



**Department of Epidemiology and Population Health  
Student Handbook**

## **Welcome from the Faculty**

Welcome to the University of Louisville's Department of Epidemiology & Population Health. As a student in the department's MPH, MS or PhD programs, you will need to familiarize yourself with the contents of this Student-Faculty Handbook.

Regardless of your particular degree program, our goal is to provide you the education and training needed to practice the exciting discipline of epidemiology. Epidemiologists work at both the forefront of public health in the control and prevention of disease, disability and death, and behind the scenes researching risk factors and causes of health problems across populations. Epidemiologists play a key role in public health by collecting data on health indicators in populations through screening and surveillance systems. We detect, investigate and mitigate infectious disease outbreaks, design health and disease screening and surveillance programs, and disease control and primary and secondary preventive interventions. Most importantly, we generate new knowledge about disease etiology that helps guide health policy and promotion, as well as medical treatment.

In our program you will study the history and theoretical foundations of the science of epidemiology, learn sophisticated quantitative and qualitative research methods, and broaden your knowledge of the causes of disease and ways to promote health. You will learn the practical aspects of doing epidemiology also, ranging from organizing an investigation of a disease outbreak to writing a fundable proposal to investigate a new hypothesis about disease etiology.

We are small department, but have a strong community of bright, active, friendly faculty and students. Our graduates are highly regarded and well placed in public, private and academic settings. We are certain that you will enjoy joining our department and your learning adventure with us over the next few years will be invigorating.

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## **I. Preamble**

This document serves as a guide to students on the mission, faculty, policies, rules and procedures of the programs and curricula administered by the Department of Epidemiology & Population Health, School of Public Health & Information Sciences.

Students should familiarize themselves with this document as well as the Policies and Procedures set out by the School of Public Health & Information Sciences (<http://louisville.edu/sphis/current-students>).

Policies, requirements and procedures regarding course registration, course loads/overloads, transfer of course credits, continuous enrollment, degree candidacy and time limitations, academic probation and dishonesty may be found in the University of Louisville Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.louisville.edu/graduate/>).

## II. Mission Statement

Epidemiology is the core science of public health. The broad mission of public health, as defined in 1978 by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), is “enhancing health in human populations through organized community effort.” The science of epidemiology is directed at identifying the determinants of health, disease, disability and death in populations for the purposes of health promotion and disease control and prevention. It thereby provides much of the information necessary to fulfill this mission, playing a major role in the development and evaluation of public health policy and law.

Modern epidemiology is a quantitative science that bridges population with basic and clinical research. Epidemiologists describe the distribution of health states and outcomes; they formulate and test hypotheses regarding disease mechanisms and etiology; and they test new interventions and treatments to prevent or ameliorate disease or improve prognosis. A good curriculum in epidemiology includes theory, terminology, and methods of epidemiology, statistical methods, and concepts and methods from biomedical, environmental, ecological, social and behavioral sciences. This breadth of knowledge, and the ability to integrate diverse types of information is necessary for the purpose of controlling, preventing, and treating disease and other health-related outcomes

Accordingly, the **mission** of the Department of Epidemiology & Population Health at the University of Louisville is to:

- provide the highest possible quality education and training in the philosophy, principles and practice of modern epidemiology;
- conduct innovative, interdisciplinary research on the causes and consequences of disease in populations using state-of-the-art methods;
- conduct translational research;
- help build epidemiologic capacity and infrastructure at local, state and federal levels;
- promote interdisciplinary teaching and health research within the school and across the university; and
- become recognized as a major provider of education, research and service throughout the region.

### III. Faculty Profiles

**Dr. Richard Baumgartner**, PhD, Professor & Chair, is an internationally recognized expert in the nutritional epidemiology of age-related chronic diseases and conditions. He is best known for his pioneering work on the epidemiology of sarcopenia, or age-related muscle loss. His current research concerns nutritional, molecular and genetic risk factors for breast cancer. He joined the faculty at the University of Louisville after 15 years in the University of New Mexico School of Medicine, where he served as Interim Chief of the Division of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Associate Director for Science in the Institute of Public Health, and Director of the Aging and Genetic Epidemiology Program. Dr. Baumgartner is a Fellow of the American College of Epidemiology.

