School of Population Health
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences
The University of Western Australia

MANUAL FOR CANDIDATES IN THE
PUBLIC HEALTH POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAMS
WITHIN THE
SCHOOL OF POPULATION HEALTH

March 2013

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We thank all authors for permission to reproduce and amend many sections of their original text.
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1. PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

This booklet sets out the administrative procedures of the UWA School of Population Health in regard to the various Public Health Postgraduate coursework programs offered by the School. In it we hope you will find answers to most of the questions asked frequently by postgraduate coursework students.

There are other documents that maybe of interest to Postgraduate students. These include the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry handbook. The Faculty handbook contains the regulations for the degree and is available on the web at http://handbooks.uwa.edu.au/postgraduate. Please note that the regulations relating to university degree programs do change from time to time and you need to refer to the current edition for the current regulations.

Please note that the information contained in this manual is updated from time to time. To be sure that you have the latest version, consult the website http://www.sph.uwa.edu.au/students/coursework.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Master of Public Health Program at The University of Western Australia was established in 1987 as part of the Commonwealth Government’s response to the Kerr White Review of education and research in public health and tropical medicine in Australia conducted in the mid-1980s. The first intake of students was accepted in the 1988 academic year.

The School prides itself on academic excellence. You should be aware that the public health program is demanding of time and effort. The minimum time commitments are likely to be of the order of 12 hours per week per unit during the academic year. At the end of the program, however, you can be confident that you have obtained an award that will prepare you for a career of leadership in public health.

3. MANAGEMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES (COURSEWORK) PROGRAM

3.1. Role of the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies

The Director will:

- provide academic oversight of all Population Health postgraduate coursework programs within the School;
- make recommendations to the Faculty regarding applications for enrolment to postgraduate courses;
- liaise with the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Science and UWA Student Administration regarding student matters; provide academic advice to students about their course of study;
- approve student enrolments and changes of enrolment;
- ensure that students comply with regulations of the program;
- liaise with other Schools/faculties at UWA and other Institutions regarding suitability and availability of coursework units as elective units;
- participate in meetings of the Postgraduate Studies Board of Examiners;
- act as an advocate for students in exceptional circumstances;
- consider written requests from students to suspend their candidature; and
- consider written requests from students to enrol in less than twelve points per year.
3.2. **Administrative Officer**

The Administrative Officer is **Rosa Catalano** (phone: 6488 2990).

Rosa is available to assist with enrolments, including cross-institutional enrolments. The Administrative Officer organises the timetable for Public Health coursework units and if you have any queries about the timetable see him in the first instance. He also maintains the School’s files on students.

If you are not sure who you should see about any administrative matter, please contact Rosa.

3.3. **Postgraduate Student Representation**

The Population Health Postgraduate Society (PHPS) currently acts as the representative body for postgraduate students studying at the School of Population Health. The aim of the Society is to support and represent all postgraduate students within the school.

The specific responsibilities with which the PHPS is charged include:

- Acting as an advocate for the postgraduate student body on matters of concern raised by students;
- Striving to improve the status, involvement and awareness of postgraduate students within the School;
- Participating in the School Research Committee and the School Teaching and Learning Committee to provide a voice for the student body with decision making within the School;
- Liaising between students and School/Faculty staff in matters of policy and programming relevant to postgraduate study; and
- Communicating administrative and program matters to the student body.

Details regarding the PHPS and its various activities can be located at [www.sph.uwa.edu.au/students/society](http://www.sph.uwa.edu.au/students/society). If you have any issues you wish to raise with faculty and feel unable to do so, for any reason, or you wish to know more about the PHPS, please contact the President of PHPS and we will do all we can to help.

Ms Emily Atkins  
Email: Emily.Atkins@uwa.edu.au  
Phone: 6488 1262

3.4. **Board of Examiners**

The Postgraduate Studies in Public Health has a Board of Examiners that meets at the end of each academic semester to finalise marks for coursework units and to assess the academic progress of students. It consists of the Head of School, the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies and co-ordinators of School of Population Health units for that semester. The Board of Examiners makes recommendations to the Faculty regarding academic progress.
4. COURSEWORK UNITS

4.1. Units

All postgraduate programs require core units and elective units to be taken. The core units are taught every year whilst elective units may vary. See Faculty Handbook for more details.

4.2. External Units

The School recognises that some students will benefit from coursework units that are not listed in the UWA Handbook. If this applies to you, in the first instance please discuss such units with the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies. You will need to demonstrate that the unit is relevant to your program of study in public health and that your enrolment in it will be approved by the co-ordinator of the unit (some units have quotas and prerequisites). Written documentation about the unit is required for the School to assess your request and to determine the point value of the unit. Submit a written request to the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies. If approved, the School will advise the Faculty of its recommendation that you be permitted to enrol in the unit. You need to ensure that your request is made well in advance of the deadline for re-enrolments to allow time for your request to be considered by the School.

4.3. Other Ways to Obtain Credit

4.3.1. Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer Schools 2013

The School of Population Health will run a number of 'Seasonal Schools' Schools in 2013 (Summer Schools are normally run annually) offering elective units condensed into one week of teaching. Details of the various units available through seasonal schools can be located at http://www.sph.uwa.edu.au/courses/winter-spring-summer-school. The program for 2013 is:

**Winter School**

Monday 24th June - Friday 28th June

- Food & Nutrition in Population Health (PUBH 5804) Assistant Professor Siobhan Hickling

Monday 1st July June - Friday 5th July

- Epidemiology and Control of Communicable Diseases (PUBH 5761) Associate Professor Angus Cook & Adjunct Professor Phil Weinstein

**Spring School**

Monday 30th September – Friday 4th October

- Epidemiology II (PUBH5759) Professor Jane Heyworth and Professor D'Arcy Holman

**Summer School**

Monday 25th November - Friday 29th November

- Clinical Epidemiology (PUBH 5757) Associate Professor Tom Briffa

Monday 9th December – Friday 13th December

- Introductory Analysis of Linked Health Data (PUBH 5785) Professor David Preen and Professor D'Arcy Holman

Monday 2nd December – Friday 6th December

- Aboriginal Health (AHEA5755) Dr David Paul
4.3.2. Postgraduate subjects completed at other universities

Previous postgraduate coursework may be credited towards your current qualification. This may include coursework completed as part of an approved course at this or another recognised institution, or coursework completed through ACCESS UWA continuing education (see: http://www.studyat.uwa.edu.au/undergraduate/admission/access-uwa). No undergraduate work can be credited, nor can we give credit for work that is not coursework, for example work completed as part of a research degree such as a PhD. The maximum credit we can provide is 24 points towards any degree program.

In order to gain credit, you must complete an ‘Application for Advanced Standing Form’. This form can be obtained at http://www.studentadmin.uwa.edu.au/welcome/forms. Submit the Advanced Standing Form with relevant documentation to Rhett Brennan, Administrative Officer, UWA School of Population Health.

Requests for advanced standing are assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies and recommendations made to the Faculty to grant credit.

4.3.3. Special topics

Under very exceptional circumstances, students may enrol in the subjects called “Special Topics in Public Health”. These subjects are worth 2, 4 or 6 points credit. They can be used if the student is 2 or 4 points short of the required points for a degree or diploma, or to facilitate a self-directed program of study. Please see the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies for more information.

4.4. Timetable

All of the core units are offered every academic year. Certain other coursework units taught by members of the School of Population Health are offered in alternate years or as demand from students dictates. Units on offer in a particular year are listed in the Faculty Handbook. Normally, a minimum of 10 students will be required to enrol in an elective unit before it is deemed appropriate to offer, although, on occasion, units have been made available to smaller numbers of students. The School reserves the right to cancel/amend elective units as demand dictates.

The timetable is available from the UWA 2013 timetables webpage (http://www.timetable.uwa.edu.au/).

4.5. Lecture Arrangements

Lectures for all units co-ordinated by members of the UWA School of Population Health are given in the SPH Seminar Rooms or the Hew Roberts Lecture Theatre, Clifton Street Building, Nedlands Campus of the University of Western Australia.

Core units are usually (but not exclusively) offered either in the morning (from 9.00am to 12.00pm) or the afternoon (from 4.00pm to 7.00pm).

A map of the Nedlands Campus showing the School of Population Health building is available at http://www.sph.uwa.edu.au/contact which contains staff offices, Reception/Administration Office and Seminar Rooms 3, 4 and 5. The Hew Roberts Lecture Theatre and Population Health Computer Laboratory are also shown. Paid parking is permitted on the Gordon Street perimeter or is free after 5.00pm in the Yellow bays.

The teaching year consists of two semesters (plus Seasonal Schools), each comprising 13 teaching weeks. First semester in 2013 begins on Monday 25th of February and there is a one week mid-semester break starting on the Monday 1st April. Teaching for second semester begins on the Monday 29th July. Each semester is followed by a study break of one week and then two weeks for examinations.

Note: It is the responsibility of students taking units offered by other Schools/Universities to ascertain the time and venue of teaching sessions for those units.
4.6 Online unit delivery

The School is currently in the process of transitioning a number of the units available in the MPH program to facilitate online delivery. From 2013, four of the core units and one elective unit will be available for online delivery. Specifically the units available online in 2013 are:

- PUBH4401 Biostatistics I (semester 1)
- PUBH4403 Epidemiology I (semester 1)
- PUBH 5749 Foundations of Public Health (semester 2)
- PUBH5752 Health Systems and Economics (semester 2)
- PUBH5761 Epidemiology and Control of Communicable Diseases (Winter School)

For specific information on the format that these online units will take, please contact the relevant unit coordinator.

4.7. Assessment

All of the coursework units offered by the UWA School of Population Health employ a combination of in-semester and end-of-semester assessment. Examples of in-semester assessment include in class quizzes/tests, written assignments and seminar presentations. It is School policy that the final examination contributes no more than 50% of the total marks for any unit.

4.8. Distinction

A degree will be awarded with ‘Distinction’ to students who have a weighted average mark (WAM) of at least 80% for their coursework units in all units where a mark is awarded.

