic Human Resources coordinator (ambuck@uw.edu) for advice on the application process.

*A faculty member with an adjunct, affiliate, clinical, senior lecturer or emeritus appointment may chair a master's committee only with prior approval of the Graduate Program Director. To request permission for this exception first check to be sure they are a member of the Graduate Faculty (few are). If not, see #3 above. Once the faculty member has Graduate Faculty status send a petition to the Graduate Program Director providing the following information:

1. A brief description of the proposed project
2. A brief explanation of why the faculty member is especially appropriate to chair your committee based on your topic and their expertise
3. The name(s) of the core Epidemiology faculty member(s) who will also serve on your committee

The committee profile must conform to the following criteria:

1. At least one-half of the total membership of the committee (including the Chair) must be members of the Graduate Faculty.
2. One committee member may be below the rank of Assistant Professor. In this case the committee must contain two other faculty members at the rank of Assistant Professor or higher.
3. All thesis committees must have at least one core Epidemiology Department faculty member.
4. Affiliate and clinical faculty, and faculty from any department or institution are eligible to serve on the committee, subject to the limitations above.
5. Appointing a non-UW affiliated committee member requires approval. To request permission for a non-UW affiliated committee member please email the following information to the Graduate Program Director.
 1. A brief description of the proposed project
 2. A brief explanation of why the person is especially appropriate to serve on the committee based on the topic and their expertise
 3. The proposed committee member's CV

Documentation you must submit via the [Epi Students](#) Canvas site (instructions and links to forms can be found there)

1. Thesis Chair/Committee update form (any changes made subsequent to submitting the original form require resubmission of an updated form)
2. Use of Human and Animal Subjects for UW Graduate Student Theses and Dissertations form (before registering for EPI 700)
3. The IRB approval or exemption cover page (before research begins)
4. Thesis proposal signed by all committee members (at least one quarter before graduation)

Concurrent Degree Programs and Graduate Certificates

FORMAL CONCURRENT DEGREE PROGRAMS IN EPI

- [MS/PhD Molecular and Cellular Biology](#) (MCB)

Follows MS General Track course requirements. A more detailed description of the program can be found at the link above. Course requirements for the MCB PhD can be found [here](#).

- [MS/MPA](#) (Public Administration)

Students must fulfill the course requirements of the MS General Track. Course requirements for the MPA can be found [here](#). Students may count 12 UW credits toward both degrees if approved by both departments

- [MS/MD](#)

Students must fulfill the course requirements of the MS General Track along with all requirements for the MD. Students may count 12 UW credits toward both degrees if approved by both departments

INFORMAL CONCURRENT DEGREE PROGRAMS IN EPI

Students may also pursue informal concurrent degrees that include the Epi MS. In these cases the Graduate School does not allow 12 credits to be counted toward both degrees. However, if a student earns more than the credits required by the Graduate School, it may be possible to count certain relevant courses toward both degrees with the approval of both departments. Consult epi@uw.edu and your current degree program office for more information.

Additionally, for concurrent master's degrees, the student's Epidemiology thesis requirement cannot be met with a thesis from another department.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

[Graduate Certificate Programs](#): Any student enrolled in a graduate degree program at the University of Washington who meets the prerequisites and qualifications may apply for a graduate certificate program. There is usually time to earn one graduate certificate during the standard MS time frame.

Rules governing all certificate programs:

- The Graduate Certificate will appear on your transcript
- At least 9 credits applied toward the certificate must be taken for a numeric grade
- Up to 6 credits may overlap with your degree program if they are elective credits for both programs
- Core degree requirements may not be used in fulfillment of a certificate program
- A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required for all courses counting toward the certificate, and a grade of 2.7 or above is required for any individual course.
- Students earning both a degree and a certificate must submit a manual degree audit to the Graduate School by the end of the quarter in which they graduate. Find concurrent program instructions for a manual audit in the [Epi Students](#) Canvas site.
- Individual Certificate Programs may have additional requirements.

The additional, specific requirements for any Graduate Certificate program may be found on the program's website (application requirements, course and credit requirements). See the Graduate Certificate Programs link above for the website containing a listing of all programs and links to program websites.

Student Resources and Information



How do I waive a course? Epi policies and instructions are [here](#).

Can I transfer previously earned graduate credits? You may transfer up to 6 graduate, quarter credits (4 semester credits) with approval of the Epi Department and the Graduate School. First complete the waiver form linked above and submit to Epi Student Academic Services. If approved by Epi, then petition the Graduate School through [MyGradProgram](#). Up to 12 credits earned as a [Graduate Non-Matriculated](#) student may be applied to a UW degree program.

