



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

College of Public Health  
*Health Promotion & Behavior*

# **PhD Student Handbook**

## **2025-2026**

[www.publichealth.uga.edu](http://www.publichealth.uga.edu)

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## **I. Introduction**

### **Overview of CPH**

Founded in 2005 as a response to the state's need to address important health concerns in Georgia, the College of Public Health at the University of Georgia is comprised of four academic departments and three research institutes. Located on the UGA Health Sciences Campus, the College offers degree programs in biostatistics, disaster management, environmental health, epidemiology, gerontology, global health, health promotion and behavior, infectious disease epidemiology, public health, and health policy and management. Graduates from the College of Public Health—nationally known for its work related to aging, disaster preparedness, evidence-based practice, global infectious disease, and workplace health—typically go on to a diverse range of careers, including medicine, health education, emergency management, public health policy, environmental science and social work.

### **The PhD in Health Promotion & Behavior**

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Health Promotion & Behavior (HPB) prepares graduates for research, academic, and other leadership positions in health promotion, health behavior, and other related areas of public health. The program of study is interdisciplinary, recognizing that the field of health promotion is complex and draws on knowledge, methods, and perspectives from multiple disciplines to effectively address public health challenges.

### **Overview of The Department**

The Department of Health Promotion & Behavior, through its teaching, research, and service initiatives, generates knowledge about the social and behavioral determinants of health and applies that knowledge to the design, delivery and evaluation of disease prevention and health promotion programs.

### **HPB Faculty Areas of Specialization**

Below is a listing of our faculty members, the institutions from which they earned their terminal degree, their areas of expertise, and their contact information.

**Jenay Beer, PhD (Georgia Tech), Associate Professor.** Associate Director for the Institute of Gerontology. Research Areas: Aging, engineering, psychology, Human-Robot interaction, assistive technology, aging-in-place.  
Email: jenay.beer@uga.edu Office: Hudson 139

**Tamora Callands, PhD (Purdue University), Associate Professor.** Research Areas: Mental and sexual health of women in low-resource countries particularly

West Africa, program implementation, reproductive health, HIV prevention, war-exposed youth.

Email: tamcall@uga.edu

Office: Wright 231

**Robert Coffman, PhD (University of Georgia), Instructor.** Areas of Interest: Tobacco use and cessation, substance use disorders and treatment, HIV/AIDS.

Email: coffra4@uga.edu

Office: Wright 341C

**Stephen Correia, PhD (University of Rhode Island), Associate Professor.**

Institute of Gerontology. Director of Neuropsychology, Cognitive Aging Research & Education (CARE). Research Areas: Dementia and related disorders, aging, neuroimaging.

Email: scorreia@uga.edu

Office: Hudson 100

**Marsha Davis, PhD (University of Minnesota), Professor, Dean.** Director of the Georgia Public Health Training Center. Research Areas: Designing, implementing, and evaluating community-based health promotion programs; childhood obesity; program evaluation; measurement of health behaviors.

Email: davism@uga.edu

Office: Rhodes 205

**Rachel McCardel, PhD (University of Georgia), Instructor.**

Email: rachel.mccardel25@uga.edu

Office: Wright Hall 245C

**Jennifer L. Gay, PhD (University of South Carolina), Associate Professor.**

Research Areas: Physical activity in adolescents and adults; motivation theories; environmental and contextual influences on health behaviors; latent variable modeling; growth and maturation issues in physical activity.

Email: jlgay@uga.edu

Office: Wright 245E

**Sarah Saint Hamilton, PhD (University of Georgia), Clinical Associate**

**Professor.** Institute of Gerontology. Director of Social Support Services, Cognitive Aging Research & Education Center (CARE). Areas of Interest: Lifespan human development, aging, nutrition, visual development, maternal & child health, social work, clinical practice.

Email: saints@uga.edu

Office: Hudson 101

**Nathan Hansen, PhD (Brigham Young University), Professor, Director of Graduate Studies.** Research Areas: Global mental health, cross-cultural intervention and assessment, HIV/AIDS, interpersonal violence and posttraumatic stress symptoms, substance use and sexual risk behavior, behavioral and psychotherapeutic intervention development and evaluation.

Email: nhansen@uga.edu

Office: Wright 333

**Timothy Heckman, PhD (University of Vermont), Professor.** Research Areas:

HIV prevention, mental health interventions for HIV-infected rural persons and older adults, interventions administered by phone and online.  
Email: heckman@uga.edu Office: Wright 327

**Katie Darby Hein, PhD (University of Georgia), Clinical Associate Professor, Internship Coordinator.** Areas of Interest: Community health, women's health, sustainable practices in communities, health disparities.  
Email: khein@uga.edu Office: Wright 151E

**Magnolia Hernandez, PhD (Indiana State University), Clinical Assistant Professor.** Online Practice Coordinator. Areas of Interest: Strategic planning, enrollment and recruitment, student mentorship, education, career development, leadership, teaching management and research.  
Email: magnolia.hernandez@uga.edu Office: Rhodes Hall

**Melissa Howard, PhD (University of Florida), Clinical Associate Professor.** Director of Online Learning and Professional Practice. Areas of Interest: Health promotion program planning and evaluation, maternal, child and adolescent health, alcohol and other substance abuse, health communication and social marketing, community engaged research and practice.  
Email: melissa.howard@uga.edu Office: Rhodes 116D

**Lucy A. Ingram, PhD (University of Alabama at Birmingham), Professor, Department Head.** Research Areas: Racial and ethnic health disparities, sexual and reproductive health, community-engaged approaches to research, building infrastructure to promote health disparities research.  
Email: lucy.ingram@uga.edu Office: Wright 131

**George Mois, PhD (University of Georgia), Assistant Professor.** Areas of Interest: Leveraging technologies to facilitate social connectivity and address the experience of loneliness among older adults, health aging, aging in place, social justice, robotics, extended reality, gerontology, communication technologies, technology embodiment.  
Email: mois@uga.edu Office: Wright 321D

**Jessica L. Muilenburg, PhD (University of Alabama at Birmingham), Professor, ,** Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs and Campus Engagement. Research Areas: Alcohol and drug relapse for those in formal treatment, tobacco cessation in substance abuse treatment facilities, tobacco and substance use in adolescents and young adults, adolescent risky behaviors.  
Email: jlm@uga.edu Office: Wright 331