4.9. Course Rules

All Masters and Graduate Certificate/Diploma courses in the postgraduate Population Health Program are subject to specific rules by which the courses are governed. It is recommended that students acquaint themselves with the specific rules for the course in which they are enrolled. Details of course rules for all degree options available through the UWA Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Science are available at http://rules.handbooks.uwa.edu.au/rules/mdhs.
5. 12-POINT MPH RESEARCH PROJECT

5.1. Preamble
As an alternative to the 24-point dissertation, MPH students may choose to undertake the 12-point research project combined with 12-points of coursework units. It is envisaged that this option may appeal to students who:

a) do not necessarily have an interest in or a requirement for more substantive research training, or
b) wish to undertake additional coursework units.

The 12-point research project involves the equivalent of one half of a full-time semester workload – and may be undertaken in either semester full-time (PUBH5701) or part-time (PUBH703).

5.2. Enrolment in the Master of Public Health Project
Enrolment in the Master of Public Health Project is not usually permitted until students have completed at least Epidemiology I and Biostatistics I and any other core units relevant to their proposed area of research. Students are required to achieve a Weighted Average Mark (WAM) of at least 65% in PUBH5750 Epidemiology 1 and PUBH5753 Biostatistics 1 in order to enrol in the project (requests for exemptions to this rule can be made to the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies).

Students planning on enrolling in the project should discuss their options with the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies, and consider the topic and supervisor BEFORE the semester begins.

5.3. Content
In most cases the 12-point project will not involve the conduct of an original research study from design to publication – although small scale studies may be possible. However, it is anticipated that the 12-point projects will show variation in both process and content. Possible projects could include (but are not limited to):

a. Substantive Literature Review
b. Research Study Protocol (Including literature review, methodology development and data collection instrument design – but no actual data collection)
c. Limited economic evaluation of a current / potential health-related intervention / activity.
d. Analysis of an existing dataset and preparation of a paper of publishable standard.
e. Work-related project (where suitable in scope and content)

Word count will vary depending on the type of project – however it is anticipated that projects will be around 40 to 60 typed pages (excluding tables, references, questionnaires etc.). Students are encouraged to prepare a paper manuscript and include it as an appendix in the submitted project document.

5.4. Selecting a topic
Students are invited to discuss possible project topics with the Dissertation Co-ordinator (Assist/Prof Julie Saunders) or directly with their potential supervisor.

5.5. Supervision
Each 12-point project is to be supervised by a member of the academic staff of the School as the coordinating supervisor. Students may also have an external supervisor if necessary for specific content knowledge.

The role and responsibilities of a supervisor of a 12-point project will not differ substantially from that of a supervisor of a 24-point dissertation and as such students are directed to Section 6.4 of this manual relating to MPH dissertation supervision.
5.6. **Project Proposal**

All students need to complete a project proposal, which must be lodged with the Administrative Officer within four weeks of enrolment in the Project if you are enrolled as a full-time student and within eight weeks if you are enrolled as a part-time student. The project proposal should include the following:

5.6.1. Objectives

The objectives of the project, including research aims, research questions, hypotheses to be tested where relevant.

5.6.2. Benefits

What are the public health benefits of the proposed project?

5.6.3. Background

Briefly summarize the background to this project and the reasons for doing it.

5.6.4. Activity plan

Outline the logical steps of the study and set target dates for completion of each task (e.g., design of research instrument, collection of data, analysis of data and report writing). The timetable has both short term and longer term advantages. In the short term it focuses attention on a particular task within the study. In the longer term, it provides a comprehensive statement about the project in terms of the methods to be employed. Developing the research questions/aims, hypotheses for research, planning the logistics and predicting the outcomes of the study on a time scale are important and valuable steps toward establishing clearly in one’s mind the objectives of the research and the means of achieving successful results. Usually candidates tend to think that the study will be completed in a shorter time than is possible. A more realistic time frame can usually be determined with advice from your supervisor.

5.6.5. Ethical Clearances

Students need to be alert to the possibility of requiring ethics approval for projects involving the participation of subjects or access to confidential information — and realise that such approval may involve some time delay before a project can begin. It is the responsibility of Project Supervisor(s) to ensure that appropriate ethics clearance is obtained prior to commencement of the project.

We discourage students enrolled in the Master of Public Health 12-point Research Project from collecting their own data because generally there will be insufficient time to complete the project within the allocated maximum time-frame. For example, if you need to submit your application to one or more ethics committees, you should also be prepared to wait some time for approval. The usual turn-around time from the UWA Human Research Ethics Committee is four weeks, provided that no objections are raised. This time can extend to several months if you need to submit the application to multiple committees. Given these delays, we suggest you think carefully about whether you need to collect data.

5.6.6. Statement of participation

If an MPH Research Project topic relates to a project in which several people are participating, you must satisfy the School that the work to be undertaken for the project will be performed by the student. You should describe your role in the overall project and your role in that part of it used for your project. A brief one or two paragraph(s) included at the beginning of the submitted project is sufficient.

5.6.7. Assessment of the Proposal

The MPH Research Project proposal is assessed by your supervisor and the Dissertation Co-ordinator. If your supervisor is also the Dissertation Co-ordinator the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies will appoint an alternative assessor. Your supervisor will recommend whether modifications are required before the research commences. The Dissertation Co-ordinator will assess the proposal in terms of its scope to ensure that it meets the requirements of the 12-point unit. S/he will also provide an independent assessment of whether approval from the UWA Human Research Ethics Committee is necessary. The School aims to provide you with an assessment of the proposal within two weeks of its submission.
Academic staff would normally have the following questions in mind when reviewing the proposal. Note that not all questions are relevant to all projects:

(i) Are the objectives and benefits of the project clear, practical and appropriate?
(ii) Is the background set out clearly?
(iii) Is it clear what work is involved in this project and what outputs will be produced?
(iv) Are the size and scope of the project appropriate for a 12 point project?

The Dissertation Co-ordinator or Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies will liaise directly with your Supervisor if there are any concerns about the scope of the proposed project. Students need to be alert to the possibility of requiring ethics approval for projects involving the participation of subjects or access to confidential information – and realise that such approval may involve some time delay before a project can begin. It is the responsibility of Project Supervisor(s) to ensure that appropriate ethics clearance is obtained.

5.7. Monitoring Progress

For each semester that you are enrolled in the project, the Administrative Officer will send your supervisor a form on which to report your progress. The form should be filled out in conjunction with your supervisor and returned to the Administrative Officer. The purpose of the form is to provide information to the School on the progress that students are making. It will enable the School to take appropriate action if required to assist you to complete your project within the time allowed. Completing the form each semester will also allow you to monitor your own progress.

5.8. Format of the Master of Public Health 12-Point Research Project

Master of Public Health 12-point Research Projects will show wide variations in content, style and presentation and it is not possible to be prescriptive regarding the structure and content of a project. The final format is a consequence of a dialogue between you and your supervisor(s).

Notwithstanding the above, it is expected that most Master of Public Health 12-point Research Projects will include: Title page, Abstract, Acknowledgements, Statement of Participation, Table of contents, Introduction, Main Text, Summary/Conclusions, References and Appendices (where appropriate). Please remember to acknowledge your supervisor.

A sample dissertation title page is located at the back of this booklet (Appendix 1). You can use this sample and replace ‘dissertation’ with ‘MPH 12-point Research Project’.

5.9. Submission of the Project

Students who submit their project by the Friday before the first teaching week in February / March are deemed to have submitted in second semester of the previous academic year and students who submit their project by the Friday before the first teaching week in second semester are deemed to have submitted in first semester. Students are strongly advised to plan on submitting a final draft to their supervisor several weeks prior to this deadline, in order to allow sufficient time for feedback and correction if necessary. If this time is exceeded you will need to re-enrol in the unit for the following semester. In any case, students must discuss timelines with their supervisor and recognize that rapid turn-around times from supervisors cannot be assumed (or expected) and failure to allow sufficient time for feedback from your supervisor will not result in an ‘extension’ of submission date.

Three copies of the project must be submitted for examination. These must be spiral bound. Projects are to be submitted to the Administrative Officer. Projects should be one and a half space typed (12-point font) on A4 paper with a left hand margin of 4cm. Double–sided copies are encouraged. Page numbers must be inserted.

5.10. Examination of the Project

Your project will be examined directly by two examiners. In consultation with your project supervisor, the Dissertation Co-ordinator or Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies will nominate two examiners, usually from within the School, although in some cases external examiners may be nominated. The School has a policy of not revealing the names of examiners and students should not
attempt to correspond directly with examiners without prior approval of the School. You should nominate a likely date of submission so that examiners can be informed.

The Master of Public Health Project Board of Examiners considers the examiners’ recommendations and reaches a decision about the status of the Project. The School aims to notify you of its decision within eight weeks of submission. You will be notified of the decision in writing by the Dissertation Co-ordinator (or the Head of School if the Dissertation Co-ordinator has a conflict of interest).

Examiners are asked to examine the project within 4 weeks. They are given a copy of the handbook entry and further explanation about the MPH program and the project. Examiners are asked to give a mark for a project out of 100. As per other coursework units, a Higher Distinction will be ≥80%; Distinction 70-79%; Credit 60-69% and Pass 50-59%. If the project is deemed to be a 'Fail' (i.e. less than 50%) the student will be required to re-enrol in the 12-point Project Unit(s) or complete additional coursework units to the value of 12 points or exit with a Graduate Diploma in Public Health.

On receipt of the examiners’ reports, a meeting of the Board of Examiners, which consists of the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies, the Dissertation Co-ordinator and the Head of School or nominee is convened to discuss the recommendations. Other academic staff members may be co-opted if any of the above have a conflict of interest.

The project may be classified as passed without corrections, passed with corrections, or failed.

5.11. Corrections to the Project

If corrections are required, these must be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor. The project is not re-examined. The corrections to be made are determined by the Board of Examiners. Copies of the examiners’ reports are held by the supervisor who will give a copy to the student. A deadline of three weeks from notification of the interim result is granted for final submission. If this deadline cannot be met, an extension must be negotiated with the supervisor and Dissertation Co-ordinator.

5.12. MPH 12-Point Research Projects Classified as Failed

If the project is classified as failed or substantial revision is required and the project must be submitted for re-examination, you must re-enrol in the project. You must be enrolled at the time it is re-submitted. You may need to apply for a suspension of candidature for a semester if you were notified of the result too late to enrol in the semester you were notified (e.g., if you submitted your project in February, but were notified in May of the result, you would seek a suspension for first semester and re-enrol in the project in second semester). If you do not wish to re-submit your project you may choose to enrol in an additional 12 points of coursework or if you have achieved sufficient points, you may elect to exit with a Graduate Diploma in Public Health.

