Checklist for Completing the MS Public Health Thesis Project (EPH699)

✓ **Preparation for EPH 699 (Public Health Thesis Project)**

- Complete minimum of 9 course credits in your MSPH degree, including EPH 501, 502 and a research methods course.
- Review the public health guidelines and past projects of other students.
- Meet with Capstone Manager to review student handbook, and discuss requirements and process. You’ll be assigned to a Capstone Faculty Advisor based on area of interest (Epidemiology; Health Prevention Sciences; Biostatistics; Environmental Health; Health Services Research & Policy; or MD/MPH).
- Select a research thesis topic and thesis project committee members.
- Meet with your assigned Capstone Faculty Advisor, who will be your 1st or 2nd Reader. (Your thesis project committee will consist of at least 3 members including the master’s program director)
- Begin IRB approval process if needed. (It is advised to work under an existing IRB approved project)
- Finalize your specific aims and methods of data collection and analysis.
- Finalize draft project proposal with Capstone Faculty Supervisor/First Reader.
- Obtain committee member signatures on left side of Student/Faculty contract.
- **Submit PDF copy of Student/Faculty contract to your Capstone Faculty Advisor/First Reader with committee signatures to Capstone Manager electronically f.casanova@med.miami.edu**

✓ **EPH 699 (Public Health Project & Thesis)**

- **Register for EPH 699**
- Begin collecting data.
- **Meet with thesis project Capstone Faculty Advisor to review procedures and your progress.**
- Analyze your data and write your thesis.
- Submit draft of thesis project to First and Second Readers for revisions.
- Review guidelines for oral presentation and submit oral presentation assessment form to committee.
- Schedule an oral presentation for your thesis project by coordinating with committee members and Capstone Manager.
- Submit PDF of signed and approved right side of Student/Faculty contract, thesis project and oral presentation assessment form to the Capstone Manager. Capstone Faculty Advisor will submit a pass/fail grade assigned by the Faculty Supervisor/First Reader.
GUIDELINES FOR

EPH 699

PUBLIC HEALTH THESIS PROJECT

PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES
GRADUATE PROGRAMS
CLINICAL RESEARCH BLDG., ROOM 912
(305) 243-5403
PUBLIC HEALTH THESIS PROJECT STUDENT HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to detail the objectives, policies and procedures of the Public Health Thesis Project.

Purpose: The purpose of EPH 699, Public Health Project (6 credits), is for the student to demonstrate competency in the development and implementation of a public health problem, program, or research question. Prior to beginning the study, the student completes a contract for the proposal and work closely with their 1st Reader.

1. Complete Prerequisites for EPH 699, MSPH Thesis Project

   - Students are required to complete EPH 502 Medical Biostatistics II before registering for EPH 699
   - Students are required to fulfill two research methods course (EPH 641, 647, 604 or 674)
   - Students are expected to complete the majority of their core coursework requirements (EPH 500, 501, 502, 520, 521, 541, 631, 647, 604) before registering for EPH 699.

2. Meet with the Capstone Manager

   - Review the requirements for completing the MSPH thesis project.
   - Discuss student research topics and potential faculty that could be thesis committee members. (see Appendix B for DEPH faculty list)
   - The Capstone Manager will assign you to a Capstone Faculty Advisor.

3. Meet with the Faculty Advisor

   - Develop a thesis topic and question with the assistance of your Capstone Faculty Advisor.
   - Determine if IRB approval is needed for your research.

4. Establish a Thesis Committee.

   - Students must have at least 3 committee members.
   - The committee will consist of a 1st reader, a 2nd reader and the Assistant Dean of Public Health (Julie Kornfeld, PhD, MPH).
     - The 1st reader will have expertise in the subject area.
     - The 1st reader works closely with the student and is involved with the supervision of the thesis project.
     - The 1st reader will approve the final thesis manuscript and complete the oral presentation assessment form. (see Appendix E)
     - The 2nd reader is often times the assigned Capstone Faculty Advisor.
• The 2nd reader works closely with the student but is not involved in the supervision of the thesis project.
• The thesis committee must include an assigned Capstone Faculty Advisor and another faculty member as either the 1st or 2nd reader.
• The Capstone Faculty Advisor will assign final satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade based on the final thesis and oral thesis presentation.
  o At least 2 thesis committee members must be present at the time of the student’s oral thesis presentation.