**Heather Padilla, PhD (University of Georgia), Associate Professor.** Director of the Workplace Health Group. Director of Traffic Safety Research & Evaluation Group. Research Areas: Worksite health, employee well-being, nutrition, weight management, obesity prevention and treatment, chronic disease prevention and management, program evaluation.  
Email: hmpadilla@uga.edu Office: Wright 233

**Christina Proctor, PhD (University of Georgia), Clinical Associate Professor, Undergraduate Coordinator.** Research Areas: Rural health, sexual health, substance use in adolescents, school health, mental health, and farmer well-being.  
Email: cproctor@uga.edu Office: Wright 151C

**Lisa Renzi-Hammond, PhD (University of Georgia), Professor.** Director, Institute of Gerontology. Co-Director of Cognitive Aging Research & Education (CARE). Research Areas: Lifespan sensory, cognitive, and neurological development, relationships between underlying brain structure, sensory integrity, plasticity, cognitive function and risk for disease, dietary intervention, cognitive training, and the promotion of cognitive vitality across the lifespan.  
Email: lrenzi@uga.edu Office: Hudson 135

**(Liyuan) Leah Wang, PhD (University of Southern California), Assistant Professor.** Areas of Interest: Evaluation, health technology, disparities in health, mental health, well-being, and resilience in populations of vulnerable adolescents and young adults.  
Email: wly1115@uga.edu Office: Wright 321B

**Rebecca Wells, PhD (Georgia State University), Clinical Associate Professor, MSW/MPH Coordinator.** Research Areas: Health disparities, medical home model for children with special health care needs, impacts and outcomes of interdisciplinary training in neurodevelopmental disabilities, electronic portfolios for integrated learning and professional development.  
Email: rebecca.wells1@uga.edu Office: Wright 341E

**Don Scott, MD (The University of Chicago), MHS, Adjunct Associate Professor of Medicine, AU/UGA Director of Education in Geriatric Medicine**  
Areas of Expertise: Geriatric Medicine

**Pamela Orpinas, PhD, Professor Emerita**  
Research Areas: Dr. Orpinas has conducted research on the developmental trajectories of children and youth. She has studied peer bullying, dating aggression, and family violence in the United States and Latin America. Her research has focused on improving the lives of immigrants and underserved populations through collaborative, multidisciplinary efforts.

**David M. DeJoy, PhD, Professor Emeritus**  
Research Areas: For the past 40 years, Dr. DeJoy's research has focused on the behavioral aspects of workplace safety and health, with particular emphasis on organizational factors, intervention effectiveness, self-protective behavior, and risk perception/communication.

**Mark G. Wilson, HSD, Professor Emeritus**

Research Areas: Dr. Wilson's research revolves around creating healthy work organizations by developing and evaluating individual, group, environmental and organizational interventions that promote positive health in employed populations. Recent work has consisted of translating efficacious clinical or community programs to worksites and evaluating the effectiveness of these interventions. His general interests lie in worksite health promotion, organizational health, intervention evaluation, and translation of programs.

### **Staff**

#### **Vanessa Valliere, Administrative Coordinator.**

Responsible for managing various administrative areas, including fiscal, logistical, faculty affairs and all incoming inquiries to the department. Provides executive support for the Department Head. Inquiries about building matters, new hires, purchase orders, travel funding and reimbursements.

Email: [vanessa.valliere@uga.edu](mailto:vanessa.valliere@uga.edu)

Office: Wright 127B

#### **Scott Wells, Student Services Associate, Undergraduate & Graduate Program Administrator.**

Responsible for scheduling HPB courses, classrooms, and instructors. Provides student registration overrides and advisements holds. Submits forms to the Graduate School and monitors PhD applications. Handles student-related inquiries related to courses, assistantships, and GradStatus form submissions.

Email: [smw17529@uga.edu](mailto:smw17529@uga.edu)

Office: Wright 128

#### **Darian Williams, Business Manager.**

Responsible for financial logistics in the department. Approves travel authorizations, requisitions, and check requests. Handles inquiries about departmental accounts, faculty buyouts, forms for new or changes in positions, and OneUSG.

Email: [dwill34@uga.edu](mailto:dwill34@uga.edu)

Office: Wright 142

**HPB Department Location:** Wright Hall, 100 Foster Rd. Athens, GA 30602

### **Wright Hall**

- **Bathrooms:** Located on every floor. The first-floor bathroom is by the Wright Hall Annex, Room 150. The second and third floor bathrooms are in the center of the building across from the stairs. There is also a unisex bathroom on the third floor, Room 354.
- **Lactation Room:** Available on the second floor, Room 254. A code is needed, contact either Scott Wells or Vanessa Valliere.
- **Student Computer Labs/Community Spaces:** There are designated student labs in Rooms 124 & 324. There are also community GRA/GTA spaces in various pods throughout the building.
- **Virtual Reality (VR) Lab (Coming Soon)**
- **Building Access:** The Wright Hall doors are open Monday through Friday, 7am-6:30pm. You will not be able to enter the building after this time unless you have been granted after-hours access. If you need after-hours access,



please inform Vanessa Valliere at least 24 hours in advance, providing your reason and 810# so a request can be submitted.

## **II. Guidelines & Regulations**

### **Graduate School Information**

#### **Graduate School Policies**

The University of Georgia Graduate School policies govern the administration of the Ph.D. degree program. See [Graduate Policies - UGA Graduate School](#) for information on specific academic procedures and regulations. Any changes in University policies will override the requirements stated in this handbook.

#### **Graduate School Forms**

There are numerous forms that students must submit throughout their graduate studies. For access to all required forms, consult the [Graduate School webpage](#) . Students should not rely on their academic advisor to know how and when to submit the necessary forms. Rather, it is the responsibility of graduate students to ensure correct and timely submission. If in doubt, ask the graduate program administrator or the director of graduate studies.

## **III. Roles & Responsibilities of Students**

### **Academic Integrity**

UGA seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and the university community. Academic honesty is vital to the very fabric and integrity of the university. Academic honesty is defined as completing all academic work without cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed. All students are required to follow the academic honesty policy. All members of the university community are responsible for creating and maintaining an honest university and for knowing and understanding the policy on academic honesty. A Culture of Honesty is the academic honesty policy and procedures of the University of Georgia. The policy is available online at [honesty.uga.edu](http://honesty.uga.edu).

These procedures are designed to protect academic integrity while providing due process when suspected violations of the academic honesty policy occur. The academic honesty process is adopted by the university to further its academic mission. In the interest of fairness, the policy requires notice to a student accused of violating this policy. The policy first provides for a Facilitated Discussion between the student and the instructor to seek a fair resolution to the alleged violation.