5.13. Presentation of the final version of the Project

If your project was passed without corrections, you are required to submit at least one unbound final copy to the Administrative Officer for the School of Population Health library. The School will pay to have this copy permanently bound. If you require further personal copies for permanent binding you are required to hand in the extra copies with a receipt of payment from the Cashiers Desk at Student Administration.

If you have to make corrections, they must be made to the satisfaction of your supervisor. The procedure for presentation of the final version of the project is:

- Your supervisor should send a memo to the Administrative Officer indicating that the corrections have been made to his or her satisfaction.
- You must present unbound copies and receipts (if applicable) to the Administrative Officer at the School of Population Health’s Administration office for permanent binding.

Celebrate!
6. THE MPH DISSERTATION

While the MPH is classed as a coursework degree, undertaking a dissertation provides you with an opportunity to complete a piece of research of reasonable size and scope under expert supervision. However, the MPH dissertation is not intended to be a major piece of original research, unlike a Masters (by research) or PhD thesis.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information that will assist you in understanding the requirements of the dissertation, identifying and developing a topic for study, conducting the research and writing the dissertation. The examination process is also discussed.


6.1.1. 24-Four Point Dissertation

The 24-point dissertation represents the equivalent of approximately one semester of full-time work. Students are required to achieve a minimum 65% WAM in PUBH4401 Epidemiology 1 and PUBH4403 Biostatistics 1 in order to enrol in the dissertation (requests for exemptions to this rule can be made to the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies). Its purpose is to provide the students with the opportunity to develop the skills in various components of the research process. It involves original research by the student under supervision. The dissertation gives students practice and experience in defining a clear research question, preparing a formal research proposal, conducting a review of a body of scientific literature and formal writing at a professional standard.

Students are encouraged to consider enrolling in the 24-point dissertation part-time over two semesters (PUBH5714), rather than undertaking this task full-time in just one semester (PUBH5712). This will allow sufficient time for completion of all components of the dissertation. During the first semester of your dissertation it is expected that your proposal has been approved and the ethical issues have been cleared. During the second semester you will write your literature review, produce the results, write the discussion section of your dissertation and prepare the paper manuscript. However, if you wish to enrol in the 24-point dissertation full-time you will be required to have a research proposal approved and ethical issues cleared by week 4 of the semester.

Some 24-point dissertations involve detailed statistical analysis and interpretation of a body of data. The student may collect original data specifically for the research or may analyse existing data in an original manner.

Other 24-point dissertations are based on the analysis of published documents such as policies relating to a particular aspect of public health. Students undertaking such a dissertation are expected to collate, integrate and appraise critically the relevant literature, and evaluate current practice and policy in the light of the literature.

Other methods of inquiry may also be permitted.

Word counts will vary depending on the type of dissertation, however it is anticipated that dissertations will be less than 100 pages (excluding references and appendices). Although not mandatory for assessment of the dissertation per se, students are encouraged to prepare a paper manuscript and include it as appendix into their dissertation. Alternatively, students may structure their dissertation such that it consists of an Introduction section (see 6.1.1.1.1), Literature Review section (6.1.1.1.2), and substitute the Methods and Results section with at least two manuscripts extracted from the dissertation research which have been submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. Candidates need to provide evidence of manuscript submission in the submitted dissertation. These sections will be followed by a Conclusion section (6.1.1.1.5). If submitting in this format, candidates have the option of appending corresponding Reference sub-sections to each of the four main sections – Introduction, Literature Review, Submitted Manuscripts, and Conclusion.

6.2. Subject Matter

The School policy on subject matter is that the topic must be relevant to the broad area of public health. A wide diversity of subject matter and methods of enquiry that have been approved as dissertation topics. You can learn about the research programs of the School at http://www.sph.uwa.edu.au.
6.3. Selection of a Topic

You may select a topic of your own choice, or you may consult with the Dissertation Co-ordinator or other academic staff in the School for assistance in choosing topics. A list of topics nominated by academic staff and by external consultants is available in the Bachelor of Health Science Honours, MPH 24-Point Dissertation and 12-Point Project, Project Options Booklet (available at http://www.sph.uwa.edu.au/courses/postgraduate/research).

It is entirely appropriate for part-time students to undertake a dissertation related to their work. Such topics minimise the difficulties faced by part-time students, many of whom work full-time.

The School has a large number of research projects under way at any given time, and there are usually opportunities for MPH students to write a dissertation in conjunction with one of the projects. While some of the possible opportunities will be included in the Project Options Booklet, you are encouraged to talk to academic staff about the various research projects to identify possible topics.

6.4. Supervision

Each dissertation must be supervised by at least one member of the academic staff of the School as the coordinating. You may also have an external person as a co-supervisor. In addition, assistance with computing and statistical aspects of dissertation projects is available.

6.4.1. Choosing a Supervisor

With regard to the dissertation, the role of the Dissertation Co-ordinator is to assist you to find a suitable topic and supervisor. Wherever possible, the academic staff member whose interests coincide most closely with the topic of investigation should be the dissertation supervisor. A list of academic staff and interests can be obtained from the Administrative Officer. You should be aware, however, that because there are a substantial number of MPH students enrolled in the dissertation at any one time, the School attempts to distribute the workload wherever possible. Academic staff who have included possible dissertation topics in the Project Options Booklet have agreed to supervise students working on those topics.

In some instances the choice of supervisor is obvious: you have already worked with them and established a research agenda of mutual interest, or they are the only suitable staff member for your area. However, in other instances there is either initially some uncertainty or you have no pre-existing preference. Under these circumstances, you should study the list of School Academic Staff and their research interests; perhaps read some of their papers; talk with existing postgraduate research students and other MPH students; but most important of all, make an appointment to meet with a short-list of at least two or three possible supervisors to discuss their likely level of interest in your topic, their approach to supervision and their availability.

The following checklist may help you in choosing a supervisor:

- Is the supervisor available?
- Does the supervisor appear to be regarded highly by others you respect?
- Do students who work with this supervisor make reasonable progress?
- Does he/she have students who have completed (and what do they say)?
- Is there a strong element of trust between the potential supervisor and present students?
- Does the supervisor comment on drafts with clear feedback? Is the feedback timely?
- Does the supervisor have too many students?
- Is the supervisor accessible?
- What are his or her expectations in work and time?

When you have decided upon a coordinating supervisor (and co-supervisor, where applicable), you need to check that this decision is suitable to both the supervisor(s) and the Dissertation Co-ordinator.

6.4.2. Role of the Supervisor

The supervisor will assist you to prepare the dissertation proposal and will provide advice to you during the project. You are encouraged to meet frequently with your supervisor. The supervisor, in conjunction with the Dissertation Co-ordinator or Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies will choose examiners for the dissertation.
The supervisor should ensure that the candidate is working on an appropriate topic which might reasonably be expected to allow the student to demonstrate the appropriate level of competence; and for the task to be completed in reasonable time given the requirements of the dissertation. The supervisor should assist the student to develop appropriate standards of achievement. This involves assisting with planning, meeting the student regularly, detailed commenting on and constructive criticism of drafts, and final attestation that the dissertation is ready for examination. This does not mean that the supervisor is stating that the dissertation will pass the examination. A supervisor can never claim that the dissertation will pass. No one can predict the exact outcome of the examination process.

The School has approved the following code of practice for staff who supervise postgraduate research degree students and MPH students:

**UWA SCHOOL OF POPULATION HEALTH CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STAFF WHO SUPERVISE MPH CANDIDATES IN THE DISSERTATION**

The supervisor will:

- provide academic guidance;
- meet frequently with the student (on average at least one hour per fortnight for full time students);
- provide advice on ethical matters pertaining to the student’s research;
- advise on the preparation of the research proposal, financial plan and operational plans;
- respond to work given to read within a reasonable time;
- provide consistent advice;
- avoid additional requirements once parameters are already agreed;
- advise the student of their deficiencies in necessary knowledge or skills, and recommend additional coursework units, short courses or other means of rectification;
- give the student feedback on satisfactory and unsatisfactory progress;
- have a reasonable level of expectation regarding what a student can and should accomplish in a dissertation;
- protect the student from unreasonable demands;
- assist the student at those times when the voice of a staff member advocate is needed;
- keep the student informed about relevant regulation and administrative processes in the School and University, and refer the students to appropriate guidelines;
- inform the student of impediments that might adversely affect their progress, such as the supervisor taking study leave, plans for retirement or an anticipated change in the supervisor’s own research program;
- generally aid the student in pursuing the project and maintain sufficiently close contact with the student’s work;
- maintain an interest in the topic;
- maintain an interest in the student as a person and be interested in the student’s welfare;
- view supervising as an important responsibility, deserving of his or her attention and time.

It is important to find out the style of supervision you prefer and then ask whether you can accommodate this style with the style of your supervisor(s). For example, some supervisor(s) are reluctant to meet students unless they come with their questions written. This demonstrates that the student can write, allows practice in writing ideas succinctly by making the student determine the questions rather than pass the problem to the supervisor to work out the question (often, good research results in better questions rather than answers), and most importantly, makes the student responsible for the session.

How much advice can you expect? Heiss (1970) found that most of the 3,000 graduate students she studied were satisfied with the relationship with their supervisor, but 6% reported that supervisors gave
too much direction, and 28% reported that their supervisors gave too little. Of further interest, 82% reported that their supervisors expected the candidate to take the initiative in arranging meetings to discuss matters of concern. Many supervisors advocate regular meetings (e.g., fortnightly or monthly), others plan meetings around the submission of completed tasks, and others prefer to read written material prior to meetings. There are many methods of supervision and it is important that you discuss the timing and purposes of meetings from the outset.

6.4.3. Co-Supervisors

Past experience has shown that about one-third of students have co-supervisors, many of whom are external co-supervisors.

Because of the diversity of the interests of MPH students, on occasions no member of academic staff will be expert in the content area of your dissertation. If this is the case, expert external co-supervision is essential. Supervisors and academic advisers can help you identify the most suitable external co-supervisor.

A possible disadvantage of co-supervision is that you will get conflicting advice. Receiving conflicting advice is common in academic research work and needs to be dealt with at an early stage and certainly not at the stage of examination. You need to acquire competence in making decisions and communicating these decisions about conflicting advice. A good strategy is for you to arrange joint meetings with your co-supervisors to discuss your reactions to the conflicting advice, to ensure that all co-supervisors receive drafts of relevant material and that you discuss these with all and attend to all comments (even if this means you have to address conflicting feedback), and keep all your supervisors informed of progress, difficulties and successes. If you ask for a joint meeting between you and your co-supervisors only when there is serious trouble, then the arrangement is unlikely to work.