**Dr. Kathy Baumgartner**, PhD, Professor, Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs, is a nationally recognized cancer epidemiologist with extensive experience designing and conducting large population-based studies. Her current research is focused on the contradiction between breast cancer incidence rates and prevalence of exposures among the primary ethnic groups in the Southwest US (Hispanic, American Indian, non-Hispanic White). She is currently involved in research studies evaluating breast cancer risk as well as prognosis including recurrence, survival and quality of life issues among long-term survivors. She was previously involved in studies of cervical cancer and respiratory disease.

**Dr. Stephanie Boone**, PhD, Assistant Professor, is a cancer and chronic disease epidemiologist. Her broad research agenda includes how to best integrate multidisciplinary knowledge to benefit population health, specifically in Kentucky. Her current research is focused on designing population-based studies to evaluate the distribution and determinants of health disparities for cancer and chronic disease incidence and mortality in Kentucky. Other research interests include investigating associations between long-term quality of life, survival and chronic disease. She has active collaborations with multiple organizations and institutions within the state and the U.S.

**Dr. Natalie DuPré**, ScD, Assistant Professor, is a cancer epidemiologist with long-term research goals to investigate the role of environmental factors (e.g., air pollutant, radon, and natural vegetation exposure) and their biological mechanisms that influence carcinogenesis and cancer progression in humans by combining expertise across cancer, environmental and molecular epidemiology. Her current research focus is in breast cancer epidemiology to investigate the role of air pollution and greenness exposures on disease progression and breast tissue gene expression. She joined the Department in fall 2018 after completing post-doctoral research at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, MA and is a graduate of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

**Dr. Brian Guinn, PhD**, Assistant Professor, is an environmental epidemiologist. His research interest includes the effect of early life environmental lead exposure on multiple life course outcomes, including chronic diseases and mental health conditions. His current research is focused on evaluating the magnitude of lead contamination in older urban environments, with the intent to identify areas in need of an organized lead abatement program. He is a graduate of the University of Louisville School of Public Health.

**Dr. Frank Groves, MD, MPH**, Associate Professor, studies the etiologic role of iron in chronic disease, emphasizing cancer in general and leukemia in particular.

**Dr. Kira Taylor, PhD**, Associate Professor, has expertise in the genetic epidemiology of cardiovascular diseases, reproductive epidemiology, and gene-environment interactions. She joined the University of Louisville in fall 2011 after completing a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of North Carolina. She is a graduate of the Emory University Rollins School of Public Health.

**Dr. Anne Wallis, MHS, PhD**, Associate Professor, is a reproductive epidemiologist interested in social and biological causes of disease and an array of methodological and theoretical approaches to improve maternal health and neonatal outcomes globally. She has ongoing research projects based in Romania and India, and she collaborates with researchers elsewhere in the US, eastern Europe, and west Africa. Dr. Wallis has been a Fulbright scholar in Armenia and The Gambia.

### **Adjunct Faculty**

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## IV. Programs and Curricula

The degree programs and curricula of the Department of Epidemiology & Population Health conform to the requirements of the School of Public Health & Information Sciences and The University of Louisville, and are fully accredited by the Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

### A. Admission

Admission requirements are published on the School of Public Health & Information Sciences website: <http://louisville.edu/sphis/academics/admissions-requirements>

Admission to the MPH and MS/PhD programs in the Department of Epidemiology & Population Health is conducted through full faculty review of transcripts, GRE, TOEFL and other standardized tests as required, a personal statement, letters of reference, and any other materials provided by the applicant. Acceptance is based on a majority vote of the department faculty.

The department will not allow transfers of undeclared MPH students, those from another concentration, or between MPH and MS/PhD programs after the first semester of coursework due to the substantial differences in these curricula.

### B. Advising

Upon admission, each student is assigned a faculty advisor who will assist them in the development of a program of study and selection of appropriate courses, and who will monitor their progress.

In the MPH epidemiology concentration, the advisor also will guide the student in their choice of Practicum Experience and assess the deliverables and grade the outcome. The general role of the MPH advisor and requirements for the Practicum are described in the **MPH Practicum Manual** that is provided at Student Orientation.

In MS and PhD Programs, the advisor *may or may not* become the student's primary mentor and thesis/dissertation committee chair. It is the student's responsibility to seek out and develop a working relationship with a department faculty member they wish to be their mentor and thesis/dissertation chair.