How can I find a tutor? Email Kevin Schuda in the Epi SAS Office at epcourse@uw.edu. Free writing tutoring can be scheduled through the [Health Sciences Library](#).



I'm looking for funding. Where can I search? Start with the [Epi Student Opportunities](#) website. The [SPH website](#) posts student funding opportunities advertised through the Dean's Office. A few other resources include the [Student Funding](#) Graduate School webpage and the [Graduate Funding Information Service](#) (GFIS) webpage.

Can I request a leave of absence? Yes, if you are eligible and fulfill all requirements for going on leave. You can find more Graduate School policy detail [here](#). A guide for the process of requesting leave is [here](#).



Does the Epi Department fund travel to conferences? Any Epi student presenting a paper, either in oral or poster format, at a major conference in the field may [apply for limited travel funds](#). There are also travel funds available through GFIS linked above.

Where can I find information about:

[Tuition costs](#)? Contact info for Student Fiscal Services can be found [here](#).

[Course Registration](#)? Contact info for the Registration Office can be found [here](#).

[Washington State Residency](#)? Contact info for the Residency Office can be found [here](#).



Are there resources for helping enhance the mentoring relationship between me and my advisor? A meeting with the Epi Graduate Program Director is often helpful. The Graduate School [Mentoring](#) website also provides information and resources.

Are there mental health professionals I can speak with on campus? The [Counseling Center](#) offers mostly free services including brief counseling sessions, assessments, referrals, and crisis intervention. The [Health and Wellness](#) department also provides mental health support for students.



Get Involved!

STUDENT REPRESENTATION

[Graduate & Professional Student Senate](#): The Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) is the official student government representing the 15,000 graduate and professional students at the University of Washington.

[Epidemiology Department Student Representatives](#): These positions provide you the opportunity to represent your fellow Epidemiology students in areas such as our curriculum, admissions, diversity, and social opportunities. Contact any representative at the link above to present ideas for improvement in the department or to inquire about becoming a representative yourself.



DIVERSITY

[Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center](#): Home of the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity, works to enrich the collegiate experience through resources and opportunities focused on increasing and promoting diversity on campus. The Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program [GO-MAP](#) specifically focuses on the graduate student experience.

The [Intellectual House](#) provides a multi-service learning and gathering space for Native American students, faculty and staff, as well as others from various cultures and communities to come together in a welcoming environment to share knowledge.

RECREATION

The [Intramural Activities/Waterfront Activities Center](#) offer opportunities for students to take classes, participate in intramural sports, take advantage of the recreation center (pool, basketball, racquetball, weight training, indoor track, tennis, climbing wall, and more). The WAC rents canoes and rowboats.



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH SEMINARS AND EVENTS

View the [School of Public Health Events Calendar](#) to find an extremely wide variety of public health related events and seminars both on and off campus, as well as links to individual SPH department calendars.



REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The [EPIDEMIOLOGY STUDENTS GROUP](#) is an official UW Registered Student Organization. On the [Student Activities Office](#) website you can search the complete listing of UW RSO's and learn more about registering a new student organization.

Appendix: Epi MS Competencies

GENERAL TRACK and CLINICAL RESEARCH TRACK

- Define and calculate measures of disease frequency and measures of association between risk factors and disease;
- Describe the major epidemiologic research study designs and their advantages and limitations;
- Describe the major sources of bias in epidemiologic research (confounding, selection bias and measurement error) and the ways to evaluate and reduce the bias;
- Evaluate effect modification;
- Apply guidelines to support whether an association is causal;
- List and define the basic terms and methods used in outbreak investigation, infectious disease epidemiology, chronic disease epidemiology, disease prevention trials and evaluation of screening tests;
- Design an epidemiologic study to address a question of interest;
- Apply regression, classical methods of analysis of categorical data, and other appropriate statistical approaches to analyze epidemiologic data;
- Interpret results of an epidemiologic study, including the relation to findings from other epidemiologic studies, the potential biological and/or social mechanisms, the limitations of the study, and the public health implications; and

Write a clear description of the rationale, methods, results and interpretation of an epidemiologic investigation.

ADDITIONAL CLINICAL RESEARCH TRACK COMPETENCIES

- Characterize the measurement properties of biomarkers;
- Devise optimal strategies for biospecimen collection, processing, and storage;
- Evaluate the properties of screening and diagnostic tests that inform the use of these measures in different clinical and population settings;
- Design a clinical trial to address a gap in knowledge regarding care of patients.