The School requires that one co-supervisor is nominated as the candidate’s principal supervisor for administrative purposes and that the principal supervisor must be a suitably qualified member of the School’s academic staff. The principal supervisor is responsible for the completion of student reports and for any other administrative matters pertaining to the candidate.

6.4.4. Responsibilities of the Student

From a supervisor’s viewpoint, there is an ideal student. He or she will complete a good dissertation; show initiative but accept guidance; is not a ‘You tell me what is required and I’ll do it’ - minimum competency student; has personal integrity and meets commitments; is able to write; is enthusiastic; is keen to communicate the results; is able to think; and keeps in regular contact”. You are expected to initiate meetings and be prepared for them. Learn the supervisor’s style (the best way is to ask them); resist the impulse to present rough copies or first drafts before you have thoroughly checked them; always submit material on which serious effort has been expended; and note that you are responsible for deadlines.

The School has approved the following code of practice for MPH students undertaking the dissertation:

UWA SCHOOL OF POPULATION HEALTH CODE OF PRACTICE FOR MPH STUDENTS UNDERTAKING THE DISSERTATION

The student will:

- develop a detailed research proposal;
- develop an operational plan with deadlines;
- accomplish tasks in the operational plan on time, or explain why this is not possible;
- be enthusiastic about his/her work;
- be open to suggestions and to advice, but also show independence and initiative;
- develop independent scholarly thought and enquiry;
- have integrity and diligence in research and writing;
- arrange meetings with the supervisor, preferably at regular intervals, and keep in regular communication;
- prepare legible documents for comment;
• follow a method of presentation which maximises the use of the supervisor’s time;
• be honest when reporting on progress and results;
• be reasonable in making demands on the time of the supervisor and other experts;
• maintain an interest in the supervisor as a teacher and scholar;
• be responsive to opportunities offered by the supervisor that will assist in the student’s professional development;
• uphold the academic standards and good reputation of the School;
• become aware of academic regulations and administrative requirements of the degree.

6.4.5. Evaluating the Supervisor
The Organisational and Staff Development Services (OSDS) of UWA has developed evaluation forms to facilitate discussion between supervisors and students about research supervision. Participation in the evaluation process is voluntary for both supervisors and student, but encouraged by the Centre in order to gain more general understanding of research supervision practice at the University.

The completed forms are exchanged between supervisor and student with a time set aside for discussion about the responses. Members of staff at OSDS are available to facilitate initial or subsequent discussion about the responses.

A copy of the questionnaires should then be sent to ‘Student Perceptions of Research Supervision’ (SPORS) at the OSDS. The results will be private and confidential for both students and supervisors.

6.4.6. Management of Conflict
It is likely that at some time during your dissertation research you will have conflict with your supervisor(s), even if it is only a friendly disagreement. Fortunately, conflicts over academic theory or the content of the dissertation are unusual. The most common conflicts usually involve misunderstanding or disagreement about the other’s expectations with respect to supervision or satisfactory progress. In these instances you and your supervisor(s) should make every effort to understand the point at issue and to work towards a solution that is mutually acceptable. If, despite a concerted and genuine attempt, you reach the situation where every possible means of resolving the conflict has been exhausted to no avail, and the lack of resolution is detrimental to your progress, you should discuss the matter with the Dissertation Co-ordinator or the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies. It is expected that the Head of School will become involved infrequently in the management of conflict between a student and supervisor(s), and that in the vast majority of instances it will be possible for the parties to resolve the matter themselves.

6.4.7. Changing Supervisors
Changing a supervisor is not always easy or possible, and can be a sensitive matter. All the more reason therefore, to make the initial choice carefully. Further, there may not be another supervisor in your area. If you do wish to change supervisors, please arrange to discuss the matter with the Dissertation Co-ordinator or the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies. The more informal and low-key these procedures can be, the better they are for all concerned. Be wary about denigrating supervisors in front of others.

6.5. Funds for Dissertation Research
Limited School resources may be available for dissertations. For example, the School will provide postage for small-scale postal surveys. You should discuss the costs of your proposed study with your supervisor who will assist you to frame a budget that is acceptable to the School.

6.6. Dissertation Proposal
All students need to prepare a formal proposal for review prior to undertaking the research for the dissertation. The proposal is to be prepared in consultation with your supervisor and must be lodged with
the Administrative Officer within four weeks of commencement of semester if you are enrolled full-time, and within eight weeks if you are enrolled part-time.

Preparation of the proposal requires you to read the relevant literature, to identify ethical issues arising from the program of research, and to make a realistic assessment of the time and budget (where relevant) required for the project. In some instances, the project may require that funds be sought from funding agencies. In such cases, the research proposal would form the nucleus of a grant application and it is well to remember that such applications have “lead times” of up to eleven months between when they are lodged and when the cash begins to flow.

Before agreeing that the proposal is ready for further consideration the supervisor (and also the student) needs to answer various questions:

- Has the argument a foundation in theory?
- Does the proposal have imagination?
- Is the project feasible and within the capabilities of the student?
- What might the results look like?
- What are the consequences if the study does not get the expected results, the data cannot be obtained, or the analyses are inconclusive?
- What are reasonable time limits for each stage and final completion?
- Given the above, is too much being attempted, what should be omitted?

The essential components of the proposal are addressed below.

### 6.6.1. Synopsis

Provide a succinct summary of the background, the objectives and the research plan. It should take no more than one page of single spaced typing.

### 6.6.2. Objectives

Include the objectives of the project, it’s research aims, research questions and hypotheses to be tested where relevant.

### 6.6.3. Benefits

What are the benefits of the proposed research?

### 6.6.4. Literature Review

Include a brief review of the relevant literature on the topic to be studied. References should be listed in one of the standard styles, Vancouver or Harvard. This section provides the argument for conducting the research.

### 6.6.5. Research Plan

The research plan should be provided in sufficient detail for the assessors to have a good understanding of the methods you propose, including their appropriateness and feasibility.

For quantitative studies, the following items should be considered for inclusion:

- Description of population and sample.
- Method of sampling.
- Description of data gathering methods, including definitions of variables.
- Discussion of validity and reliability of data
- Statistical methods.
- Sample size estimation.
For qualitative studies, the following items should be considered for inclusion:

- Philosophical framework;
- Description of population and sample;
- Description of data collection methods;
- Description of sampling techniques and recruitment of participants;
- Draft of research protocols;
- Data analysis;
- Discussion of rigour

For dissertations that are based on critiques of the literature, you need to include detail on the source of the literature that will be reviewed, how it will be identified and how it will be reviewed.

### 6.6.6. Ethical Considerations

A section outlining the ethical considerations arising in the course of the proposed research is required. This section should address questions of consent to participate in the research, security of the data including protection of the identities of individual participants and a clear statement as to which ethical committees will have to review the research before it can commence.

Under normal circumstances the proposal should be approved before submitting to an ethics committee.

### 6.6.7. Budget

If no School resources are required, simply write a sentence such as “No School funding is necessary”. If resources other than computing are requested, an itemised budget is necessary.

### 6.6.8. Statement of Participation

If a dissertation topic relates to a project in which several people are participating, you must satisfy the School that the work to be undertaken for the dissertation will be performed by you the student. You should describe your role in the overall project and your role in that part of it used for you dissertation. (A brief paragraph is sufficient).

### 6.6.9. Timetable

The aim of the timetable is to outline the logical steps of the study and to set target dates for completion of each task (eg, design of questionnaire, collection of data, analysis of data and report writing). The timetable has both short term and longer term advantages. In the short term it focuses attention on a particular task within the study. In the longer term, it provides a comprehensive statement about the project in terms of the methods to be employed.

Developing the research aims, research questions, hypotheses for research, planning the logistics and predicting the outcomes of the study on a time scale are important and valuable steps toward establishing clearly in one’s mind the objectives of the research and the means of achieving successful results. Usually candidates tend to think that the study will be completed in a shorter time than is possible. A more realistic time frame can usually be determined with advice from your supervisor (No more than one half page.)

### 6.7. Assessment of the Proposal

The dissertation proposal is assessed by two members of the academic staff who are chosen by the Dissertation Co-ordinator or the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies if your supervisor is the Dissertation Co-ordinator. They will recommend whether the research be allowed to proceed without change, whether modifications should be made to the proposal before the research commences, or whether the topic is unsuitable for a dissertation. They will also provide an independent assessment of whether approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee is necessary. Most proposals are approved with modification or with minor modifications only. The School aims to provide you with an assessment of the proposal within three weeks of its submission.
Although the research proposal is not considered in the assessment of the dissertation, academic staff would normally have the following questions in mind when reviewing the proposal. Note that not all questions are relevant to all dissertations.

- Are the objectives and benefits of the research clear, practical and appropriate?
- Is the background set out clearly?
- Is the relevant literature critically reviewed?
- Do the study questions emerge clearly?
- Is the study population defined and described?
- Are the sampling design and sample size (if appropriate) described clearly?
- Are the variables to be measured defined? (in quantitative studies)
- Are the techniques for the collection of data specified?
- Are the plans for analysis of the data outlined?
- Are the sequential steps to be undertaken clearly specified?

6.8. Ethical Clearances

All research projects involving the participation of subjects, or the use of information about people for a purpose for which permission has not already been obtained, need approval from the Committee for Human Research Ethics of The University of Western Australia. Your supervisor is responsible for ensuring that you obtain approval.

If you need to submit your application to one or more ethics committees, you should also be prepared to wait some time for approval. The usual turn-around time from the UWA Human Research Ethics Committee is four weeks, provided that no objections are raised. This time can extend to several months if you need to submit the application to multiple committees.

Under normal circumstances the proposal should be approved by the Dissertation Co-ordinator before submitting to an ethics committee.

6.9. Enrolment in the Dissertation

Enrolment in the dissertation is not permitted until students have completed at least Epidemiology I and Biostatistics I and any other units relevant to their proposed area of research.

You should be aware that there are two unit codes corresponding to the dissertation. The codes vary according to whether you are a full-time or part-time student.