Students who wish to change their assigned advisor must make a written request (*email accepted*) to the department Chair. Students in the MS/PhD program who have established a thesis/dissertation committee and who wish to change their primary mentor and committee chair, or reconstitute the membership of their committee, must make a written request to the department Chair also. Rules and procedures for forming and revising a thesis/dissertation committee are provided in **Section F. Constitution of Thesis/Dissertation Committees**.

## **C. Description of Curricula**

MPH, MS and PhD Epidemiology program curricula may be found on the SPHIS website: <http://louisville.edu/sphis/academics>

The sequence of courses shown in each curriculum may vary depending on availability of instructors, classrooms and times, as well as course and curriculum revisions. It is very important that students meet with their advisors at the start of each semester to determine the exact courses for which they should register.

### **1.0 MPH: Concentration In Epidemiology**

The MPH Concentration in Epidemiology is designed for those students who wish to practice epidemiology in local, state, and federal health agencies. The department has developed a program of study designed to meet the core competencies defined by the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH). Extended concentration competencies align with those published by the Council on State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) and the American College of Epidemiology (ACE).

Further details on the MPH Concentration in Epidemiology can be found at: <http://louisville.edu/sphis/academics/mp-program>

### **2.0 MS in Epidemiology**

The Masters of Science in Epidemiology (MS) at the University of Louisville is designed to prepare students for a career in epidemiologic research, as opposed to epidemiologic practice. The curriculum differs from MPH Concentration in Epidemiology in that many required courses overlap with the PhD curriculum and a research Thesis is required. Students who graduate with an MS in epidemiology may find work in consulting agencies, work on research projects, or may continue in academia.

### **3.0 PhD in Public Health Science: Specialization in Epidemiology**

The School of Public Health & Information Sciences offers a PhD in Public Health Science with four different specializations. The Specialization in Epidemiology consists of a rigorous curriculum designed to prepare students for a career as a professional epidemiologist in academic, public or private sectors. The curriculum provides intensive education in advanced theory and methods, and training in management skills needed to develop and lead epidemiologic research.

## D. Program Deliverables

### 1.0 MPH Practicum

Every student in the MPH program is required to fulfill a **Practicum** experience. The Epidemiology Concentration encourages students to seek out practicing epidemiologists in local and state agencies, individuals in other organizational settings (i.e. non-profit agencies), or faculty outside the School of Public Health with on-going research projects that involve aspects of epidemiology, or who are interested in supporting a Practicum with appropriate relevance. The practicum experience and its required deliverables must be completed to fulfill degree program requirements. All MPH students are provided a **Practicum Manual** upon matriculation.

### 2.0 MS/PhD Thesis/Dissertation

**a. Thesis:** A research thesis is required of every candidate for the degree of **Masters of Science in Epidemiology**. Ordinarily, an MS Thesis cannot be initiated until successful completion of the first year of required, core coursework (approximately 21 credit hours) as described in the MS curriculum (see **Section C. Description of Curricula**). Before starting thesis research, students may explore potential research topics and opportunities using **PHEP 666 Masters Independent Study in Epidemiologic Research**. To start their Thesis, the student must establish a **Thesis Committee** as described in **Section F. Constitution of Thesis/Dissertation Committees**. If a student has not completed their Thesis by the end of the second year, or after accumulating a total of 39 credit hours, they must register for Masters Candidacy each subsequent semester until their thesis is completed. The MS in Epidemiology cannot be awarded without successful completion and defense of the thesis. According to university policy, MS students must complete all degree requirements within 6 years of starting their program of study.

**b. Dissertation:** A dissertation is required of every candidate for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health Sciences - Specialization in Epidemiology**. It is to be a scholarly achievement in research, and should demonstrate a thorough understanding of epidemiology theory and methods and the ability to conceive and conduct original, publishable research.

Before starting dissertation research, students may explore potential research topics and opportunities with faculty using **PHEP 778 Doctoral Independent Study in Epidemiologic Research**. To start their research, the student must pass both **Proficiency and Candidacy Exams (Section E. Examinations)** and be placed in **Doctoral Candidacy**. To initiate work on the Dissertation, he/she must establish a **Dissertation Committee (Section F. Constitution of Thesis/Dissertation Committees)**, develop and present a **Research Proposal** that is approved by their committee. Students in Doctoral Candidacy are allowed up to 4 years in which to complete all dissertation requirements, after which they must apply for and be granted extensions as recommended by the department Chair with approval of the SPHIS Dean

and University Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Additionally, doctoral students must be admitted to candidacy at least nine months before receiving their degree.

