

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Research Mentors for Public Health Undergraduate Theses

OVERVIEW OF THE HONORS THESIS PROGRAM

Honors thesis projects can be quantitative or qualitative in design and can involve analysis of research mentor's data or data from an existing publicly available database (e.g., NHANES). Mentors must have appropriate expertise, given the student's research question and study design. Systematic reviews are NOT allowed for an Honors Theses.

Students completing an Honors Thesis in Public Health must have a research mentor with expertise in the student's subject area. The research mentor has the ultimate responsibility for guiding the student towards the successful completion of the research, thesis, and potential publications.

In the Fall semester, students develop a research question and hypothesis and describe the aims for the research. They conduct a literature search and write a literature review to ensure the student understands the foundations for their research. The literature review will serve as the background section of their Honors Thesis. Students will enroll in PB HLTH 155A: Senior Research Seminar in Public Health (3 units) and will be provided a permission code to enroll in PB HLTH H195A (3 units) once they have been accepted into the program.

Through PB HLTH 155A, students will develop the capacity to:

1. Develop and define a research question.
2. Be proficient in finding primary literature sources and managing literature citations using bibliographic management software (such as EndNote, RefWorks, or Zotero).
3. Be able to critically interpret information from peer reviewed medical or social science literature.
4. Know basic data management skills and have working knowledge of Stata or R.
5. Know how to appropriately visualize data & select appropriate analytic tests.
6. Be able to execute & interpret basic analytic tests in Stata or R (bivariate, non-regression).
7. Be able to execute & interpret regression analyses in Stata or R (bivariate & multivariate).
8. Develop a research protocol for study of human subjects.
9. Be familiar with laboratory, analytic and other methods used in human research.

In the Spring, students will analyze their data and write their Thesis with support from their research mentor and the Spring Honors Thesis seminar course. After the Spring semester, there will be an Honors Thesis Symposium for students to present their work to the community. Students will enroll in PB HLTH 195B (3 units) to complete their Honors Thesis work and participate in the Honors Thesis Symposium at the end of the semester.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HONORS THESIS PROGRAM

Requirements are listed on the [Undergraduate Honors Thesis - UC Berkeley Public Health](#) webpage.

- An overall GPA of 3.5* or above at the end of their Junior year,
- An Upper Division in the Major GPA of 3.5 or above at the end of their Junior year,
- Successful completion of PH 142 by the end of their Junior year,
- Successful completion of PH 150A by the end of their Junior year.

MENTOR REQUIREMENTS

- Mentor must have a doctoral degree (PhD, MD, ScD) and be a faculty member
- Mentor can be in any department on the UC Berkeley or UC San Francisco Campuses
- Daily supervision (especially in a laboratory environment) may be delegated to a graduate student or other researcher

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

- Enroll in PB HLTH 155A: Senior Research Seminar in Public Health (3 units) and PB HLTH H195A (3 units) enroll in the Fall semester (permission codes for PB HLTH 195A will be distributed during the Fall adjustment period)
- Enroll in PB HLTH 195B (3 units) in the Spring semester (permission codes will be distributed during the Spring adjustment period)
- Meet with their Honors Thesis cohort as needed for PB HLTH H195A/B as needed
- Check in with their Honors Thesis Mentor at least bi-monthly
- Submit a completed written thesis by the end of Spring semester ([General Thesis Workplan linked here](#)) and present at the Honors Thesis Symposium

MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

While the instructor of record for PB HLTH H195A/B will be a member of the School of Public Health's Undergraduate Management Committee (UGMC), the research mentor supports the student in writing their thesis and provides the final grade recommendation for the thesis. This grade will be the grade submitted for the student's PB HLTH 195A/B courses.

- Support the student's research
- Read and provide feedback on the thesis
- Meet with the student at least bi-monthly
- Confirm that the dataset the student is analyzing will be complete by the Fall semester

ADEQUATE PROCESS AND THESIS SIGN-OFF

The UGMC will check in with the research mentor via survey or email at 3 time-points during the academic year (late fall, early spring, and mid-spring) to ensure the student is making adequate progress. Typically, students must submit a final draft of their thesis to the UGMC in the week before RRR week ([General Thesis Workplan linked here](#)). The research mentor can contact the UGMC and Public Health academic advisors at any point if they have concerns about the student's progress. Public Health will reach out around grades at the end of the semester.

AS A RESEARCH MENTOR

1. I understand that the student will complete PB HLTH 155A: Senior Seminar in Research Methods in the fall, and the Honors Thesis courses (PB HLTH H195A/B) in the fall and spring (for which I will provide a grade)
2. I will
 - a. Provide access to a dataset, which will be complete early in the Fall semester
 - b. Meet with the student at least bi-monthly for the entirety of the academic year
 - c. Complete periodic check-ins initiated by the UMGC by email or survey, providing assurance as to the student's progress
 - d. Oversee the student in writing their thesis
 - e. Review, comment on, and sign off on student's thesis
 - f. Provide a grade to UGMC for the student's thesis work

I am willing to act as a mentor for _____ (student name) because [please let us know how you know this student and why you believe they will be successful in completing a thesis in a few sentences]:

While I am the primary research mentor, I will delegate daily supervision of the student to (if applicable):

Delegate Supervisor Name & Title: _____

Delegate Supervisor Signature: _____ **Date** _____

By signing, I commit to supervise the student's honors thesis work to assure that the student's efforts are of good quality and that the student receives the necessary assistance required to understand each stage of the research. The Research Mentor will provide the final grade submission for the student.

Research Mentor Name & Department: _____

Research Mentor Signature: _____ **Date** _____

By signing, I am agreeing to mentor this student in the honors thesis program and to evaluate the student's progress. I commit to supervise this student's project to assure that the student's efforts are of good quality, and that the student receives the necessary assistance required to understand each stage of the research.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date** _____

By signing, I confirm that I have met with my Honors Thesis mentor(s) and agree to the above. I must complete the requirements listed and maintain an Upper Division in the major GPA of a 3.5 and an overall GPA of a 3.5 to graduate with Honors in Public Health. If I no longer wish to continue with the Public Health Honors Thesis program, I will communicate with my mentor, Honors Thesis instructor, and Public Health advisors.

Questions can be directed to the Undergraduate Program at sphug@berkeley.edu.

REQUIRED IF PARTICIPATING IN LAB

If you will be working in a lab for your Honors Thesis, please fill out the following information. If any of the following information changes, we ask that you keep an updated copy and send sphug@berkeley.edu a copy.

P.I. Name and Email:

Agreed upon lab hours:

In scope duties and responsibilities (please list in detail):

Out of scope activities (please list in detail):

Please provide a signature if all are in agreement with the above.

Student Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Mentor Signature: _____ **Date** _____

P.I. Signature (if different from the mentor): _____ **Date** _____

Delegate Supervisor (if different from P.I.): _____ **Date** _____