PUBH5712 Dissertation Full-time
PUBH5714 Dissertation Part-time

You should be enrolled in the dissertation in any semester that you are actively working on it and will be using the School’s facilities or meeting with your supervisor. You do not have to be continuously enrolled in it (e.g., you might enrol for the first time in second semester 2013 but not again until second semester 2013), but you must be enrolled in the dissertation in the semester in which you hand in your completed work. Please note that if you are not enrolling for a semester you are required to complete and submit an Approved Leave Application Form to Student Administration:

http://www.studentadmin.uwa.edu.au/welcome/forms

6.10. Monitoring Progress

Each semester that you are enrolled in the dissertation, the Dissertation Coordinator will provide your primary supervisor with a form on which to report your progress. The form should be filled out in conjunction with your supervisor and returned to the Administrative Officer.

The purpose of the form is to provide information to the School on the progress that students are making. It will enable the School to identify and to take appropriate action to assist you to complete your dissertation within the time allowed.

Completing the form each semester will also allow you to monitor your own progress.

6.11. Format of the Dissertation

Dissertations completed for the MPH show wide variations in content, style and presentation and it is not possible to be prescriptive regarding the structure and content of a dissertation. The final format is a
consequence of a dialogue between you and your supervisor(s). One of the best ways to appreciate the possible variation in the structure of a dissertation is to peruse those that have been completed by other students. All dissertations are on display in the School’s library. (Dissertations are not to be removed from the library.) Please see staff in the administration office for access.

The typical dissertation includes a title page, abstract, table of contents, acknowledgments, main text, references, and appendices. An example of a title page is shown in Appendix 1. Note that the year given is the year of submission. Please remember to acknowledge your supervisor - it is impossible to tell who supervised a number of MPH dissertations in the School’s library!

As noted earlier, dissertations in the School tend to follow one of two models. The first involves original analysis of data. The second involves a critique of existing literature with or without data collection. Possible headings for the two types of dissertations are described in Appendix 5. Do not be concerned, however, if your dissertation does not follow either of these models.

6.12 The Latter Stages

It is remarkable how much time is taken by the incidental things at the end. When you have finished writing, it is not uncommon for a full month’s work to be needed to clear up these ‘little’ things. They include checking references, ensuring good quality figures and tables, ensuring that the correct style has been used throughout, typing, editing, and checking for spelling and typographical errors.

6.12.1 Editing

This stage always seems to take longer than planned; and many students do not even bother to plan any time for this task. Good grammar, punctuation and spelling are important components of a dissertation. You should use English and not American spelling. Examiners will tend to pick up every error and, when a critical mass of errors is reached, their attitude to the rest of the dissertation becomes tainted. Think of final editing as akin to the final spray painting of a restored car. The mechanics may be perfect but a poor paint job ruins the image.

It may be useful to employ a professional editor at the last stage, but as a minimum get experts (e.g., supervisors) to read the dissertation. Spell checks on computers are a good start, but they are no replacement for an expert. There are also computer programs to check your grammar, but while worthwhile, they are not the complete answer.

6.13 Presentation of the Dissertation

Dissertations should be double or one and a half space typed on A4 paper with a left hand margin of 4cm. Double-sided copies of the dissertation are encouraged.

6.14 Submission of the Dissertation

Students are expected to submit their dissertation by the end of the first semester in which they are enrolled for full time students and the end of the second semester for part time students. The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences does allow students who submit their dissertations by the Friday before the first teaching week in each semester to be considered to have submitted in the previous semester. However, students who propose using these later deadlines are required to negotiate the submission date with their supervisor, who may or may not be available during the semester breaks.

In any event, student should plan on submitting a final draft to their supervisor several weeks before it is due for submission, to allow sufficient time for feedback and correction. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss timelines with their supervisor.

If the ‘Friday before the first teaching week deadline’ is exceeded, the Faculty requires that students re-enrol in the unit. Failure to allow sufficient time for feedback from your supervisor will not result in an ‘extension’ of the submission date. Unfortunately, this rule is non-negotiable.

The procedures for submission for examination are as follows:

- Make three copies of the dissertation for examination. These must be temporarily bound. There is a spiral binding machine in the School, but it is difficult to use. Spiral binding can be done at Guild Printing or commercial printers such as Snap Printing.
• Present three temporarily bound copies of the dissertation to the Administrative Officer at The School of Population Health for examination.

6.15 Examination of the Dissertation

Your dissertation is examined independently by two examiners. One will be a member of academic staff of the School and the other ideally will be an external examiner. The School considers the examiners’ recommendations and reaches a decision about the status of the dissertation. The School aims to notify you of its decision within eight weeks of submission. You will be notified of the decision in writing by the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies or the Dissertation Co-ordinator (or the Head of School if there is a conflict of interest).

Your supervisor will discuss with you the names of possible examiners. This should be done well in advance of you submitting your dissertation to avoid delays in examination. You should nominate a likely date of submission so that examiners can be informed. The final choice of examiners is made by the supervisor and the Dissertation Co-ordinator or the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies.

The School has a policy of not revealing the names of examiners and students should not attempt to correspond directly with examiners without prior approval of the School.

Examiners are asked to examine the dissertation within six weeks. They are given a copy of the handbook entry and further explanation about the MPH program and the dissertation (see Appendix 2). Examiners are asked to recommend whether the dissertation should be passed without corrections, passed with minor corrections, deferred or failed. (A Deferred classification means that substantial revisions are necessary and that the student must re-submit the dissertation for examination.) The examiners are also asked to give a grade for a dissertation that is passed on a scale of Higher Distinction, Distinction, Credit and Pass. Higher Distinction means the dissertation is outstanding in all respects and in the top 5%, Distinction that the dissertation is of a very high standard and in the top 15%, Credit that the dissertation is of a high standard and Pass that the dissertation meets the primary requirements.

On receipt of the examiners’ reports, a meeting of the Board of Examiners, which consists of the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies, Head of School (or his/her nominee) and the Dissertation Co-ordinator is convened to discuss the recommendations. Other academic staff members may be co-opted if any of the three have a conflict of interest (e.g., if one was the supervisor and another examiner). A written response to the examiners’ reports will be requested from the student’s supervisor. This is then considered in conjunction with the examiners’ reports to determine the status of the dissertation. The dissertation may be classified as passed without corrections, passed with corrections, deferred and failed. On the basis of the examiners’ recommendations, the committee nominates a mark for the dissertation.

In considering the examiners’ reports the Board of Examiners take into account the examiner’s expertise, years in the field and exposure to the literature in the field. If there is a variation between the examiners, members of the committee tend to give more weight to the more credible examiner taking into account that person’s experience and quality of the examiner’s report. Where members of the Board fail to reach consensus on the grade to be awarded, the School’s Research Coordinator (or his/her nominee) will be asked to arbitrate. In the event that the examiners results are diverse the Board can rule that the dissertation be re-examined by a third examiner.

6.16 Corrections to the Dissertation

If corrections are required, these must be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor. The dissertation is not re-examined. The corrections to be made are determined by the Board of Examiners in conjunction with the supervisor. Copies of the examiners’ reports are held by the supervisor who will give a copy to the student. A deadline of six weeks from notification of the interim result is granted for final submission. If this deadline cannot be met, an extension must be negotiated with the supervisor and Dissertation Co-ordinator.

6.16.1. Dissertation Classified as Deferred

If the dissertation is classified as deferred, substantial revision is required and the dissertation must be submitted for re-examination. A classification of deferred can be granted once only. A deadline until the end of the following semester is usually granted. If this deadline cannot be met, an extension must be negotiated with the supervisor and Dissertation Co-ordinator. An extension to the time limit for the
degree will be granted, if necessary, to allow you to re-submit the dissertation. A resubmitted dissertation, if it passes, will be awarded a grade of Pass only. If your dissertation was classified as deferred, you must re-enrol in the dissertation and you must be enrolled at the time it is re-submitted. You may need to apply for a suspension of candidature for a semester if you were notified of the result too late to enrol in the semester you were notified (e.g., if you submitted your dissertation in February, but were notified in May of the result, you would seek a suspension for first semester and re-enrol in the dissertation in second semester).

6.16.2. Dissertation Classified as Failed

If the dissertation is classified as failed the student may elect to complete the MPH by undertaking 24 points of coursework or may elect to be awarded the Graduate Diploma of Public Health if they have achieved sufficient credit points.

6.16.3. Presentation of the Final Version of the Dissertation

If your dissertation was passed without corrections, you are free to submit it for permanent binding immediately after you have been notified it has passed. The correct number of copies of the dissertation can be given to the Administrative Officer along with the receipt for binding.

If you have to make corrections, the procedure for presentation of the final version of the dissertation is:

- You should send a letter to the Dissertation Coordinator outlining the amendments made to the dissertation as well as provide justification for any changes suggested by examiners that were not made. Your supervisor should also confirm that they approve changes made..
- If approved, the Dissertation Coordinator will then forward the approval to the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies who in turn will forward approval to the Faculty Administrative Officer indicating that the dissertation has been passed.
- If outstanding changes are still required the Dissertation Coordinator will contact you and your supervisor to discuss further.
- Once the final dissertation had been approved you will need to collect a P-form from the School Administration Office who will pay for one bound dissertation (currently $40) that will go in the library at SPH.
- Students can either bring unbound copies of their dissertation to UniPrint or alternately they can give UniPrint a digital copy of the dissertation.
- Students will need to pay for any personal copies of the dissertation that they want ($35 per copy) and can do this on a separate transaction.
- It is also recommended that students provide a copy for each supervisor.
- Once the permanent binding is completed the dissertations will be sent to the School and the School will contact the student to collect copies.

Celebrate!
7. ENROLMENT

7.1. Minimum Number of Points per Year

Coursework students are required to enrol in at least one unit in each semester and at least 12 points in every year unless you have prior approval from the School. The purpose of this regulation is to assist you to complete the degree within the time limit. If you wish to enrol in less than the required minimum you should first apply in writing to the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies. It may be preferable for you to suspend your candidature (see Suspension of Candidature). If you choose to suspend candidature, you will be required to also complete an ‘Approved Leave Application Form’. Please note that international students can only enrol full-time in the MPH program and must complete all units within the specified timeframe for the degree.

ipoint is the University’s site for answers anytime online. For updated information regarding enrolment please go to http://ipoint.uwa.edu.au. All student administration forms are downloadable from http://www.studentadmin.uwa.edu.au/welcome/forms.