## E. Examinations

Students cannot initiate work on a PhD Dissertation until they have successfully passed both **Proficiency** and **Candidacy Exams**. Students who successfully complete all requirements for the department's MS program, and are accepted into the PhD program, are not required to take the Proficiency Exam: they enter the PhD program in status equivalent to a second year doctoral student.

### 1.0 Proficiency Exam

Upon successful completion of the first 26 credit hour block of required coursework, doctoral students shall be eligible to sit for the written **Proficiency Exam** that will assess the student's competency in basic knowledge of disease biology/pathophysiology, history of epidemiology in public health, and theory and skills in population research methods, including observational and experimental study designs, qualitative and quantitative analytic methods. The objective of this examination is to determine if the student is sufficiently capable and prepared to continue with more advanced elective and independent study towards a doctoral degree. It will be administered and graded by a committee of faculty appointed by the department Chair.

A majority vote of the faculty will determine the outcomes: "Pass", "Pass With Remediation", or "Fail". Remediation will consist of required additional coursework, independent study, or other options as determined by the faculty. A student who fails the Proficiency Exam will be required to retake the exam within 6 months. A student who fails the exam a second time will be offered the option of completing a terminal MS degree or dismissed from the doctoral program.

### 2.0. Candidacy Exam

After passing the Proficiency Examination, and upon completion of the second 24 credit hour block (cumulative 50 credit-hours including minor electives), the student will sit for the **Candidacy Exam**. The objective of this examination is to evaluate if the student meets all of the required program competencies and assess whether he/she is ready to undertake significant research in his/her research area of interest, including demonstration of capacity for logical, critical thinking, breadth of knowledge in their area of research interest, and, ability to develop, design and conduct a research project leading to a completed dissertation. It will be administered and graded by a committee of department faculty appointed by the Chair.

The exam will be organized in two parts: (1) a comprehensive written examination; and (2) an oral presentation of a *potential* dissertation topic. The purpose of the written examination is to determine whether the student meets all the program competencies including specialized knowledge pertaining to the student's chosen field of

concentration. The purpose of the oral presentation is to evaluate the student's oral presentation skills and their ability to assemble and defend a complete and coherent research proposal on a topic of their choice.

Part I: The student will review the literature on an important outcome in an area of epidemiology of their choice (e.g. genetics, environmental pollution, nutrition, etc.). The product must be a 15+ page essay with at least 20 references. This critical review should address the following:

- The rationale for selected outcome in terms of its public health and medical significance
- The descriptive epidemiology of the selected outcome in terms of its distribution by person, time and place
- Proposed risk factors and their strengths of association
- Possible biological mechanisms
- A critical assessment of potential causes including a review of causal criteria incorporating a plausible diagram
- A critical assessment of methodologic issues across previous epidemiologic studies, such as study design, sample size and statistical power, exposure and outcome assessment, control of confounding, effect modification and relevant biases
- Identification of gaps in the literature
- Discussion and recommendations for future research

Part II: The oral component of the candidacy exam should consist of a presentation by the student that is approximately 30-40 minutes in length, followed by questions from the exam committee and from any departmental faculty in attendance. The objective of the oral component of the doctoral candidacy exam is to have the student present on an area of interest in epidemiology that may be related to the eventual dissertation topic. The dissertation proposal (which may deviate from this candidacy presentation) will be more focused and detailed and presented at a later date, after candidacy status is attained. While the proposed project may be related to ongoing research that the student or a faculty member is already conducting, the objectives, specific aims, and hypotheses for this research proposal must be the student's original creation and should not be discussed with any faculty member in detail prior to the presentation.

The oral presentation should provide the following:

1. A background review on the epidemiology of the health condition of interest and the recent, relevant published literature on the student's research idea on this condition and a rationale for its selection.
2. The objectives, specific aims, and hypotheses for the proposed study.
3. A complete, detailed description of an appropriate study design including the types of data and/or biological samples needed to test the hypotheses. This description should address the following:
  - How the population will be selected, including inclusion and exclusion criteria.
  - How exposure(s), outcome(s), and any covariates will be selected and assessed

- How the data will be analyzed with assessment of sample size requirements and/or statistical power
- A description of any anticipated sources of bias and how they may be addressed or minimized
- Identification and discussion of potential limitations and strengths.