If a matter is not resolved through a Facilitated Discussion, the policy allows for a Continued Discussion with an Academic Honesty Panel. These procedures are designed to 1) protect the rights and interests of students and the university community, 2) guarantee fairness to all, and 3) ensure order. The forums used in academic honesty matters are designed to be educational while providing appropriate consequences when academic dishonesty occurs. The goals of this academic honesty policy are to: Foster a culture of academic honesty at the university. Maintain the integrity and academic reputation of the university. Process, fairly and consistently, cases of potential academic dishonesty.

### **Financial Aid & Awards**

The departments offer assistantships involving teaching responsibilities, research, and special services. To receive reduced tuition, the graduate assistant must be hired for a minimum of 13 hours per week and be paid at the approved rate for that college. The compensation is based on degree level and the number of hours. Students should check with the department's Director of Graduate Studies for details.

The Graduate School offers assistantships and fellowships, which are awarded on a university-wide competitive basis. Out-of-state students not supported by an assistantship may apply to the Graduate School for a waiver of out-of-state tuition. Please contact your Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate Program Administrator if you are interested in waiving your out-of-state tuition. The University participates in the Federally-sponsored Work/Study Program. Based on evidence of financial need, students may qualify for this program and be assigned to a variety of responsibilities around the campus. This program permits the student to work 10-25 hours per week. Approval of the Graduate School is required for work hours and course load.

The University has a large number of loan funds to assist students, which are administered by the Office of Financial Aid located in the Academic Building. Please check the stipulations regarding their use. Any student desiring information regarding financial aid should explore these possibilities with the Financial Aid staff at: <http://www.uga.edu/osfa/>.

### **Assistantships**

**Assistantships are not guaranteed and are awarded depending on funding and student performance and progression through the program.** To receive a tuition waiver, the student must be paid on a graduate assistantship for 33-50% time, work for 60% of the semester, and be registered for 12 graduate credit hours. Any student with an assistantship in the fall and spring semesters will have their tuition waived for the summer semester. Professional programs, training grants, audit hours, and undergraduate courses do not qualify for assistantship tuition waivers. If these requirements are not met, the tuition waiver will be

revoked, and the student will be responsible for all tuition. Health insurance is mandatory for all students on assistantships and can only be waived if the student receives health insurance from another source. If a student receives an assistantship, they are required to work in the office for 13-20 hours per week depending on their allotted time percentage. There are circumstances where assistantship hours can also decrease in hours (i.e., 20 to 13 hours) and in terms of months (i.e., 9 months to 12 months). The student should be aware that assistantships are not guaranteed from year to year, nor are the number of hours or number of months guaranteed. If awarded a teaching assistantship, attendance at the teaching assistantship meetings is mandatory.

### **Advising & Course Registration**

#### **Advising:**

Upon admission to our programs, students will be assigned an initial advisor who can offer general academic advice in addition to that provided by the director of graduate studies of their selected areas of emphasis. Students who receive an offer of assistantship at the time of acceptance in the program should consider their assistantship supervisor to be their major advisor upon matriculation. It is possible to change advisors as students meet new faculty and further refine research interests. It is advisable to finalize determination of one's major professor by the end of year 1 to avoid delays in meeting academic milestones. The Director of Graduate Studies will serve as a temporary academic advisor for students who are transitioning between labs to support the student's identification of a permanent advisor.

#### **Registration Clearance for Students who have been advised:**

- Scott Wells is responsible for clearing students in Health Promotion and Behavior to register and in HPRB POD (Permission of Department) and POM (Permission of Major) classes. Wright Hall, Rm 128. Email: [smw17529@uga.edu](mailto:smw17529@uga.edu)
- Nichole Thomas is responsible for clearing students in Biostatistics and Epidemiology to register, and clearing students for BIOS/EPID POD (Permission of Department) and POM (Permission of Major) classes. B.S. Miller Hall, Rm 106. Email: [nthomas@uga.edu](mailto:nthomas@uga.edu)
- Amanda Cantey is responsible for clearing students in Health Policy and Management for registration, and in POD and POM classes for the HPAM department. Wright Hall, Rm 104. Email: [acole23@uga.edu](mailto:acole23@uga.edu)
- Kate Wisenbaker is responsible for clearing students in the Environmental Health Sciences department to register and in EHS POD (Permission of Department) and POM (Permission of Major) classes. Environmental Health Science Building, Rm 205. Email: [ehs-studentservices@uga.edu](mailto:ehs-studentservices@uga.edu)
- Dr. Kerstin Gerst Emerson will serve as the contact person for students in the Gerontology concentration, and who wish to register in GRNT POD

(Permission of Department) and POM (Permission of Major) classes. Hudson Hall, 101 Spear Road. Email: [emerson@uga.edu](mailto:emerson@uga.edu)

- Dr. Curtis Harris will serve as the contact person for students in the Disaster Management concentration and who wish to register in DMAN POD (Permission of Department) and POM (Permission of Major) classes. 105 Bowstrom Road. Email: [cuharris@uga.edu](mailto:cuharris@uga.edu)

## **IV. PhD General Information**

### **Competencies**

After completing the Ph.D. program, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze and interpret research results and epidemiological data to identify research questions, knowledge gaps, and methodological shortcomings that if addressed, hold potential for advancing our understanding of public health problems.
2. Design and execute research studies based on theories of behavior and social change that address important empirical questions related to health behavior, disease and injury prevention.
3. Utilize appropriate research designs, data collection strategies, and quantitative and qualitative analytic methods to conduct research on health behavior and disease and injury prevention.
4. Choose appropriate scholarly communication channels to share research results, disseminate evidence-based strategies and approaches, and otherwise share in the critical exchange of ideas and solutions pertinent to health behavior and disease and injury prevention.
5. Collaborate with other public health researchers and professionals through team-based project work or through processes of peer review and feedback.
6. Integrate principles of good ethical practice and cultural sensitivity in all aspects of research, teaching, and professional practice.
7. Prepare research proposals guided by behavioral theory and include appropriate research methodology.

## **Coursework**

The individual program of study is determined by the Major Professor, the student's Advisory Committee, and the student. Each program of study must meet the requirements of the Graduate School and the Department of Health Promotion & Behavior. The general distribution of courses is as follows:

### **A. Master-Level Competencies**

Doctoral students must demonstrate competency in the core master-level health promotion courses and basic research methods, by taking the courses at UGA or demonstrating equivalent knowledge. The student's Major Professor, with approval from the Director of Graduate Studies, decides whether to include these courses in the student's program of study. If needed, these courses should be taken as early as possible in the student's program of study:

PBHL 7100 Introduction to Public Health  
HPRB 7270 Resource Development and Program Implementation in Health Promotion  
HPRB 7470 Program Evaluation in Health Promotion and Health Education  
HPRB 7510 Health Promotion Research Methods  
HPRB 7920 Health Behavior

**B. GradFIRST seminar (GRSC 7001).** The GradFIRST seminar (GRSC 7001) is intended to supplement discipline-specific graduate training with focused professional development and networking opportunities with faculty and other graduate students across UGA's campuses. GradFIRST seminars are 1-credit courses (GRSC 7001) taught by UGA graduate program faculty. More information on the GradFIRST seminar series is available at <http://grad.uga.edu/gradfirst>.

**C. Health Behavior Core.** The health behavior core courses provide an in-depth understanding of (1) the ecology of health and the etiology of disease, (2) the theoretical foundations of health-related behavior, and (3) the application of this knowledge to the design and evaluation of health promotion and education interventions. The following courses constitute the core requirements of the doctoral program:

HPRB 8510 Research Methods I  
HPRB 8420 Theory and Research in Health Behavior  
HPRB 8520 Research Methods II OR HPRB 8530 Multivariate Statistics in the Behavioral Health Sciences  
HPRB 8430 Intervention and Evaluation of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

**D. Elective Area Requirements (12-15 Credit Hours).** The electives serve to enhance the student's content background and research competencies. *Students will work directly with their major professor to determine the most appropriate classes for their area of interest.*

**E. Research Methods.** PhD students are expected to demonstrate a high level of methodological skills pertinent to the field of health promotion and behavior and their specific research interests and professional career objectives. Research methods are organized in three areas: Basic Research Competencies, Advanced Research Competencies, and Doctoral Research Seminars.

- 1) **Basic Research Competencies (6 Credit Hours).** Doctoral students must demonstrate competency in basic statistics through correlation and multiple regression. Students who do not have these skills must complete one of these two series of courses:

BIOS 7010 Biostatistics I  
BIOS 7020 Biostatistics II  
OR  
ERSH 8310 Applied Analysis of Variance  
ERSH 8320 Applied Correlation and Regression

- 2) **Advanced Research Methods (16-19 Credit Hours).** Students must successfully complete 12 hours of advanced methods courses. This sequence should be planned in consultation with the Major Professor and approved by the Advisory Committee, and should be of sufficient depth and focus to fully support the planned dissertation work.

- 3) **Doctoral Research Seminars (1-4 Credit Hours).** Students will complete 4 hours of doctoral seminar by enrolling in 2 hours of HPRB 8990 for the spring semester of the third year and fall semester of the fourth year. The purpose of this seminar is to provide students with personal and professional development pertaining to post-doctoral employment and career planning. Students must have passed written and oral comprehensive exams prior to enrolling in this seminar. If HPRB 8990 is not being offered, students may substitute the course with GRSC 7001. The remaining 3 credit hours must be substituted by taking another cognate or research course. Consult with your advisor and/or the Director of Graduate Studies.

In addition, students can take a maximum of 18 credit hours of doctoral research (HPRB 9000), before they are admitted to candidacy. Graded S/U.

**F. Dissertation Research (3-30 Credit Hours).** Doctoral dissertation writing (HPRB 9300) can be taken only after admission to candidacy. NOTE: After admission to candidacy, a student must register for at least 10 hours of

dissertation or other appropriate credit, prior to graduation. Please check with the Graduate School for questions specific to this policy.

**G. Continuous Enrollment.** All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must maintain continuous enrollment from matriculation until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) credits in at least two semesters per academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer), including the 3 hours of *Graduate* credit that is required for registration during the semester in which degree requirements are complete, until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated.

**Leave of Absence:** A leave of absence provides a mechanism for students experiencing unusual circumstance to be exempt temporarily from the continuous enrollment policy. A leave of absence requires approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the Graduate School. A leave of absence will be granted only for good cause such as serious medical and health-related events, major financial and employment issues, adoption or fostering of a child, child care, elder care, and other significant family issues, or other major personal circumstances that interfere with the ability to undertake graduate study.

An approved leave of absence stands in lieu of registering for the minimum of 3 credits for each semester for which the leave of absence is granted. During a leave of absence, students may not use UGA facilities, resources, or services designed or intended only for enrolled students; receive a graduate assistantship, fellowship, or financial aid from the University; or take any UGA courses related to their program of study. The amount of time approved for leave of absence will not count toward time limits governing a graduate degree. The Request for Leave of Absence from Graduate Enrollment can be found [here](#).

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## **V. Administration of the Program**

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### **General Requirements**

1. **Residence:** Residence, a UGA requirement, is defined as completing at least 30 semester hours of consecutive coursework. This requirement can be obtained through combinations, such as 15 credit hours over 2 semesters or 3 credit hours over 10 semesters. Summers can be counted toward residence. However, if the student does not enroll in summer classes, the summer semester is not counted against the residence requirement.

2. Time Limitations: All requirements except the dissertation and final oral examination must be completed within a period of 6 years. This time requirement dates from the first registration for graduate courses on a student's program of study. Coursework will start to expire at the end of these 6 years if the student is not admitted into candidacy. A doctoral candidate, who fails to complete the final dissertation defense within 5 years after passing comprehensive examinations and admission to candidacy, will be required to take the comprehensive examinations again and be admitted to candidacy a second time.
3. Transfer of Credit: **No courses taken prior to a doctoral student's admission to their degree program at The University of Georgia are eligible for transfer.** Doctoral students who have matriculated as prospective candidates into the degree program may take courses at other accredited institutions and transfer up to nine semester credits to the UGA program of study. These courses must constitute a logical part of the student's program and must be approved by the Major Professor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Transferred courses may not have a grade below a "B" and may not have been used in a degree program at another institution. All requests for transfer of credit, with accompanying official transcripts, must be in the Graduate School at least 30 days prior to the time the student plans to graduate.

Courses transferred for the doctoral degree may not be used in fulfilling the requirement that a minimum of 16 hours of 8000/9000-level courses be included on the program of study or the university's residency requirement.