5. Approvals Needed
  o Obtain committee signatures for left side of the student/faculty contract. (See Appendix C for contract and proposal)
  o Submit a thesis proposal with your student/faculty contract that includes the following:
    • Project Title
    • Introduction/Background
    • Hypothesis
    • Methods
    • Data Analysis Description
    • IRB Approval Process
  o Obtain IRB approval, if needed
  o Submit Student/Faculty Contract and Thesis Proposal to Capstone Manager
  o Register for EPH 699
    • Students may choose to register for the 6 credits of EPH 699 in two parts, registering for 3 credits of the total 6 at a time. If the student’s public health thesis project is not completed in the semester in which they are registered, the student will receive an “IP” In Progress grade. Once the student has completed their 6 credits of the public health thesis project. The student’s grade will then be changed to a satisfactory grade.
**Data Requirements:** All projects must have a data component. The definition of data is broadly stated in order to acknowledge the diverse types of problems historically addressed by students. This definition includes quantitative data (e.g., collection of blood pressure, collection of self-reported disability) as well as qualitative data (e.g., focus groups and participant observation). However, a comprehensive review of literature alone does not fulfill the data collection requirement for EPH 699.

**Institutional Review Board Approval:** All projects that involve human subjects must obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to initiation of the project. Since this process can be quite cumbersome and may take up to six weeks, it is recommended that students collaborate with faculty members who have existing research projects with IRB approval. If an existing IRB approval is used, a copy of the approval form must be attached to the EPH 699 contract and to the final manuscript.

Students who will require IRB approval can obtain the necessary forms and guidelines from the Human Subjects Office (243-3195). Keep in mind that for the purposes of the IRB Behavioral Sciences Subcommittee, the principle investigator of the project MUST be a U.M. faculty member. Students are to be listed as collaborators, even if the research is a thesis or dissertation. The faculty member named will be held responsible for the content of the protocol.

6. **Completion of EPH 699 Requirements**
   - Review of the project requires completion of a manuscript and an oral presentation detailing study findings. Detailed format requirements for the paper are provided in Appendix D.
   - An oral thesis presentation of findings, which lasts one hour, should utilize a similar format and conclude with a question and answer session with the thesis project committee. This question and answer session may cover material relevant to the whole public health experience, not just the project.
   - The student must coordinate with the Capstone Manager and committee members on time, date and location of oral presentation.
   - The oral thesis presentation assessment form must be completed by the 1st reader.
   - Once the project is complete, the student is responsible for obtaining final signatures on the right side of the contract from the Faculty Supervisor, Second Reader and Master’s Programs Director. At that time, a final grade of S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) will be awarded. In some cases, the committee may request changes to the project prior to assigning a grade.
   - A final thesis manuscript, a signed (right side) Student/Faculty contract and oral presentation assessment must be submitted electronically to the Capstone Manager, Felicia Casanova via email f.casanova@med.miami.edu
7. **Deadlines**

- **The final draft of the Public Health Thesis Project must be submitted to the administrative office and to all committee members at least three weeks prior to the end of the semester and at least one week prior to the scheduled oral presentation.** At that time, the student must contact the Capstone Manager to reserve a room for the presentation. It is the student's responsibility to schedule the oral presentation at a time which is suitable to the committee members.

- **The oral presentation of the thesis project must be completed no later than 1 week prior to the official end of the semester.**

- **The final version of the thesis manuscript is to be submitted to the Capstone Manager on the day of the oral presentation, unless revisions are requested by the committee.**
APPENDICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The appendices include all required forms, including contract, program competencies, guidelines and supporting material to help guide the student, Faculty Supervisor and Capstone Faculty Advisor through completion of the Public Health Thesis Project. Documents must be signed and submitted electronically to the Capstone Manager. Each document must be saved with the students last name followed by an underscore and the document name. Ex. Doe_F.E. Proposal or Doe_C.P. Final Thesis

Appendix A: MSPH Program Competencies (Page 8)

Appendix B: List of DEPH Faculty (Page 9)

Appendix C: Student/Faculty Contract (Pages 10-11)

Appendix D: Format for Public Health Project (Pages 11-13)

Appendix E: Oral Presentation Assessment Form (Page 14)
Appendix A

The Graduate Programs in Public Health requires all graduate academic public health masters’ students (MSPH) to have fundamental competence in the areas of knowledge basic to public health. Each MSPH student is required to complete a series of required competency-based core courses and a master’s research project.