A majority vote of the faculty will determine the outcomes: “Pass”, “Pass With Remediation”, or “Fail”. Remediation may consist of additional coursework, independent study, or other options as determined by the faculty. A student who fails the Candidacy Exam will be dismissed from the doctoral program.

## **F. Constitution of Thesis/Dissertation Committees**

Upon successful completion of all required coursework and/or exams, the student must establish a committee of faculty who will advise them in the course of their thesis/dissertation research and assess the final result. The committee must be formed and registered before the student starts work on the Thesis/Dissertation. To establish a committee, the student must obtain signed consent from each faculty member verifying agreement to serve on the committee. Forms for this purpose may be obtained from the department’s Administrative Assistant. Adjunct faculty members and faculty who are external to University of Louisville may be allowed to serve if the student can provide an appropriate rationale in relation to their research topic. All such external members must provide a curriculum vita and be reviewed for graduate faculty status. Committee membership is subject to approval by the department Chair and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

### **1.0 Committee Membership**

An MS thesis committee consists of *three* faculty members. A PhD dissertation committee consists of *five* faculty members. The committee chair must be an *active, full-time* faculty member in the Department of Epidemiology & Population Health. One member must be from another department in SPHIS, another school or unit in the university, or outside of the university pending approval of graduate faculty status. In all cases, the *majority* of a committee must hold *primary* appointments in the department. Adjunct faculty may serve as committee members but not as committee chair. Co-chairs are not allowed.

While it is often appropriate for a student’s committee chair to be the Principal Investigator of a study on which the student is employed, or from which they are accessing data for their thesis/dissertation, this is not required and, in some cases, may conflict with the rules stated above governing committee membership. If there is such a conflict, this person may be a committee member only.

### **2.0. Committee Responsibilities**

**a. Student Responsibilities:** It is the student’s responsibility to seek out a department faculty member to chair his/her thesis/dissertation committee. This person may or may

not be the student's assigned advisor, but should be a faculty member with whom the student has developed a mutually respectful, trustworthy, mentoring relationship. The student will work with their chosen committee chair to recruit additional faculty members for their committee. The student is expected to follow the rules and the procedures described for committee constitution, proposal presentation, committee review, thesis/dissertation formatting, submission, and defense, and adhere to all relevant policies set forth by SPHIS, the School of Interdisciplinary & Graduate Studies, and UofL. The student should work with their Chair to set regular committee meetings and to seek feedback and direction from *all* committee members during the course of their thesis/dissertation research. Failure to engage all members of the committee appropriately may reflect unfavorably on the student's progress, faculty assessment, and a successful thesis/dissertation defense.

**b. Faculty Responsibilities:** The Chair of a thesis/dissertation committee acts as the student's primary mentor – an experienced and trusted advisor. This is an important responsibility that is critically important to the student's successful completion of the thesis/dissertation. The role of Chair is:

- to assist in the student's choice of committee members;
- to ensure all rules and procedures regarding committee constitution, proposal presentation, committee review, thesis/dissertation formatting, submission, and defense are appropriately followed;
- to engage all members of the student's committee in guiding the student toward a valid, high quality thesis/dissertation;
- to ensure the student holds regular committee meetings and keeps all committee members informed as to their thesis/dissertation progress.

Faculty members of thesis/dissertation committees share responsibility with the Chair in ensuring the student's successful completion of the Thesis/Dissertation. Their responsibilities are:

- to assist the committee chair in guiding the student toward a valid, high quality thesis/dissertation
- to provide timely, useful reviews of the student's work and constructive feedback
- to provide a balanced, unbiased assessment of the final thesis/dissertation

## **G. Thesis/Dissertation Proposal**

Students are required to submit a written proposal and make a formal oral presentation to their committee *before* embarking on thesis/dissertation research. The proposal should include a brief, but comprehensive literature review supporting an acceptable research rationale, hypotheses and specific aims, a proposed study design, a preliminary outline of methods, a list of resources, and a tentative timetable. The committee will discuss with the student any revisions needed before the student can progress with their research.

The thesis/dissertation is expected to be a scholarly achievement in research that demonstrates a thorough understanding of research techniques in epidemiology. It is

expected to be original, professional quality, and worthy of publication, in whole or in part, in the peer-reviewed scientific literature.

## H. Thesis/Dissertation Formats

The *traditional format* for a Thesis/Dissertation consists at minimum of:

- An introductory chapter, outlining the theme, hypotheses and/or goals of the research project
- A background-literature review chapter that provides a context and rationale for the research topic
- A methods chapter that describes in detail both data collection/access, statistical analytic approaches, sample size(s) and statistical power
- A results chapter that provides text, tables and figures that describe the study population or sample, and present results from statistical tests of hypotheses
- A concluding chapter that provides interpretations of the research results in the context of current research in field, including reflection on etiology, mechanisms, causality, public health/medical significance, strength and limitations of the student's work, and future research directions

PhD students, pending committee approval, may follow an alternative *manuscript format*. This format consists of at least *two* linked, journal-formatted manuscripts, and should be structured, *minimally*, as follows:

- An introductory chapter that provides a comprehensive critical literature review that rationalizes the research, and introduces each of the hypotheses addressed in the linked manuscripts
- Two or more chapters that are the linked manuscripts, with a short transitional chapter between each
- A final chapter that synthesizes, integrates, and discusses the findings reported in the manuscripts when taken together. This should include a discussion of the broader conclusions drawn from the entire research project, their public health/medical significance, strengths and limitations, and recommendations for further studies
- An appendix that provides greater detail on study methods and additional data tables as deemed necessary to fully understand the study

The student must be the first author on each of the linked manuscripts that must be acceptable for publication based on specific journal and peer review requirements. A manuscript will *not* be accepted as part of the dissertation if it was submitted to a journal *before* the dissertation committee approved the research proposal.

***Note that all theses and dissertations must meet the format and binding guidelines of the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies.***

## I. Thesis/Dissertation Timeline

The written thesis/dissertation must be submitted in completed form to *all members* of their committee at least *thirty days* before the end of the term in which the candidate

expects to graduate to allow sufficient time for final review and recommended revisions. All committee members must agree that the dissertation is ready for the oral defense. Later submission puts the student at serious risk of not defending on time.

## **J. Thesis/Dissertation Defense**

The student must schedule their oral defense *at least two weeks* in advance so that the time and place for the oral presentation may be posted to the faculty and students of SPHIS and general academic community who are free to attend. The student should also pay close attention to university deadlines for submitting their work to the School of Interdisciplinary & Graduate Studies and in relation to graduation.

The Thesis/Dissertation Defense consists of oral, PowerPoint assisted presentation of the student's work of at least *40-45 minutes duration*, allowing 15-20 minutes for questions from attendees and committee members. The oral presentation should describe all aspects of the research project in detail. It should provide a concise, coherent summary of the student's work and demonstrate a strong grasp of the science of epidemiology. It should be of professional quality, both visually and orally, and presented in a poised fashion. The student will be expected to provide complete, accurate and informed answers to all questions.

After the oral presentation, attendees will be asked to leave and committee members will continue with an oral examination of the student on the merits, limitations and quality of the dissertation and presentation. The student will then exit the room, allowing the committee to discuss the written document, the oral presentation, and any needed revisions. A majority vote of the thesis/dissertation committee will result in the following outcomes:

- I. *Pass*  
Student has successfully defended his/her Thesis/Dissertation. Only minor revisions are needed before it is submitted to the graduate school.
- II. *Provisional Pass*  
Major revisions are needed, however the student does not have to orally present his/her Thesis/Dissertation again. Committee will decide if the revisions are completed accordingly.
- III. *Fail*  
Student has not successfully defended his/her thesis. The work is incomplete, of inadequate quality, and needs a complete overhaul. The student will be provided a maximum of 6 weeks to develop an improved written Thesis/Dissertation to be accompanied by a second oral presentation.

A student who fails the Thesis/Dissertation Defense a second time will be dismissed from the program.

## **K. Thesis/Dissertation Submission**

The following steps must be taken to submit the final copy of the thesis/dissertation electronically after oral defense and approval of the committee:

1. Final document must be converted to a PDF (following the guidelines as noted above) and sent to SIGS and the department's administrative assistant.
2. Submit as advised by the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies through the ThinkIR repository. [Click here to download instructions on this process.](#)
3. The signature page within the electronic version must have the names of all committee members typed under the signature line; the signatures cannot be scanned into the document.
4. Submit a signed signature page on white paper, with original signatures, to the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies, attention Courtney Kerr.

A copy of the final, signed thesis also must be deposited with the department office.