4. Admission to Candidacy:
  - A. The *Final Doctoral Program of Study (G138)* must be submitted by the student in GradStatus and approved by the Doctoral Advisory Committee and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to taking comprehensive exams and applying for Admission to Candidacy. The *Final Doctoral Program of Study* must show all graduate courses relevant to the doctoral program (including master-level courses and courses approved from other universities), in addition to courses satisfying the minimum degree requirement. The final program of study should include at least 16 hours of 8000/9000 level classes that do not include 9000, 9005, or 9300. Assistantship hours (9005) should never be included on any program of study. **Doctoral Dissertation Writing (HPRB 9300) (minimum of 3 credits, graded S/U) must be on the final program of study.**
  - B. After completing the required coursework and as a prerequisite to admission to candidacy, the student must pass the comprehensive doctoral examination (written and oral).

### **Major Professor/Advisor**



The student's Major Professor advises and mentors the student throughout the program. The Major Professor will assist the student in choosing courses, signing off on official Graduate School documents, and chairing the student's advisory committee.

### **Doctoral Advisory Committee**

The Major Professor and the doctoral student decide the composition of the Doctoral Advisory Committee. Although UGA requires at least three members on the doctoral committee, HPB requires four. The Advisory Committee consists of a Major Professor (generally, this person is also the advisor and the chair of the committee) plus at least three other members. The composition of the committee has the following restrictions:

- At least three members of the Advisory Committee must have graduate faculty status, including the chair.
  - At least two members must be from HPB.
  - At least one member's primary affiliation must be from outside of HPB.
  - Two Co-Major Professors may be appointed to the committee, but they will count as one person for the purpose of number of committee members.
  - No more than one committee member can be a non-UGA faculty, who holds a terminal degree in their field of study. This person must be nominated by the Director of Graduate Studies and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. The person's vitae and a letter of justification must be sent to the Dean for approval.
  - If the student decides to have a five-member committee, at least three of them should be from HPB and at least three must have graduate status.
- ★ Once the student has settled on the committee members, the student must submit the *Advisory Committee* form (G130) to the Graduate School in GradStatus. The *Advisory Committee* form can be submitted as early as the end of the first year in residence and no later than the end of the second year of residence.
- ★ Graduate students will use their Enrolled Student Progress Portal to select or propose their Major Professor and to propose members for their Graduate Advisory Committee.

## **Annual Review of Doctoral Students**

The Graduate Faculty of the Department of Health Promotion & Behavior will meet annually to evaluate the progress of doctoral students toward completion of their degrees. This evaluation is conducted to advise students as to the feasibility of continuance in the program. Students will be evaluated on program competencies, course progression, and professionalism. After the meeting, students will receive a letter informing them about the decision on their progress toward degree completion. Students who receive an "unsatisfactory" evaluation will plan a course of action with their advisor and Director of Graduate Studies to improve their progress. Students who receive an "unsatisfactory" evaluation a second year may be withdrawn from the program. Please see below milestones related to annual reviews.

### **Research Competency**

Before beginning the comprehensive examination, the student must provide evidence of competence in designing and conducting research. This evidence may include one or more of the following:

1. A Master's degree thesis that is presented to the student's advisor during the first semester of study at UGA.
2. A "Thesis Equivalent" that is completed during the student's matriculation in the Ph.D. program at UGA (generally prior to the completion of 27 semester hours of coursework).
3. Research project(s) completed after beginning the Ph.D. program at UGA that involved faculty as mentors. The student must provide evidence of leadership or significant contribution to the overall development, conduct, and interpretation of the research rather than just being a member of a research team.

The student's Major Professor or the Advisory Committee initially approves the evidence of research competency, and then, the information is forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies for final approval.

### **Comprehensive Doctoral Examination**

Doctoral students must pass formal, comprehensive written and oral examinations before being admitted to candidacy. The exam includes three areas: cognate, research methods, and the health behavior core. **Students must complete the comprehensive examination by their 5<sup>th</sup> semester unless they have special permission from advisory committee and department (Fall of 3<sup>rd</sup> year or equivalent) to avoid an "Unsatisfactory" in the annual evaluation.**

## **Written Comprehensive Examination**

1. The Advisory Committee administers this examination.
2. The criteria below guide the preparation for the examination. The nature of responses will vary from question to question and from area to area. In general, however, responses will be evaluated using the following criteria:
  - a. The response is relevant to the question.
  - b. The response is detailed and indicates depth of knowledge.
  - c. Ideas are logically developed.
  - d. Statements and ideas are documented, using available research.
  - e. Scholarly writing is used (e.g., correct citations, well-structured paragraphs, correct grammar and spelling, and clarity of presentation).
3. The Advisory Committee members will evaluate the examination. The Advisory Committee will have 3 weeks from the date the exam is returned to submit their grade to the Major Professor. Each examiner will report to the Major Professor a single grade of pass or fail. The student may receive one failing vote and still pass the exam, provided all other votes are positive. Two failing votes indicate a failed exam. The major professor's/co-major professors' vote of approval is required for the student to pass the examination. An abstention is not an appropriate vote for comprehensive examinations. The Major Professor will report the results to the student, the Advisory Committee, and the Director of Graduate Studies.
4. A student who fails the written preliminary examination may be scheduled for re-examination once only. The Major Professor must notify the Director of Graduate Studies of the failed exam. Further, the Major Professor must also notify the Director of Graduate Studies *at least* 3 weeks prior to the re-examination.
5. Mechanics of Administration - Written Examination
  - a. The student receives the exam questions on the approved date and has 7 days from that date to return the responses to the Major Professor. The student must submit an electronic copy. The Advisory Committee and the Director of Graduate Studies must approve any deviation from this time frame *before the beginning of the exam*. If the exam is not returned within the 7 days, then the student will fail the exam and must retake it, unless an exception is made by the Advisory Committee and Director of Graduate Studies.
  - b. The student may use any books, journals, notes, or other materials to answer the questions.
  - c. All questions on the exam must be answered.
  - d. The student may not consult with other faculty, students, practitioners, or experts who may provide answers to the exam questions.
  - e. Per the Graduate Bulletin, the master's thesis demonstrates independent judgment in developing a problem from primary sources, and a dissertation represents originality in research, independent thinking,

scholarly ability, and technical mastery of a field of study. It is the responsibility of the advisory committee to review and evaluate the thesis or dissertation as a representation of a student's individual effort. As such, the use of generative AI in theses and dissertations is considered unauthorized assistance per the Academic Code of Honesty and is prohibited unless specifically authorized by members of the advisory committee for use within the approved scope. If approved by the advisory committee, the extent of generative AI usage should be disclosed in a statement within the thesis or dissertation.