Master of Science in Public Health

Upon completion of the Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) degree, all graduates will be able to:

- Advance and promote the implementation of evidence-based public health practice
- Identify, understand and promote ethical choices, strong values and professionalism in public health practice
- Apply statistical reasoning and quantitative methods for the purpose of analyzing public health data and participating in population-based research
- Identify and apply the most appropriate statistical test for the purpose of performing hypothesis-driven research to solve public health problems
- Explain the role of multi-level occupational and environmental conditions which directly or indirectly impact the health of individuals, communities and populations
- Apply epidemiologic methods to the measurement and study of population health and the prevention of infectious and chronic disease
- Examine the main components and issues of the organization, financing and delivery of health services and public health systems
- Identify social and behavioral concepts, models and theories that form the foundation of health promotion and disease prevention
- Recognize sociocultural factors that promote and inhibit health in vulnerable and underserved populations
- Develop skills to identify public health research questions and hypotheses, analyze data and communicate findings effectively to diverse stakeholders
Appendix B

PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES FACULTY

Kris Arheart, EdD
Nelson Arboleda, MD, MPH
John Beier, ScD
Scott Brown, PhD
Margaret Byrne, PhD
Julie Cummings, MSSW
Noella Dietz, PhD
Daniel Feaster, PhD
Orlando Gomez-Marin, PhD
Eric Hecht, MD, MSPH
Wayway Myaing Hlaing, PhD
Viviana Horigian, MD
Jennifer Hu, PhD
Hermant Ishwaran, PhD
Lanetta Jordan, MD, MSPH, MPH
Roderick King, MD, MPH
Erin Kobetz-Kerman, PhD, MPH
Julie Kornfeld, PhD, MPH
Tulay Koru-Sengul, PhD
Naresh Kumar, PhD
David J. Lee, PhD
Howard Liddle, EdD
Kathryn McCollister, PhD
Clyde B. McCoy, PhD
Sherri Messinger, PhD
Ana Palacio, MD, MPH
Hilda Pantin, PhD
Tatiana Perrino, PsyD
Sherri Porcelain, MPH
Guilleromo Prado, PhD
Sunil Rao, PhD
Isildinha Reis, DrPH
Cynthia Rowe, PhD
Eleni Sfakianaki, MD, MSPH
Seth Schwartz, PhD
Mark Stoutenberg, PhD
Jose Szapocznik, PhD
Leonardo Tamariz, MD, MPH
Appendix C

Name: ______________________          Student ID#: __________________

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH - EPH 699 PUBLIC HEALTH THESIS PROJECT

STUDENT/FACULTY CONTRACT

This contract is to be completed and submitted to the EPH Graduate Programs Office prior to registering for EPH 699.

Credit Allocation: Students register for EPH 699 - Public Health Project (1-6 credits) after completing all prerequisite work. Students may register over several semesters. The final grades earned will be S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory).

Course Description: The purpose of the public health project is to allow students to demonstrate competency in the development and implementation of a public health intervention, address a public health problem, or answer a public health research question.

NOTE: EPH 699 IS THE REQUIRED CULMINATING “CAPSTONE” EXPERIENCE FOR THE MSPH DEGREE. EPH 699 MAY BE TAKEN AS AN ELECTIVE BY MPH STUDENTS IF APPROVED BY THE STUDENT’S ACADEMIC ADVISOR.

Term Beginning: ____________ Oral presentation completed by: __________________

Final draft of the public health project must be distributed to all committee members and the EPH Graduate Programs office at least one week prior to the oral presentation and one week prior to classes ending for the semester:

Student Signature: ___________________ Date: __________________

On the attached sheet, state the title, introduction, background, and methods you will be using

Approved by: ___________________ Completion certified by: ___________________

1st Reader
Signature ___________________ Date __________ 2nd Reader
Signature ___________________ Date __________

Second Reader’s
Signature ___________________ Date __________ Second Reader’s
Signature ___________________ Date __________

Director’s signature ______________ Date __________ Director’s signature ______________ Date __________

Final Grade Earned: ______
COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS
ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEET IF NECESSARY

PROJECT TITLE

INTRODUCTION:

- Purpose of the project:

- Hypothesis(es) you formulated:

BACKGROUND:

- List background information available to you:

METHODS:

- List measures you will use:

- Describe how data will be collected:

- Describe your role in the project:

- Describe your data analysis procedures:

- Will human subjects be used: _____Yes _____No

  If yes, attach IRB approval forms
Appendix D

FORMAT FOR EPH 699 Public Health Project (Thesis)

The paper MUST BE TYPED DOUBLE-SPACED on 8 1/2" x 11" heavy duty white paper. Type on only one side of the paper. Allow generous margins on each page - at least 1 1/2" at the left side and 1" for the top, bottom, and right side. Number pages (in Arabic) consecutively, beginning with the title page. Type the page number in the upper right-hand corner of each page. The paper should include title page, abstract, text, acknowledgements, references, tables, and legends with each manuscript component beginning on a new page. Students must submit a signed electronic copy to the capstone manager; students should keep copies of everything submitted.