7.2. Annual Re-Enrolment

Re-enrolment for the following year takes place in November/December. The deadline for enrolment is usually around the mid-December. If your enrolment for the present year is suspended, but you are returning to study the following year, you must re-enrol in December, even if your suspension includes the first semester of that following year.

You are required to complete your re-enrolment each year, online through Student Administration. It is imperative that you complete either your Enrolment form for the following year or an Approved Leave Application Form. If you are not studying and do not complete an Approved Leave Application Form you will have to re-apply to enrol when you decide to return to your studies.

Please note that if you do not re-enrol by the deadline, should you wish to subsequently re-enrol to continue your course the following year then you will need to pay a late fee at the Cashier at Student Administration before you will be permitted to re-enrol. Information on the re-enrolment process and the late fees is available from the Student Administration website:

7.3. Cross-Institutional Enrolments

A cross-institutional enrolment is required if you wish to enrol at Murdoch University or Curtin University or another institution. If you wish to undertake a unit at another University you must complete the Application for Cross-Institutional Enrolment (in addition to the UWA enrolment form). http://www.studentadmin.uwa.edu.au/welcome/enrolment/crossenrol

On the UWA Enrolment Form:
Please put External Special Postgraduate Unit (then Unit name in brackets) the Unit Code Number ENRL8009.

On the Cross-Institutional Enrolment Form:
Please put in Name and Unit Code

  e.g.  Program Evaluation E540 (Murdoch University)
         Public Health Nutrition 04869 (Curtin University)
         Environmental Health 512 (Curtin University)

The Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies MUST sign all Cross-Institutional Enrolment forms. Show the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies the content of the proposed unit to be taken at the host University.

After the substitution unit/s has been approved, the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies will sign your application. Present the completed form to the host University (the University in which you wish to study).
If your application is approved the host University will provide the relevant enrolment material which you must complete and return by the due date specified, by that University.

Applicants should be aware that quotas apply to many units and courses and there is no guarantee that enrolment will be available in the unit of your choice. It is therefore advisable to return the form as soon as possible.

Students who need to change enrolment or withdraw from their study at any time during the year must ensure they formally notify both their home and host Universities.

7.4. Changes of Enrolment

What is a change of enrolment? Once a student has completed their initial enrolment or re-enrolment for the following academic year, they may wish to subsequently add /withdraw units, to their enrolment.

Why does this matter? In accordance with HESA legislation and rules of the University, you are ultimately charged for the units you are enrolled in at the census date - 31 March for Semester 1 units and 31 August for Semester 2 units. The census date for all condensed units is midnight on day 2 of the teaching week. Therefore it is your responsibility to ensure that your enrolment is correct. Failure to adhere to these formal deadlines (see http://www.student.uwa.edu.au/course/dates) will result in financial and academic liability.

How do I complete a change of enrolment? The most common changes can be easily managed by award course students through our online student portal StudentConnect. Changes made to your enrolment using this method are easy to make and are instantaneous. This allows you better management of your enrolment and enables staff more time to deal with other more complex changes.

For all enrolment information see http://www.studentadmin.uwa.edu.au/welcome/enrolment/enrolment_methods/changing

7.5. Time Limits

The overall time limit for completion of the Masters Degree is 6 years.

7.6. Approved Leave

7.6.1. Approved Leave Regulations

Students choosing to interrupt their studies by not enrolling for a semester or longer period will be required to apply for Approved Leave.

University General Rule 2005 – 1.1.6 states:

(3) Students must apply in writing for a period of Approved Leave if they -

(a)(i) do not wish to re-enrol in any year;

or

(ii) withdraw from all units in which they are enrolled, and

(b) intend to return to their course in a later year.

(4) Students who do not re-enrol in any year and who have not been granted approved leave are classed as having discontinued their course.

(5) Students who have been classed as having discontinued their course must re-apply if they wish to resume their studies.

This means that students who do not re-enrol and have not gained approval for a period of leave will be regarded as having discontinued their studies, and should they seek to resume their studies at a later date, they will be required to re-apply for admission. If re-admission is approved the student will be required to pay student contribution amounts or tuition fees applicable for commencing students in that particular year.
7.6.2. Who must apply for Approved Leave?

All students must apply for Approved Leave in the case where they wish to have a period away from their studies. Higher Degree by Research students should seek advice on suspension of candidature from the Graduate Research School.

Scholarship holders should check the conditions/regulations of the scholarship they hold to ascertain if the scholarship may be suspended. Please contact the Scholarships Office.

International students must seek authorisation from the International Centre prior to lodging an application. There are implications for fees and student visa eligibility.

Transnational students (those studying at campuses outside Australia) must also apply for Approved Leave. They should consult their local provider regarding fee matters, and submit their forms to Student Administration.

7.6.3. Application Deadlines

Applications for Approved Leave in the first six months of 2013 must be made by December 2011. Applications for Approved Leave for periods between July and December 2013 must be submitted by May 2013. In exceptional circumstances faculties may accept late applications.

Application forms can be downloaded from [http://www.student.uwa.edu.au/course/forms#alternative](http://www.student.uwa.edu.au/course/forms#alternative) or obtained in hard copy from the Enquiry Counter at Student Administration (Hackett Hall) or from faculty offices.

7.6.4. Lodging an Application

Students must lodge their application for Approved Leave in person, by post, or by fax. E-mail or phone requests will not be accepted.

Student Administration
M356
The University of Western Australia
35 Stirling Highway, Crawley WA 6009
Fax: (08) 6488 1083

7.6.5. Principles

The maximum period for which an application for Approved Leave can be made is 12 months at a time. Further periods of leave after that interval must be the subject of a new application.

Approved Leave will not normally be granted in the first teaching period of the first year of study, except where there are exceptional circumstances as determined by the Faculty.

Applications from students who have a progress status of “On Probation” or “Suspended” may not be approved. Students should contact the relevant faculty office before applying.

7.6.6. Approval Process

Applications for Approved Leave are assessed by the Faculty responsible for the course in which the student is enrolled (or Faculties, in the case of combined courses). The Faculty will consider the following:

- The likelihood of students having the necessary prerequisites (taken within the required time limit) to complete the course on return;
- Unit availability;
- The likelihood of course restructuring.

Students will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application. Students dissatisfied with the result may request a review of the decision by the relevant Dean within 12 University working days.

7.6.7. Recommencing Studies

Students who are granted Approved Leave must ensure that they re-enrol within the stipulated re-enrolment dates for the relevant semester. **It is the student’s responsibility to ascertain re-enrolment**...
dates. This information is available on the Student Administration web page or can be obtained from the Enquiry Counter Student Administration (Hackett Hall).

Students who have discontinued their studies (and have not obtained Approved Leave) must re-apply for admission to their course. If re-admission is granted students will be required to pay the student contribution amounts or tuition fees applicable for commencing students in that particular year. Additional information about re-commencing an incomplete degree can be found here.

7.6.8. Impact of Approved Leave on time limits

University General Rule 2.1.33(1) sets out the time limits for courses.

For postgraduate courses a period of Approved Leave is known as a “suspension of candidature” and is not counted within the time limit for the course.
8. ADVANCED STANDING AND UNIT EXEMPTION

8.1. Advanced Standing

The regulations for the MPH allow students to obtain credit in recognition of postgraduate coursework completed as part of an approved course at this or another recognised institution, work completed in courses by professional providers or private educational institutions, or coursework completed through Access UWA. Please refer to the Faculty Handbook for details.

For example, an MPH student who is awarded 24 points advanced standing needs to complete either a) another 48 points of coursework, b) another 36 points of coursework and a 12 point project or c) another 24 points of coursework and a 24 point dissertation, to satisfy the requirements for the degree. In general, advanced standing cannot be approved for more than 50% of units in any one degree.

In order to gain credit, you must complete an 'Advanced Standing Form'. This form can be obtained at http://www.studentadmin.uwa.edu.au/welcome/forms.

Submit the Advanced Standing Form with relevant documentation to the Administrative Officer at the UWA School of Population Health.

If credit is granted, the points may be unspecified, in which case they do not apply to any particular units, or they may apply to particular units. For example, if a student has completed a postgraduate unit in epidemiology that is considered to be equivalent to Epidemiology I, the student may be awarded credit for Epidemiology I. If all the credit points awarded are unspecified, students must still complete all the core units required for the degree.

8.2. Exemption

The regulations for the MPH permit students, in exceptional circumstances, to substitute one elective unit for one core unit.

Written requests, stating reasons for the substitution, should be addressed in writing to the Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies.

9. COMPUTING SKILLS

Computers are commonly used in public health practice and research. Their use ranges from word processing to data management and analysis. Although there is no formal computing training requirement for entry to the program or to any of the units, it is assumed that all candidates will be able to use computers for word processing. It is not essential, but previous use of computers for data entry, management and analysis would be an advantage for Biostatistics I and other units in research methods.

9.1. The School of Population Health Computing Laboratories

One Computing Laboratory is situated in the room adjacent to the Postgraduate Student Room (1.29) on the first floor of the Clifton St Building. The School IT section are responsible for the management of the laboratory. Please see them in the first instance if you are experiencing any technical difficulties with the lab PCs.

You will need a user account before you can use the lab. See IT to arrange access. The lab is available for use at any time except when it is booked for a class. The room is always unlocked.

The PCs are connected to the School of Population Health network and provide access to a range of computer software. There is software for word processing, spreadsheet work, statistical analysis and internet browsing. NVivo 8 for qualitative data analysis is available in the Nursing Computer Lab. The particular software products available are based on the current standards adopted by the School.

The PCs in the laboratory may be used to connect to the UWA Library in order to inspect the catalogue of holdings in any of the UWA libraries (including the Medical Library) and to conduct literature searches using tools such as Medline.
There is another Computing Laboratory which is used mainly by the School’s undergraduate students. It is located adjacent to the Nedlands Café and requires security card access. Please see the Administrative Officer for access if you intend using this lab.

9.2. Self–sufficiency and Getting Help

You should attempt to become self-sufficient in computing. Most software programs have built-in help that should be referred to in the first instance. Fellow students can also be of assistance.

9.3. Student Purchase of Software

UWA postgraduate students are able to apply for, or purchase, a variety of software products if required for use on home PCs. These include

a. EndNote: Free for home use.

b. SPSS: Limited supplies of the SPSS Graduate Pack are available for purchase from the Co-op Bookshop (6488 2069). The Graduate Pack does not contain all the modules available for SPSS so check beforehand whether it has the modules you require.

9.4. Unifi and Student Network Access Project (SNAP)

Another option that may be of interest to some students is Unifi. Unifi is the campus-wide wireless network providing internet and network access to all UWA staff and students from their laptops and compatible mobile devices. The wireless network is available to all UWA staff and students. Further information, including access and logon instructions, is available from the following web-site http://www.its.uwa.edu.au/wireless/unifi

9.5. Access from Outside the School

For security reasons, there is limited access to the School’s networks and central computers from outside the School. If you require external access as part of your degree please see personnel in the School’s IT department.

Full external access to the UWA Library is only available if connecting from a computer on the UWA network or from a home computer using your personal student login details. However, most resources are still available if connecting from computers not connected to the UWA network.

10. FACILITIES

10.1. Library

The University library staff are very keen to help you use their invaluable resources. Your student card is also your borrower’s card for the Library.

The library’s catalogue and databases such as Medline and Current Contents are available online and can be interrogated through any of the computers in the School’s Computing Laboratory. The latter is useful for keeping up-to-date with literature on your dissertation topic. For training in using these databases, and for information on where to find and how to use other resources, arrange a session (preferably in small groups) with the Reference Librarians at the Medical Library.

Students are encouraged to draw the attention of the Dissertation Co-ordinator books or other material that they would like to see added to the library collection.

10.2. Student Room

There is a student room with desks available within the School in Room 1.29. You are free to use this room at any time. There are a few lockers, with keys, available in the room. Please see the Administrative Officer if you wish to use one of the lockers.
10.3. Photocopier
The photocopier in Room 1.14 can be used for handouts for the presentation of tutorials without cost. You may also make two copies of your completed dissertation free. Other photocopying must be paid for. Please see the Administration Officer if you wish to use the photocopier.

10.4. Tea Room
Informal interaction between staff and students is of benefit to both. Students are encouraged to use the tea room in the School at any time. The School provides tea, coffee, milk and sugar for students. It would be helpful to have your own mug if you use the tearoom regularly. Please note that food and drinks in the tea room fridge belong to individual staff and/or students and are not for public consumption unless specifically indicated.

10.5. Shower
There is a shower downstairs in the Clifton Street Building. It is located in the walkway between the main School building and the toilet block. You need to provide your own soap and towel. See Administration Staff for the key.

10.6. Access to the School After Hours
The front door to the School is open between 8.00am and 5.00pm on normal University working days. After-hours access to the School is controlled by an electronic security system. The student room, the computing laboratory and the tea room are open at all times.

If you wish to gain access to the building after hours, you will need to have your Student Card activated for access. Please see the Administrative Officer.

10.7. Parking
Parking permits are available from (Facilities Management) Parking, from the first week of February. Students need to present their Advice of Enrolment or Receipt of Enrolment plus current car registration.

Further details can be found at the parking website: www.parking.uwa.au/parking/handbook/student

11. SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

11.1. Public Health Seminars
Population Health Seminars are scheduled on Tuesday mornings from 11.00am to 12 noon in Seminar Room 3 during semesters. Details regarding the seminar program and speakers can be located from http://www.sph.uwa.edu.au/staff/seminars. Students are highly encouraged to attend.

11.2. Orientation Day
At the beginning of each semester an Orientation Day is held to welcome new students and provide them with the opportunity to meet our staff, tour facilities and arrange after hours access. We also encourage existing students to come along and socialise with the new students.

12. FEES
Places in the Master and other coursework programs are available on a fees basis only and must be paid after enrolment each year. The fee may be tax deductible for part-time students employed in the health sector. Please consult your accountant.

The total fees payable each year depends on the total point value of the units taken each semester.

Please contact the University of Students Office (6488 3235) for detailed amounts and information on Fee Help or see http://www.studentadmin.uwa.edu.au/welcome/fees/postgraduate_fees
13. **ACE - ACADEMIC CONDUCT ESSENTIALS**

From Semester 1, 2008, all newly enrolled students at any level (undergraduate and postgraduate) will be required to complete an online module which will introduce them to the basic issues of ethical scholarship and the expectations of correct academic conduct that the university has of its students. The unit is called Academic Conduct Essentials, or ACE for short, and will be available to students through their LMS account. All new students will be automatically enrolled in the unit.

Students must complete the ACE module within the first 10 weeks of their enrolment. To pass ACE students need to obtain a minimum of 80% in the quiz at the end of the module, but may attempt the quiz as many times as necessary to pass. Students’ Academic Transcripts will indicate to employers that they have passed or failed to complete “Academic Conduct Essentials”.

Students new to the university environment are often unaware of the complexity of correct academic practices. The ACE unit is designed to illustrate that, even with the best intentions, students can inadvertently find themselves having committed academic misconduct. Becoming familiar with expectations as early as possible in students' academic careers will be beneficial as they progress through their studies.

The fostering of academic integrity is given high priority at UWA and is supported by institutional policies and practices. Each Faculty has an appointed Academic Conduct Advisor whose role includes assisting students with counselling on matters of academic conduct.

Please direct any queries about ACE to ace-help@uwa.edu.au or view the FAQ’s about ACE.

Source: [http://www.ace.uwa.edu.au](http://www.ace.uwa.edu.au)

14. **POSTGRADUATE TEACHING STAFF**

**Director of Public Health Postgraduate Coursework Studies**

**Professor David Preen**

Research Interests: Health services research, medical record linkage, pharmaco-epidemiology

Teaches: Clinical Epidemiology

Analysis of Linked Health Data units

Email: david.preen@uwa.edu.au

Phone: 6488 1307

**Head of School**

**Professor Elizabeth Geelhoed**

Research Interests: Health economics, Economic evaluation, Burden of disease

Teaches: Health Systems and Economics

Economic Evaluation of Health Care

Email: elizabeth.geelhoed@uwa.edu.au

Phone: 6488 7129
Deputy Head of School

**Associate Professor Colleen Fisher**
Research Interests: Family and domestic violence and health, Women’s reproductive health, Community-based support services, Family and domestic violence prevention and early intervention
Teaches: Qualitative Research Methods in Health, Public Health Practicum
Email: colleen.fisher@uwa.edu.au
Phone: 6488 2193

**Professor Niyi Awofeso**
Research Interests: Health care policy research, Health surveillance, Health care access for disadvantaged groups
Teaches: Foundations of Public Health
Email: niyi.awofeso@uwa.edu.au
Phone: 6488 1282

**Professor Fiona Bull**
Research Interests: Health promotion, Physical activity
Teaches: Health Promotion I
Email: fiona.bull@uwa.edu.au
Phone: 6488 1249

**Associate Professor Angus Cook**
Research Interests: Environmental health, medical geology, Respiratory epidemiology, Vector borne disease, Water borne disease
Teaches: Epidemiology and Control of Communicable Disease, Disease Prevention in Population Health
Email: angus.cook@uwa.edu.au
Phone: 6488 7804

**Professor Jane Heyworth**
Research Interests: Environmental epidemiology, Environmental health, Rainwater quality
Teaches: Epidemiology I, Epidemiology II
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Phone: 6488 7370
Assistant Professor Siobhan Hickling
Research Interests: Folate, Nutritional epidemiology
Teaches: Food and Nutrition in Public Health
Email: siobhan.hickling@uwa.edu.au
Phone: 6488 7369

Winthrop Professor D’Arcy Holman
Research Interests: Health services research; record linkage and spatial analysis applications; evaluation of health promotion programs; structural determinants of health; alcohol and tobacco-related harm; meta-analysis and new research methods; causal inference; screening.
Teaches: Introductory Analysis of Linked Health Data Epidemiology II
Email: darcy.holman@uwa.edu.au
Phone: 6488 1251

Assistant Professor Ian Li
Research Interests: Applied labour economics, Education economics, Health economics, Economic evaluation
Teaches: Leadership and Management of Health Services Health Systems and Economics
Email: ian.li@uwa.edu.au
Phone: 6488 1295

Winthrop Professor Matthew Knuiman
Research Interests: Busselton Health Study, Cardiovascular diseases epidemiology, Respiratory diseases epidemiology, Physical activity promotion
Teaches: Biostatistics I Biostatistics II
Email: matthew.knuiman@uwa.edu.au
Phone: 6488 1250
15. APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE TITLE PAGE FOR DISSERTATION

Full Title of Dissertation

Your Full Name

24-Point Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Public Health

School of Population Health
The University of Western Australia

Year of Presentation
16. APPENDIX 2: NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO EXAMINERS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Requirements for the degree of MPH

The MPH at the University of Western Australia is a degree by course-work and dissertation and requires that the student obtain at least 72 credit points over a minimum of eighteen months of full-time study (or the equivalent of part-time study). A full-time load of 24 points per semester requires approximately 40 hours per week of classroom and other related activities.

30 credit points come from five compulsory core units in epidemiology, biostatistics, health promotion, health systems and economics and foundations of public health; 24 credit points are awarded for a research dissertation; the balance of credit points are obtained from a wide variety of elective course-work units.

2. Description of the 24 point dissertation

A 24-point dissertation represents the equivalent of approximately one semester of full-time work. Collection of original research data, or original analysis of existing data, is not required although it is encouraged. Students may, for example, choose a relevant public health problem, review the literature relevant to it, prepare a detailed plan for dealing with it in some defined population, and describe how the results of implementation of the plan might be evaluated. In such a dissertation the primary requirements would be for the student to demonstrate the capacity to evaluate public health issues, to collate and integrate the available information, and drew conclusions at a professional level about the optimal method of managing or further developing the issue in question.

3. Examination procedures

Each dissertation is examined by two examiners, one being from outside the School of Population Health at The University of Western Australia. The final decision on the grade is made by a committee consisting of the Director of Postgraduate Studies, the Head of School (or his/her nominee) and the Dissertation Coordinator after considering the examiners’ reports and the supervisor’s comments of the examiners’ reports.

The School has adopted a policy whereby candidates are not informed of the names of their examiners. However, under Freedom of Information legislation, the examiners’ anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

After examining the dissertation and considering the primary requirements of the 24 point dissertations as described above, examiners are requested to complete the Examiner’s Recommendation Form (containing the overall recommendation and grade) and to write a separate report outlining the grounds for their recommendation, indicating the strengths and weaknesses of the dissertation, and, where appropriate, specifying corrections they would like to be made. Examiners are asked to comment in their report on the following points (if relevant):

- Has the student adequately defined a relevant public health problem or issue?
- Has the student comprehensively reviewed the relevant literature?
- Has the student adequately defined the research aims or questions?
- Has the student used appropriate methods?
- Has the student adequately discussed results or findings and drawn conclusions at a professional level?
- Is the overall standard of presentation of the dissertation satisfactory?
- Is the standard of the research work suitable for publication?
4. Overall classification scheme

PASSED - the dissertation meets the primary requirements as described above and no corrections are required.

PASSED SUBJECT TO CORRECTIONS – the dissertation meets the primary requirements as described above but specified corrections should be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor before the dissertation is finally accepted.

DEFERRED – the dissertation does not meet the primary requirements but could be improved as specified in order to meet the requirements, and should be revised and re-submitted for examination.

FAILED – the dissertation does not meet the primary requirements and could not be improved to meet the requirements in a reasonable time.

5. Grading scheme

For dissertations classified as PASSED OR PASSED SUBJECT TO CORRECTIONS the grading scheme is as follows:

Higher Distinction: the dissertation is outstanding in all respects and in the top 5% of Master’s dissertations.

Distinction: the dissertation is of a very high standard and in the top 15%

Credit: the dissertation is of a high standard

Pass: the dissertation meets the primary requirements
17. APPENDIX 3; GUIDELINES FOR DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPTS

DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPT: GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

MPH students who are enrolled in dissertation or who have completed the dissertation are eligible to obtain two credit points of coursework by preparing and submitting for publication in a peer-reviewed journal a manuscript based on their dissertation.

The main requirements are that the student

- identifies a relevant component or aspect of the dissertation that is suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- prepares and submits for publication a manuscript in accordance with the journal’s requirements
- is the first-named author of the manuscript

The enrolment is via the Special Topics units:

- PUBH5770 Special Topics in Public Health (2 points), semester 1 or
- PUBH5772 Special Topics in Public Health (2 points), semester 2

The student should complete the Dissertation Manuscript proposal form below, obtain the signature of the dissertation supervisor and give the form to the MPH Course Coordinator for approval.

The dissertation supervisor will decide if the student has met adequate standards of scholarship in written communication in the preparation and submission of the manuscript for publication and to recommend a (Ungraded) Pass or Fail for the unit.

It is the responsibility of the dissertation supervisor to ensure that the grade is forwarded to the MPH Administrative Officer before the end of the examination period for the semester in which the student is enrolled.

MPH DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPT PROPOSAL FROM

Name of student
Student number
School dissertation supervisor
Title of dissertation
Anticipated title of manuscript
Anticipated author list for manuscript
Anticipated journal name
Semester (e.g. first semester 2013)
Signature of student Date
Signature of supervisor Date
19. APPENDIX 5: FORMAT FOR THE DISSERTATION

6.11.1. Dissertation Involving Original Analysis

6.11.1.1. Introduction
The introduction section/chapter serves to introduce the domain of study, what you intend to study, and most critically, indicates the importance of studying this topic. It may contain an explanation of the dissertation topic as a problem with sub-problems; an extension of the meaning of the dissertation topic by justifying the significance of the dissertation problem in terms of its relevance to trends and issues in theory, research and practice; an introduction to themes and subjects which generally define the scope and direction of the study and the stage for later discussions on questions, issues, problems and propositions.

6.11.1.2. Literature Review
Past literature can be considered as a source of data to argue a case for and against your dissertation. You would have introduced your argument in the introduction and the literature should now be interpreted with respect to this argument. The review should focus on the hypotheses and arguments to be defended in the subsequent sections. This approach adds structure to the review, and makes it more effective in convincing the reader (i.e., other researchers) of the strength of your argument. The subsequent study and conclusions are then already placed in context. This approach has much merit. Too often, the review of literature is seen as a place to demonstrate that you have read everything or to provide a compendium of research studies in historical order. This leads to the situation where you present a review, then at the end say, ’now all that is wrong and so here am I’. By the conclusion, the review has been forgotten. Such reviews would normally be criticised by examiners. The literature review chapter emphasises a conceptual perspective to establish an intellectual standpoint; structures and directs a review of issues; introduces themes and subjects which define the general scope and direction of later discussion on questions, issues, problems and propositions. If it is possible to take the Literature Review chapter out of the dissertation with little or no effect on the total dissertation, then the Literature Review is obviously meaningless to the dissertation. Too often, this operation is possible.

6.11.1.3. Methods
This section is typically succinct. Its aim is to describe your research methods as a considered choice from among possible alternatives. It is not the place to argue that there is only one way to study the phenomenon (there is not), or to denigrate the alternatives. You may need to justify the research methods in the light of the research demands of the dissertation problem and sub-problems, the review of ideas and practice, and detailed research questions and propositions. You will typically need to discuss the population of interest, sampling procedures, the sample, the assessment instruments, how they were administered, and the statistical or qualitative analyses. Be sure that you have permission for use of any materials developed by others that are not available in the public domain. The test is whether a successor could duplicate your study including analyses of the data from reading the chapter on methods alone, and in the case of a quantitative study, with a reasonable prospect of duplicating your findings as well.

6.11.1.4. Results and Discussion
There is debate as to whether these chapters should be integrated or separated. A major consideration is that the discussion does not merely repeat the results. Accordingly, some supervisors prefer you to integrate the two, especially if the range and number of results are large and fall logically into groups that form the basis of separate chapters. Integration of Findings and Discussion is the norm in qualitative research. Alternatively, separating the Results and Discussion may sometimes lead to a better organisation of ideas. In the discussion section you need to present and explore the meaning and significance of research material as evidence. The discussion generally restates principal findings briefly, considers whether they are likely to be valid or biased, and, assuming they are valid, reviews them in the light of relevant previous research.

6.11.1.5. Conclusions
This chapter allows you to provide depth and finality of meaning to the argument advanced in the dissertation. It should not be merely a summary of the previous chapter(s) and certainly not a
paraphrasing of results. There is probably an excellent opportunity to integrate your findings or analysis with the previous literature that was discussed in the literature review. Rather than write the traditional ‘limitations of research’ (many of which typically should have been known before you embarked on the study), consider advancing suggestions for further research as a consequence of this study. Some academics argue that the hallmark of a good dissertation is that it raises more or better questions for further research than it answers.

Most dissertations stand or fall on the basis of this chapter. It is not an addendum, a final few words, or a summary. This is the chapter where your views, research competencies, and substantive knowledge can truly shine. The final chapter is often the hardest to write and you should spend much effort on the Conclusions.

6.11.1.6. References

Ensure that you use an appropriate style. Styles widely used in Public Health are the Vancouver style and the Harvard style. Consistency in formatting the citations in the text and the references is important. Include all references actually used in the dissertation. As this is not a bibliography, there is no place for other sources than those cited in the dissertation. Ensure that there is a perfect match between sources in the text and the reference list. This is a very time consuming task, and it is profitable to become very familiar with your preferred style prior to commencing your dissertation. Endnote is the computer package adopted by the School for organising bibliographic databases and it is recommended that students use it for their dissertations. Please see the Schools Computers Systems Officer for access to this software.

6.11.1.7. Appendices

Include material that is not available elsewhere. The aim is to allow others to replicate your study. Appendices could include copies of research instruments, other and original data. For example, inclusion of survey instruments in an appendix is often a very useful record for future readers of your dissertation who wish to replicate or refine your methods. Do not include items that are clearly recoverable or retrievable by others.

6.11.2. Dissertation Involving a Critique of the Literature

6.11.2.1 Introduction

This section would be the same as for a dissertation involving the analysis of data.

6.11.2.2 Critique of the Literature

A dissertation that involves a critique of the literature will tend to come to some overall judgement regarding policy and practice in public health, whereas in a dissertation involving analysis of data, the conclusions of the literature review will be expressed principally in terms of questions that remain unanswered.

A critique of the literature requires a high level of scholarship. It is not simply a sequence of paragraphs, each describing the methods and results of one previous study. The candidate demonstrates scholarship by the extent of his or her search of the literature, and ability to identify and draw out similarities and differences between particular studies and their conclusions. The latter can be made easier by compiling tables that summarise related reports. A key element in the assessment of a candidate’s performance is the demonstration of critical capacity in terms of identifying shortcomings in methods, deductions or arguments, of the weight given to particular pieces of evidence, and of suggesting novel explanations that draw pieces of the argument together or explain apparent contradictions.

Scholarship is also demonstrated by the apparent as well as the actual organisation of the material. Use of headings and sub-headings allows the candidate to show how the question has been approached and is important in creating in the examiner’s mind the feeling that “this candidate knows what he (or she) is about”. Similarly, there is a lot to be said for deliberately creating a certain “momentum” in the piece such that it comes to lead, almost “inevitably”, to the particular conclusion that the candidate wishes to advance. Thus, it is quite legitimate to identify certain issues in the text and then explicitly to set them aside, as it were, on the grounds that they are peripheral to the question that you wish to address.

Particularly in a long review, and in one that draws upon evidence from several different sources, such as official statistics, laboratory experiments and epidemiological studies, separate chapters may be
warranted. It is as well to introduce each sub-section or chapter carefully and to finish with a concluding paragraph or two that highlights the particular strands of the argument that you wish to draw from that particular source. This again contributes to a sense in the reader’s mind that you have mastered the subject and that you have a clear idea of how it all fits together. It also prevents the examiner “getting lost”, can contribute to the clarity of your own thinking through obliging you to consider what are the most important points to be had from a particular source and adds to the general “tightness” of your writing by “tidying up” each issue before passing on to the next one.

6.11.2.3 Reference to Current Practice

In some dissertations, current practice and policy can be evaluated in light of the critique of the literature. For example, Terina Hill’s dissertation was a review of “The Risks and Benefits of Exercise in Pregnancy”. After reviewing the literature, she included a section that described current policy and practice in Western Australia. This was followed by a chapter of conclusions and guidelines for exercise in pregnancy.

6.11.2.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter allows you to provide depth and finality of meaning to the critique of the literature. Consider advancing suggestions for further research as a consequence of your review. Some academics argue that the hallmark of a good dissertation is that it raises more or better questions for further research than it answers.

This chapter is also the place to state your recommendations for policy and practice. On the basis of the evidence reviewed, you may be able to identify modifications to current practice.