### **Oral Comprehensive Examination**

After the student passes the written comprehensive exam, the student must pass an oral defense. The Graduate School will announce this oral comprehensive examination, which is open to all members of the university community.

- ★ **The Department Director of Graduate Studies must notify the Graduate School of the time and place of this examination *at least 2 weeks before the date of the examination.***
- ★ **It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Administrator in time for the Comprehensive Exam Announcement to be completed.**

The examination will be scheduled within 1 month following notification of successful completion of the written comprehensive examination.

1. The oral examination will be directed mostly toward a discussion of the content of the written comprehensive examination. However, it may include the entire field of study. The examination may also include discussion of the dissertation prospectus but may not be a substitute for the examination of the proposal.
2. Each member of the Advisory Committee will cast a written vote of "pass" or "fail." At least three of the four possible votes must be positive to pass.
3. The Major Professor will report the results to the Department Director of Graduate Studies who will forward a formal report to the Graduate School.
4. A student who fails the oral comprehensive examination may be scheduled for re-examination once only.
5. The student can apply for doctoral candidacy after passing the oral comprehensive exam.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

Admission to candidacy for a doctoral student is requested immediately after the successful completion of the comprehensive oral examination. The following is a complete list of requirements for admission to candidacy:

1. All prerequisites set as a condition to admission have been satisfactorily completed.
2. Research skills requirements, if applicable, have been met.
3. The final program of study has been approved by the advisory committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Dean of the Graduate School.
4. An average of 3.0 (B) has been maintained on all graduate courses taken and on all completed courses on the program of study (no course with a grade below C+ may be placed on the final program of study).
5. Written and oral comprehensive examinations have been passed and reported to the Graduate School.
6. The advisory committee, including any necessary changes in the membership, is confirmed and all its members have been notified of their appointment.
7. The residence requirement has been met.

★ **The student must submit the Application for Admission to Candidacy form (G162) in GradStatus to the Graduate School as soon as possible following the completion of these requirements.**

Candidacy begins on the date the form is received in the Graduate School. After admission to candidacy, a student must register for at least ten credits of dissertation or other appropriate graduate credit during the degree program's completion. Students planning to graduate the same semester they enter candidacy must be admitted to candidacy by the published deadline for candidacy during that semester and register for ten hours. The student must also meet all other deadlines for graduation in that semester. A student must register for at least three credit hours in any semester when using University facilities, faculty or staff time.

Time Limit on Candidacy. The dissertation must be completed within 5 years following admission to candidacy to qualify for graduation. If a doctoral student's candidacy expires after the first week of classes in the final semester, the student is

granted the remainder of the semester to complete degree requirements without special permission of the Dean of the Graduate School.

### **Dissertation**

1. Dissertation Planning. Students pursuing a Ph.D. must complete a dissertation on a subject related to their major field of study. The dissertation must represent originality in research, independent thinking, scholarly ability, and technical mastery of a field of study. Its conclusions must be logical, its literary form must be acceptable, and its contribution to knowledge should merit publication.

The dissertation must provide the student with an educational experience that enables the student to: (1) make a significant contribution to the field of health promotion & behavior; and (2) develop knowledge and skills that contributes to the theoretical, conceptual, empirical, or practice base in the field of health promotion & behavior. At minimum, the dissertation should contribute to at least one of these knowledge bases. The dissertation should be an original study of a contemporary public health problem relevant to health promotion & behavior based on social and behavioral science theory.

The dissertation must include all of the following: (1) identification of the social and behavioral science theory used to inform the study, (2) conceptualization of the study research questions and hypotheses, (3) development of the study research design and methods, and (4) interpretation of study results. These activities are conducted under the direction of the student's dissertation committee.

It is most important that the people who serve on the Advisory Committee, at the time the dissertation research is undertaken, be those faculty members most knowledgeable in the areas of the student's research. They should be selected irrespective of their departmental affiliation. Sometimes it will be appropriate for the membership of the Advisory Committee to remain unchanged during a student's entire doctoral program, while at other times changes in original committee will be necessary.

NOTE: It is strongly suggested that students use citation management software for courses, the dissertation proposal, and the dissertation. Please ask your major professor for guidance in this process.

2. Examination of the Dissertation Prospectus (The Proposal). When the Major Professor certifies that the dissertation prospectus is satisfactory, it must be formally considered by the Advisory Committee in a meeting with the student. This formal consideration may not replace the comprehensive oral examination. **Students must complete the prospectus by their 6th semester unless granted special permission by the Advisory Committee and department (Spring of 3<sup>rd</sup> year or equivalent) to avoid an "Unsatisfactory" in the annual evaluation.**

- a. The prospectus generally includes Chapters 1 (Introduction and Statement of Purpose), 2 (Review of the Literature), and 3 (Methods), as well as the references cited and appendices.
- b. The student will provide an electronic copy of the prospectus to all members of the committee at least 3 weeks prior to the examination.
- c. Approval of the prospectus signifies that members of the Advisory Committee believe that it proposes a satisfactory research study. Approval of the prospectus requires the agreement of all members of the Advisory Committee except one, as endorsed by their signatures on the appropriate form which, together with this approved prospectus, is filed with the Director of Graduate Studies.
- d. Before starting data collection, the Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects (<http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso/>) must approve the student the study.

The Major Professor has the primary responsibility for guiding research, but the student should consult all members of the Advisory Committee to draw upon their expertise in relevant areas.

3. Dissertation Approval and Defense. Prior to the student's Dissertation and Oral Exam, the student will submit the Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) *Submission Approval (G129)* form on GradStatus. When the Major Professor is satisfied with the completed dissertation, the Major Professor will distribute copies of the dissertation to the other members of the Advisory Committee, will schedule a final oral defense, and will notify the Graduate School. Subsequently, the Graduate School will announce the time and place of the defense of the dissertation to the University community.

- ★ **Student or advisor must notify Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Program Administrator to submit *Dissertation Defense Announcement (G119)* in GradStatus to the Graduate School at least two weeks before defending.**
- ★ **The student is responsible for completing the *Approval Form for Doctoral Dissertation and Final Oral Examination (G164)* in GradStatus.**

The committee members will have 3 weeks to read and evaluate the completed dissertation. Written assent of all committee members except one is required before a dissertation is approved as ready for a final defense. If the Advisory Committee declines to approve the dissertation as ready for the final defense, the Major Professor will notify the student and the Graduate School. Dissertation defenses are open to the public.

The Major Professor will chair the dissertation defense. All members of the Advisory Committee except one must approve the dissertation and must certify their approval in writing. The results of the dissertation defense must be

reported to the Graduate School at least 2 weeks prior to graduation. The date (year) on the dissertation's title page should be the same as the date (year) on which the dissertation is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, after approval by the Advisory Committee.

4. Dissertation Format. Students will have the option of developing a dissertation using the traditional format or using journal articles as chapters. The student must notify the Major Professor and committee of the preferred choice before the prospectus defense. Subsequent changes in the format must be approved by the committee. Documentation and format must be consistent throughout the dissertation or thesis. The final format must conform to the Graduate School *Theses and dissertations: Student Guide to preparation and processing*.

The Graduate School requires electronic submission of the dissertation and thesis. Students can choose between two dissertation formats:

- a. Traditional Format. Although not all dissertations or theses follow the same format, most students' final document will comprise five chapters, plus references and appendices:
  - 1) Introduction
  - 2) Review of the Literature
  - 3) Methods
  - 4) Results and Discussion
  - 5) Summary, Conclusions, and RecommendationsDeviations from this format must be approved by the Major Professor.
- b. Journal Articles as Chapters. This format permits the inclusion of two or more manuscripts for the doctoral degree (or one or more manuscripts for the master's degree), which have been submitted or are ready to be submitted to scholarly journals, as chapters or sections of the dissertation or thesis. All manuscripts, whether submitted or not, must be approved by the Major Professor and Advisory Committee as publishable quality manuscripts (three of four committee members must agree). Each manuscript must be prepared in the style of the scientific journal and blend appropriately with the other parts of the document, except where the specific journal requires otherwise (e.g. literature citations, table designations). However, figures and tables should include a chapter and figure/table designation (e.g. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) both in the text and caption so that no figure/table number occurs more than once in the dissertation or thesis. No reprints or photocopies of reprints will be accepted. The Graduate School requires the following minimum sections or chapters:
  1. Introduction
  2. Review of the Literature
  3. Manuscript one
  4. Manuscript two



5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations (this section ties together the major results of both papers)

If the student follows this format, the student must be the first author of each article included in the dissertation or thesis. The names of all authors, in the order submitted to the journal, and the name of the journal (with volume, page numbers, and date if known) must be given as a footnote to the title on the first page of each manuscript, to indicate the current status of each manuscript. Continuous pagination is required throughout the dissertation or thesis. The usual requirements for margins, consistency in chapter section titles, and other mechanics as specified in the Graduate School dissertation or thesis guidelines will apply. The student must include evidence of permission to use articles that have been published or accepted for publication. The student is responsible for securing copyright releases prior to submitting the dissertation or thesis to the Graduate School.

5. Admission to Candidacy Requirement. The Graduate School shall not accept a thesis or dissertation if the student has not been admitted to candidacy for the degree. Admission to candidacy occurs after a successful comprehensive exam.

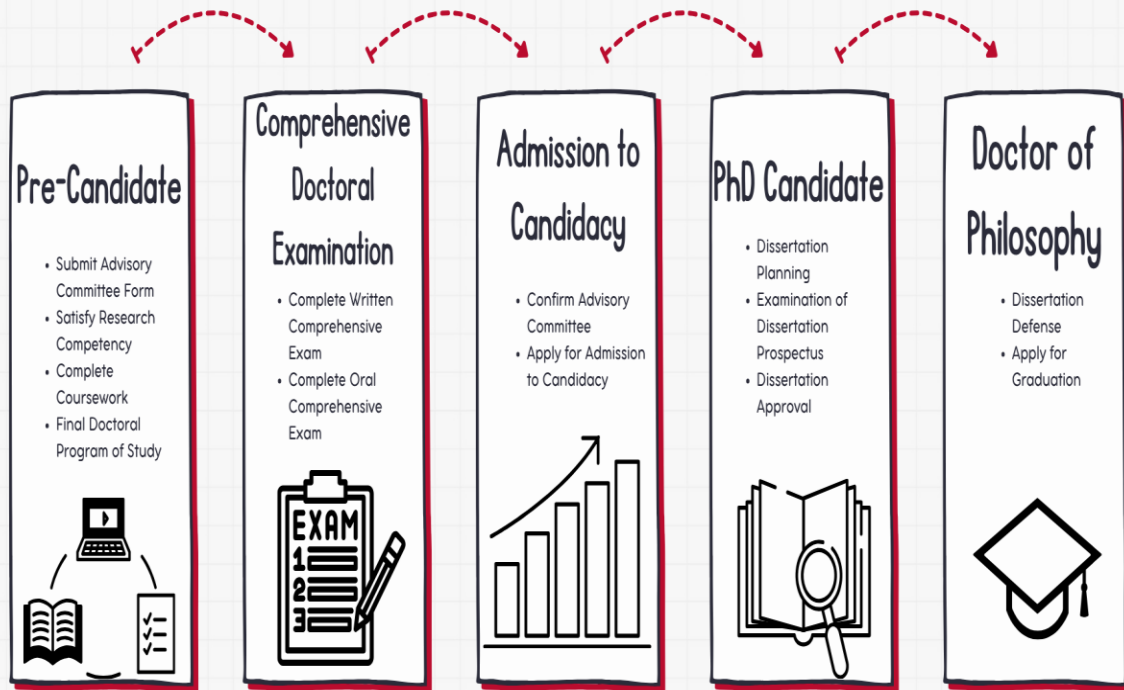
### **Graduation**

Graduate candidates expecting to graduate should consult the Graduate Bulletin for information regarding graduation requirements. Graduate candidates should also contact the Director of Graduate Studies' office in their academic department or email [gradinfo@uga.edu](mailto:gradinfo@uga.edu) for general information regarding graduation requirements. Graduate commencement exercises are held in spring and fall. Students completing requirements during summer have the option to participate in the fall graduate commencement ceremony.

### **Visual Timeline**

Below you will find a graphic timeline that depicts the major milestones you can expect to achieve during your time as a PhD student.

## PHD GENERAL TIMELINE



### VI. UGA Resources

#### **Academic Writing & Teaching**

Writing and teaching are skills that can always be improved. Every student should take advantage of UGA resources that help to improve writing and teaching skills.

- Visit the UGA Writing Center for help with writing skills at: <http://writingcenter.english.uga.edu/>.
- Visit the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at <http://www.isd.uga.edu/> for teaching aids. They also have special help for teaching assistants.

#### **Housing**

The university offers graduate student housing for single individuals, as well as families. Please check [https://housing.uga.edu/site/register\\_famgrad](https://housing.uga.edu/site/register_famgrad) for housing options on the main campus. For housing specific to Public Health Students, visit [https://housing.uga.edu/site/register\\_medical\\_partnership](https://housing.uga.edu/site/register_medical_partnership). This housing option is on the Health Sciences campus and is reserved for Public Health and Medical Students ONLY. Units may be leased for an individual family or can be shared between TWO residents. Both residents, however, must be public health or medical students. All University housing assignments are made according to the date the completed housing application and deposit are received.

The Department of University Housing maintains a bulletin board (on the first floor of Russell Hall) that is used to advertise off-campus rental housing (apartments, houses, duplexes, trailers, rooms, and roommate ads). Additionally, the Department of Housing has compiled an apartment listing handout. For more information, contact the Department of University Housing. Additionally, listing and inserts (such as the Apartment Blue Book; Rental Community Guide) in the local newspapers, as well as notices on bulletin boards located around campus, may be helpful in locating available housing. Department of University Housing University of Georgia, Russell Hall Athens, GA 30602-5575 Phone: (706) 542-1421 | Fax: (706) 542-8595 <https://www.housing.uga.edu/>

### **Libraries and Student Learning Center**

The University of Georgia Library is the largest university library in the state and is a member of the Association of Research Libraries. Thus, the Library is equipped to provide comprehensive services to students involving nationwide resources for both curricular and research needs. Numerous online books and journal articles can be retrieved at: <http://www.libs.uga.edu/>.

The principal libraries on campus are: • Main Library (on North Campus) 706/ 542-3251 • Science Library (on South Campus) 706/ 542-0698 • Miller Learning Center (North Campus, electronic library) 706-542-7000 • Special Collections Libraries-visit <http://www.libs.uga.edu/scl/> for information on the three libraries and their offerings. • Student Learning Center 706/ 542-7000. Please visit this center at <http://www.slc.uga.edu/>. It provides numerous resources for students. Additional libraries can be found by visiting <http://www.libs.uga.edu/locations/main>.

### **Parking Services**

Campus is divided up into permit required areas and short-term pay lots. Permits are distributed based on a unique priority system that takes into account factors such as cumulative hours for students, and years of service for employees. Customers should expect to ride the free bus and/or walk. It is unrealistic to expect to find parking right outside the dorm or building. Time management skills and scheduling around transportation requirements are necessary for a campus the size of UGA. Everyone must display a parking permit at all times on campus for the assigned lot.

Information on registration for parking is sent via email to all students. Check myUGA email frequently. For more information:  
<http://www.parking.uga.edu/>Health Sciences Campus (HSC) contains permit lots as well as visitor parking. Additionally, a campus bus route transports students between South Campus and HSC every 20 minutes. The HSC permit allows students to park in any location on the campus. For HSC parking map, 31 visit <https://tps.uga.edu/sites/default/files/docs/hsc.pdf>.

### **UGA Email & MyID**

Official university e-mail communications to students will be sent to the student's UGAMail account. In order to create an email account, a student must first have a UGA MyID. Please access this website in order to create an account: [https://eits.uga.edu/access\\_and\\_security/myid/](https://eits.uga.edu/access_and_security/myid/). This MyID can be used to log onto email, eLearning Commons and some computer labs on campus. All students need a UGA Card to withdraw books from the library, access HSC buildings after hours, the Ramsey Center, purchase student tickets to university events, and get into dining halls and residence halls.

To obtain a UGA card, complete a Student Application Form at the Cashier's Window in the Tate Student Center. Bring a photo identification and proof of registration. The Cashier's Window is open 9:30-4:00 Monday-Friday during regular academic semesters. For details, check: [www.uga.edu/ugacard](http://www.uga.edu/ugacard). Students who need to have access to the Coverdell Building or HSC buildings after office hours will need to get a Proximity Card. Contact Diane Baird, in the Dean's Office (dsbaird@uga.edu), for details.

UGA ID Number: Although students will use the social security number for class registration and University payrolls, the UGACard will have a 16 digit identification number that will remain the entire time at UGA.

- The first six digits are alike on all UGA ID cards (627541). This is the UGA identifier.
- The next nine digits are the ID number. It will begin with 810 followed by six unique numbers assigned to the student.
- The last digit is the issue number. This number will change each time the student replaces the card.
- For access to services where that use a keypad rather, students MUST enter the 10 digit ID number (beginning with 810 or 811 and include the current issue number at the end).

### **University Health Center**

The University Health Center is a state-of-the-art outpatient healthcare facility that provides a large number of medical services to students. They have specialty care clinics and departments for a range of services including Allergy, Dental, Dermatology, Massage Therapy, Physical Therapy, Radiology, Sports Medicine, Travel Clinic, Urgent Care, Vision, & Women's Services. Check their website at: <http://www.uhs.uga.edu>.

### **Health Insurance**

UGA currently has a voluntary and a mandatory health insurance plan. Visit UGA's Human Resources [website](#) on student insurance and employment to learn more about these plans and waivers for coverage.

### **Calendars & Deadlines**

The UGA academic calendar is maintained by the Registrar's office at UGA and can be found [here](#). Please consult the calendar for important dates during the year including the first day of classes, add-drop dates, dates for early registration, examination periods, commencement, etc.

The Graduate School also maintains an additional calendar of [important dates and deadlines](#) pertaining to specific aspects of graduate education. Consult with those as well. It is graduate students' responsibility to initiate required paperwork well in advance to ensure all deadlines can be met.

### **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy**

The University of Georgia is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work and study. The Equal Opportunity Office is responsible for ensuring such an environment and to follow all laws. To learn more about these issues and available resources, please see <https://eoo.uga.edu/>

### **Campus Emergencies – UGA Alert**

The UGA Alert Emergency Notification System aims to inform the UGA community of any kind of emergencies in a timely manner. Learn more, sign up or update your information at: <https://emergency.uga.edu/ugaaalert/>.

### **UGA Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. UGA abides by FERPA rules. To learn more about FERPA consult this [webpage](#).

NOTE: Please use caution when setting certain FERPA restrictions in the system, as these can have consequences that you may not want, such as legally prohibiting your advisor from writing you a letter of recommendation. If you do choose to change your FERPA settings, you will be able to do so using the system you use to manage your records. If you have questions or need general information about FERPA, contact Adam Lawrence, 706-542-6020.

### **Source for UGA Policies and Procedures**

For a comprehensive list of all University policies and procedures, including those not governed by the Departmental student handbook and Graduate School handbook, go to <https://policies.uga.edu/>.