TITLE PAGE (Appendix C)

The title page should carry all of the following centered on the page 1) the title of the article, which should be concise (but informative) and descriptive; 2) first name, middle initial, and last name of the author; 3) course numbers (EPH 699); 4) month and year in which the paper is completed; 5) signature and printed name of the capstone faculty advisor and 6) the statement, “Submitted to the Graduate Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Public Health” placed at the foot of the title page.

ABSTRACT

The abstract must be 150 to 250 words summarizing the project's essential points. It should be understood without access to the entire project.

TEXT

The text is usually divided into sections with the headings: Introduction, Background, Methods, Results, and Discussion

Introduction: State the purpose of the project and the hypothesis you have formulated. Summarize the rationale for the study or observation.
**Background**: This includes a brief summary of the available background information.

**Methods**: Describe your selection of the observational or experimental subjects clearly. Identify the methods, apparatus, and procedures in sufficient detail to allow other workers to reproduce the results. Give references to established methods, including statistical methods; provide references and brief descriptions for methods that have been published but are not well known; describe new or modified methods, and evaluate their limitations. Identify all drugs and chemicals used. Describe the methods used to acquire the data for the project.

**Results**: Present your results in logical sequence in the text, tables, and illustrations. Do not repeat in the text all the data in the tables, illustrations or both; emphasize or summarize only important observations.

**Discussion**: Emphasize the new and important aspects of the study and the conclusions that follow from them. Do not repeat data or material from previous sections. Include the implications of the findings and their limitations, including implications for future research. Relate observations to other relevant studies. Link the conclusions with the goals of the study but avoid statements and conclusions not completely supported by your data. Recommendations, when appropriate, may be included.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Keep acknowledgements to a minimum. Acknowledge only persons who have contributed to the scientific content or provided technical support.

**REFERENCES**

References must be numbered and cited consecutively in the text. At the end of the paper, references must be listed on a separate page in the numerical order in which they are first cited in the text. Personal communications and unpublished data should not be included in the list of references. References 1) must include names of the first six authors; when there are seven or more; list the first three, then "et al"; 2) complete title of the article cited; 3)
name of journal abbreviated according to Index Medicus; 4) year of publication, but omitting day or month of issue; 5) volume number; and 6) inclusive page numbers.

**TABLES**

Tables should be self-explanatory and should supplement, not duplicate, the text. Each table must be typed, double-spaced, on a separate page. Each table must have a title and be numbered consecutively and cited in the text.

**FIGURES**

Figures consist of all material that cannot be set in type, such as photographs, line drawings, graphs, charts, and tracings. Omit all figures that do not increase understanding or that repeat information given in the text. Each figure should be numbered consecutively and cited in the text. Each illustration must have a descriptive legend which should not exceed 40 words in length. Legends should be typewritten, double-spaced, on 8 1/2 x 11" paper and identified by number.
# Appendix E

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<th>2 = Poor</th>
<th>3 = Average/Acceptable</th>
<th>4 = Very Good</th>
<th>5 = Exceptional</th>
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<td>Minor errors, omissions, and/or lack of synthesis</td>
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<td>Good coverage and synthesis of key sources plus additional relevant material</td>
<td>Thorough review and excellent synthesis of sources, including some obscure but relevant ones</td>
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<td>Errors in methodology selection and/or use</td>
<td>Minor methodological errors and/or omissions</td>
<td>Methodology applied correctly and adequately; appropriate documentation</td>
<td>Methodology applied correctly, explained clearly, and documented well</td>
<td>Mastery of finer points of methodology plus elegant application and/or supplementary approaches</td>
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<td>Some links to discipline knowledge and methodology but not clearly integrated with research</td>
<td>Adequate connection between knowledge of discipline and use of methodology and research</td>
<td>Clear exposition of relationship of disciplinary knowledge and methodology to original research</td>
<td>Insightful references to sources and application of methodology to excellent research topic</td>
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<td>Material presentation with errors in reasoning and/or without much analysis and synthesis</td>
<td>Reasoning sometimes confused, simplistic, and/or not clearly explained</td>
<td>Adequate reasoning, explanation of assumptions, and supporting evidence</td>
<td>Clear reasoning with organized presentation of evidence, assumptions, and conclusions</td>
<td>Clear and organized argument that represents sound, original, and complex thought</td>
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<td>Writing generally unclear, with consistent errors and/or poor organization</td>
<td>Writing sometimes unclear, with weak organization and/or grammatical errors</td>
<td>Writing clear, concise, and organized, with minor or no grammatical errors</td>
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<td>Presentation sometimes unclear, with weak organization, and/or some distracting mannerisms or language</td>
<td>Presentation organized to convey main points of thesis/dissertation clearly and without distractions</td>
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Comments: