This handbook provides a summary of the policies and procedures that apply to doctoral students majoring in Community Health Education in the Division of Community Health Studies of the School of Public Health & Health Sciences. It supplements information contained in other official sources:

1. Graduate School Bulletin

2. Graduate School Handbook

Every student should become familiar with the information contained in this manual. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that all academic requirements and deadlines are met. Whenever in doubt, contact the Graduate Program Director for further information.
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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Philosophy of the Program

The PhD is a degree in Public Health. While each student chooses a major and a minor concentration, the PhD degree is granted in Public Health, not an individual concentration. The course of study focuses on: (1) the development of advanced research competence in one’s major, Community Health Education, (2) an understanding of theory and methods in a minor area, and (3) familiarity with the principles and practices of Public Health in general.

B. Administration of the Program

The administration of the doctoral program is overseen by Community Health Education faculty as a whole. A Doctoral Studies Committee (DSC), consisting of 4 CHE faculty members plus an outside member, the Minor advisor, from another department on campus, will be appointed for each student by agreement between the student’s advisor and the Graduate Program Director (see Form DSC). The DSC is responsible for reviewing and approving all issues pertaining to the Comprehensive Qualifying Exams (i.e., reviewing outlines, reading position papers, and participating in oral portion of CQE). Approvals for all steps of the comprehensive exams process (outlines, position papers, oral defense) will be needed by a majority of DSC committee members (see section III.A. below).

1. Doctoral Study Plan

Students should complete their Doctoral Studies Plan (Form DSP) by the end of their first semester of study. The major advisor reviews and approves the student’s initial study plan and any subsequent changes in study plans (see section II.B).

2. Comprehensive Qualifying Exam

The Comprehensive Qualifying Exam is usually scheduled during the 4th or 5th semester of study, after the student has completed a minimum of 36 credits of doctoral-level courses. Outlines of the Major, Minor and Methods papers are submitted for approval to the student’s major advisor and the four other members of the Doctoral Studies Committee. The position paper in the student’s Minor area of concentration is developed in consultation with the student’s minor advisor, who is a faculty member from outside the Division. The DSC must also review and approve the outline or synopsis of the position paper for the student’s minor concentration before proceeding to writing the position paper (see section III.B).

The Graduate Program Director is responsible for scheduling the written and oral portions of the Comprehensive Exam, in consultation with the student’s major advisor. The written and oral portions of the exam are assessed by DSC, including a minor advisor. The student’s advisor communicates the results of the exam in writing to the GPD, and the GPD reports the results to the Graduate School (see section III.D).
3. Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal must be approved by the student’s Dissertation Committee, which is composed of at least two faculty from CHE and one faculty member from outside the Department selected by the student (see section IV).

4. Dissertation Defense

The final dissertation must be defended orally before the student’s Dissertation Committee (see section IV.C.5).

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Basic Requirements

Doctoral students are expected to major in Community Health Education and select one minor area of concentration. The student is expected to complete a minimum of 39 course credits, including two semesters of the doctoral seminar, PH 892 a & b. Students who do not have a background in public health are expected to take at least 3 of the 5 core required public health courses, which do not count towards the total 39 required credits.

Upon the successful completion of the qualifying examination, the student undertakes an 18-credit dissertation.

B. The Doctoral Study Plan

In general, doctoral students are admitted into the program based on a close match of interests with a faculty who agrees to serve as their advisor. It is important for the student to work closely with the advisor and other relevant faculty to develop a study plan that documents the focus of the student’s academic studies (see Form DSP). Should the student find that she cannot work with the faculty member who agreed to take her on at the time of her admission, or the faculty member leaves the university, the student should work with the GPD and Program Head to identify a new advisor.

An important part of the study plan is selecting a minor concentration and minor advisor. The minor is in a subject area relevant to the field and comprises doctoral-level courses outside of the Division of Community Health Studies. As a general rule of thumb, students are advised to take 15 credits in their major, 12 credits in their minor and 12 credits of research methods. Six of the 15 credits in the CHE major will consist of two semesters of the Doctoral Seminar, 892 a & b. Depending on prior coursework, students are further advised to take at least one course in qualitative research methods, one in quantitative research methods, and one in advanced statistics.

Doctoral students are expected to enter the program with the equivalent of an MS or MPH degree (in either experience or course work) in Public Health. If the background or course work is deficient, then students must take at least three of the five core required public health courses.
during the doctoral program. These courses will not count towards the total credit requirements, unless waived by the GPD. Responsibility for verification of the background lies with the student and must be approved by the advisor as part of the development of the study plan.

The Doctoral Study Plan (Form DSP) must be signed by the student’s advisor. Students must discuss any proposed revisions of their study plan with their advisor and submit amendments accordingly.

C. Course of Study

In consultation with the student’s advisor, the CHE faculty recommend that students take 15 credits in their major, 12 credits in their minor and 12 credits of research methods. Six of the 15 credits in the CHE major consist of two semesters of the Doctoral Seminar, 892 a & b. Doctoral students receive credit only for 600 level courses (and up); at least 9 credits must be 700-level or higher courses. No more than 6 credits in Special Problems or Independent Study are allowed. All courses taken by PhD students for credit must be taken on a graded basis. All course work must be completed with a grade of B or better. Failure to achieve a B grade in any course may result in dismissal from the doctoral program. Guidelines and restrictions on course work are as follows:

1. Major Concentration

The student’s major is in Community Health Education, the social and behavioral science branch of public health. In general, coursework in the major includes graduate level courses offered in other UMass departments that confer a doctoral degree.

2. Minor Concentration

The minor concentration may be in another academic concentration in Public Health outside the Division (e.g., Epidemiology), but usually comprises courses from another University department that confers a doctoral degree.

3. Research Methods

Students are advised to take at least one course in qualitative research methods, one in quantitative research methods, and one in advanced statistics.

4. Doctoral Seminar -- PH 892 a & b

This upper level seminar examines theory and advanced research methods in public health. Students are advised to enroll in the seminar during their first and second year of course work. Students are strongly advised to complete a basic survey research methods class before enrolling in the seminar.
5. Dissertation  

18 credits

Total: 57 Credits

D. Other Requirements

1. University Residency Requirement

The University residence requirement states that the student must be registered as a full-time student (9 or more course credits) for at least two consecutive semesters.

2. Statute of Limitations

Students who enter the program with a Master’s degree in Public Health or closely allied field have a four-year Statute of Limitations (SOL) to complete the degree, while those with an unrelated degree have six years. The SOL is determined by the Graduate School at the time of admission.

3. Language Requirement

Community Health Education has no foreign language requirement.

III. COMPREHENSIVE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

A. Overview

Upon completion of course work and approval by the major advisor, the student is eligible to take the comprehensive qualifying examination. The Comprehensive Exams are usually scheduled towards the end of the fourth or fifth semester of studies and no later than the beginning of the seventh semester in residence, unless an extension is formally approved in writing by the Graduate Program Director. Students should consult with their advisor to determine when they are ready to take their Comps. The qualifying exam has two parts: written and oral. The examination is intended to be integrative, rather than a re-testing of specifics covered in particular courses. A description of the expected scope and content of the exam is presented in the next section.

B. Written Exam

The student’s advisor is responsible for coordinating the development of the written examination in the student’s major, minor and methods areas. During the final semester of course work, the student should contact his/her major advisor and indicate a readiness to take the qualifying examination.

The written examination consists of three position papers, covering the major, minor and research methods areas, typically written over the course of one semester. The student will work
with his/her advisor to identify and select social scientific theories, frameworks or schools of thought of appropriate scope, relevance and potential application to the field of Community Health Education. Ideally, students choose particular theories because they find them intellectually interesting and they provide new insight into significant problems in the field. Prior to writing their papers, students must submit a synopsis or outline of their major, minor and methods papers, with a bibliography of each proposed topic area, to the Doctoral Studies Committee for approval. The focus and scope of the position paper in the minor is developed in consultation with the minor advisor and then approved by the DSC. The student is encouraged to meet with the major and minor advisors (and other faculty) to obtain advice and guidance on how to best prepare the position papers.

Both the Major and the Minor theory papers should present an analytic review of the literature on two different substantive theoretical areas or schools of thought, corresponding to one’s major and minor areas. Students are typically expected to have completed at least two doctoral (700-) level courses pertinent to the proposed topic area, only one of which may be an Independent Study, in preparation for the exam.

The position papers should critically examine the chosen theoretical tradition(s) and surrounding or associated research, develop an argument and take a position with respect to their significance to the field. In these papers, students must demonstrate both breadth and depth in describing and explaining a social scientific theory, theories or theory area, defining key concepts used in the theory/-ies, and locating the theory within the broader intellectual currents to which it stands in contrast and where it makes its distinct contributions. The position papers should describe the historical development of the theory to the present day and demonstrate its potential application for addressing issues of concern in the field of community health education. The paper should describe how the theory stands in relation to rival theoretical orientations -- how it is distinct from and/or critical of other theories in that research domain -- pointing out its strengths or advances over alternative perspectives as well as the major limitations and criticisms that have been leveled about its proficiency in understanding and explaining phenomena. Students are encouraged to illustrate the relevance of key concepts by showing how they might be applied to a public health issue of interest to the candidate. In general, the average length of these papers is roughly 40-50 pages each.

The methods paper should focus on the methodological issues that guide the student’s selection of particular methods for conducting their doctoral dissertation research. For this paper, students should demonstrate depth in reviewing a specific research methodology in terms of its historical development and explain its strengths and weaknesses relative to other approaches for investigating problems of concern in Community Health Education.

Before beginning to write their Comprehensive Exam position papers, students must submit an outline and bibliography of the major, minor and methods papers for approval by the DSC to evaluate the appropriateness of their scope and content. The outline typically covers the following points:

a. A description and explanation of the particular social science theory or theories chosen by the student and definition of key concepts germane to the theory or theories;
b. The historical development of the identified social science theory/-ies and concepts, situating its development in relation to concurrent rival theories or alternative approaches;

c. A review of empirical studies in the field of public health and related disciplines that support or point to potential problems in the application of the theory/-ies and associated concepts;

d. Major critiques that have been raised about the theory, and a response to these criticisms in support of its significance and the identification of areas for further refinement; and,

e. The implications of the theory/-ies for public health practice, particularly as applied to the public health problem of interest to the candidate.

The student will work with her/his major and minor advisors to complete their outlines and bibliographies. After approval by the student’s major and minor advisors, the outlines will be distributed to the DSC for their review and approval. At this point, the DSC will vote to approve, or not to approve, the proposed scope and content of the outlines based on an assessment of their appropriateness and relevance to the field. If one or more DSC members do not approve the outlines as presented, the student’s advisor will meet with the DSC to discuss their concerns. The student will then work with her advisor and, as appropriate, the DSC member(s) raising concerns, to revise the outline(s) to achieve a satisfactory scope and content. Upon approval, the student is encouraged to meet with individual DSC members to gain their advice and feedback for strengthening the quality of their positions papers; individual faculty may suggest additions or revisions to the proposed outlines and bibliographies. After gaining the Committee’s approval, students may then proceed with writing their papers.

Students have 9 months from the date of approval of their comps outlines to complete all three papers and schedule the oral exam. The start date for completing the papers is the time of approval of the three outlines. This date will be reported to the GPD and recorded by the student’s advisor on the DSP form. If necessary, the student may request additional time by submitting in writing a detailed time line for completion of the papers. The request for an extension must be formally approved by the DSC and Graduate Program Director. Failure to adhere the scheduled timeline may result in dismissal from the doctoral program.

After completing the papers, the major advisor distributes the completed position papers to the Doctoral Studies Committee for their evaluation. All three position papers will be read and evaluated independently by all members of the Doctoral Studies Committee, including the outside (minor) member. Faculty members have four weeks to complete their assessment. If one (or more) of the written papers is not passed by the majority of the DSC, then one and only one revision of the failed paper(s) is allowed. The revised exam paper/s must be submitted to the DSC no sooner than one month and no later than three months after the time at which the student is informed of the result. All three papers must be passed by a majority of the DSC. In case of disagreement or lack of consensus, a vote will be taken and recorded by the Doctoral Studies
Committee. Failure to pass on the second attempt will result in an automatic dismissal from the Doctoral Program.

If the majority of the committee members approve the written portion of the exam, it is then followed by an oral examination by the Doctoral Studies Committee.

**C. Oral Exam**

After all three written exam papers have been provisionally passed, the advisor indicates in writing to the GPD that the oral exams are ready to be scheduled. After confirming that all requirements have been met, the GPD schedules the student for the oral examination.

The oral examination is taken no earlier than one month and no later than three months after the successful completion of the written portion of exam. When the oral examination is held, its time and location must be announced to the faculty at least two weeks in advance. The Graduate Program Director is responsible for reporting the scheduled date and time. There will be no exception to this advance notice period.

The oral examination is scheduled for a three-hour time period. The student will come prepared to give a brief overview of each of their exam papers to the committee, and for a round robin style of question and answer and discussion. Attendance at the oral examination is restricted to the Doctoral Studies Committee. The three areas covered in the oral exam may be passed or failed separately. A simple majority is required to pass. If the oral exam is failed, it may be re-taken from one to three months later. The timing of the re-examination is set by the major advisor. A second failure results in an automatic dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

At the conclusion of the oral examination, the Doctoral Studies Committee and minor advisor are responsible for voting on the outcome of the comprehensive qualifying exam as a whole (written and oral): pass with distinction, pass or fail. The results, including the vote, are sent in writing to the Graduate Program Director by the major advisor. The student is notified of the examination results in writing by his/her advisor at the same time that the results are forwarded to the GPD, with a copy to the student’s file.

**D. Documentation**

After the written and oral portions of the comprehensive qualifying examination have been completed, the major advisor is responsible for sending a memo containing the official record of the results to the GPD, with a copy to the student and his/her file. In the case of a pass, the GPD notifies the Graduate School that the student has completed the qualifying examination and is eligible to submit a Dissertation Proposal. In the case of failure (failing any part of the exam twice), the Graduate Program Director will take appropriate action for dismissal of the student.
IV. DISSERTATION

A. Purpose

The dissertation represents the culmination of the PhD degree program. It is intended to demonstrate the student’s ability to conceive, plan, execute and analyze a substantial research project independently. The dissertation must contain original research. As a result of the process, the student is expected to develop both conceptual and methodological skills and to contribute new knowledge to the field. In addition, the student is expected to demonstrate skill in communicating the results of the research at the final doctoral oral examination (dissertation defense).

B. Timing

Data collection for the dissertation begins only after successfully completing the comprehensive examination and approval of the dissertation proposal by the student’s dissertation committee. If dissertation work is begun prior to that time, the student risks losing any investment of time or resources, as this premature involvement constitutes neither endorsement of the project nor support for its continuation. Under no circumstances may the student register for dissertation credits prior to successfully completing the comprehensive examination. The minimum number of dissertation credits in the School is eighteen (18), as required by the Graduate School. A student can register for a maximum of nine dissertation credits in one semester.

C. Process

Planning for the dissertation research usually begins with discussions of topics of common interest to the student and the faculty member who is likely to become chair of the dissertation committee.

1. Appointing Dissertation Chair & Committee

After a specific topic or problem has been defined, the next step is to obtain a formal commitment from a faculty member to chair the Dissertation Committee. In general, the faculty member who has served as the student’s major advisor will also serve as Chair of the Dissertation Committee, but the student has the right and the responsibility to decide which CHE faculty member, with her/his consent, will serve as Chair. In consultation with the Chair, the student is responsible for recruiting 2 - 4 other committee members who can provide expertise to guide the execution of the research. The Dissertation Committee is responsible for approving the dissertation proposal, guiding and supervising the research and conducting the oral defense.

The Dissertation Committee must conform to the following Graduate School policies:

- Be composed of no less than three (3) full-time graduate faculty from UMass Amherst.
- The Committee Chair must be from the major area of concentration, Community Health Education.
c. One member must be a graduate faculty member from another Department at UMass Amherst outside the School.
d. At least two members must have their primary appointment in the School.
e. The outside faculty member and the minor faculty advisor may be the same person.

Thus, the minimum committee consists of two graduate faculty from the School and one from outside of the School.

Persons who are not UMass graduate faculty but graduate faculty at another University may be appointed, with permission from the Graduate School, for “one-time” special appointments to serve on a Doctoral Dissertation Committee. The student must submit a memo explaining the rationale and justification for the appointment, and the faculty member’s curriculum vitae, to the GPD to initiate the approval process.

The Chair is responsible for submitting Form DC, Establishing a Dissertation Committee, to the Graduate Program Director, who forwards it to the Graduate School. The Committee is formally appointed by the Graduate School on the recommendation of the GPD.

Students are advised that, once the committee has been formally appointed, the student cannot remove a committee member without that individual faculty member’s consent.

2. Dissertation Proposal

The student is expected to develop a written proposal that defines the research problem, the significance of the inquiry, a review of previous research and relevant social theory, methods of investigation, plan of analysis and anticipated limitations. The proposal shall be developed in collaboration with the Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee is responsible for approving the proposal for doctoral dissertation research (see Form DP).

Once approved, it is forwarded to the GPD for review and approval. It is then forwarded to the Graduate School for their records. Graduate School regulations specify that at least seven (7) months must elapse between the time the proposal is filed with the Graduate School and the time of the final oral defense of the dissertation.

3. Human Subjects Review

All doctoral students must complete the University’s on-line research ethics training program. When appropriate, the proposal must be reviewed and approved by the University Human Subjects Review Committee and formal written notification of their approval must be included with the proposal prior to its submission to the Graduate School.

4. Format of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into chapters and typically includes an introduction, including key research questions and the significance of the topic, a literature review, theory, methods, results
and discussion. Papers written for the comprehensive exam may be used as a basis for chapters in the dissertation.

5. Final Doctoral Oral Examination (Dissertation Defense)

After the dissertation research has been completed and reviewed by the Dissertation Committee members, the GPD is notified by the Committee Chair and an oral defense is scheduled. The Graduate School Office of Degree Requirements must receive written notification of the examination (Form DD) at least three weeks (four weeks in the summer) prior to the examination date. The examination cannot be held without this requisite advance notification. The Graduate School requires that every member of the Dissertation Committee be present for the examination, or the oral defense must be re-scheduled and re-announced in the same manner.

Any graduate faculty from within the University may attend the dissertation defense. Students may attend as well. Other guests may attend only at the request of the examinee and with the permission of the Committee Chair.

At the conclusion of the public defense, the Dissertation Committee meets in executive session to deliberate the results. Only members of the Dissertation Committee are permitted to vote on whether the dissertation and its defense are satisfactory or not. This vote must be unanimous for the student to pass the dissertation defense. In the case of failure, the defense may be re-scheduled one to six months later. If the second attempt results in failure, the student is automatically dismissed from the doctoral program.

Official written notification of the outcome of the dissertation defense is sent by the dissertation chair to the GPD. The chair is responsible for reporting the grades for the 18 credits of dissertation to the graduate school Office of Student Records. The GPD reports the outcome of the defense to the Graduate School.

D. Typing Guidelines

When preparing the dissertation proposal and drafts of the final dissertation, the student should follow Typing Guidelines for Master’s Theses and Doctoral Dissertations, available in the Office of Degree Requirements. This handbook contains detailed guidelines for preparing the dissertation in the proper format, including requirements for printing, and preparing tables, figures, notes, references, and bibliography. These requirements must be followed exactly to ensure acceptance of the dissertation by the Graduate School.

When choosing word processing software and printer, the student should make sure that the typeface meets the requirements set by the Office of Degree Requirements. The student is advised to use the approved word processing format throughout the dissertation, to ensure that the final work is consistent with Graduate School rules for style and format.
E. Deadlines

The final dissertation must be submitted along with all other graduation materials by these deadlines:

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<td>January 15</td>
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All materials must be received by the Graduate School by the deadline for each respective degree date. Materials received after the deadline will be processed for the next degree granting period.

F. Degree Certification

Prior to formal awarding or posting of the doctoral degree, the Graduate School can provide a letter certifying the completion of all degree requirements, provided all academic requirements have been met. Requests to provide a certification of completion must be made in writing to the Graduate School Office of Degree Requirements, noting the person or agency to whom such certification should be sent.
Appendices

Forms DSP, DC, DP, & DD
Form DSP  
Doctoral Studies Plan  
Department of Public Health  
School of Public Health & Health Sciences

Name: _________________________________   Matriculation Date: _____________________

Master’s degree (Major subject): ___________________________________________________

Admission credits (list course and credits)   PH core satisfied: ___ No ___ Yes   List Courses

1._________________________________  1.____________________________________
2._________________________________  2.____________________________________
3._________________________________  3.____________________________________
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**MAJOR CONCENTRATION:** _________________  Major advisor: ____________________

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**RESEARCH METHODS:**

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Modifications of Study Plan for Major (approval by Major Advisor required)

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Modifications of Study Plan for Minor (approval by Minor Advisor required)

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QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS: Certification that student is ready to take qualifying exams
(to be completed by June 15 for Fall exam or January 15 for Spring exam)

Major advisor: __________________________
(Signature) (Date)

Minor advisor: __________________________
(Signature) (Date)

Written: __________________________
(result) (date)

Oral: __________________________
(result) (date)

Examination results reported to Graduate School: ____________ (date)
**DISSE**RTATION COMMITTEE  
Nominated date: ____________  Appointed date: _______

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<th>Members</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dept.</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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**DISSE**RTATION DEFENSE:  
Notice Sent: _____________ (Date)

Date of Oral: _____________  Result: _____________

Other notes: _____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Degree Eligibility Form Submitted to Graduate School: _____________ Date

Graduation: ________________ Date
Form DSC
Doctoral Studies Committee

Student name: __________________________________

Student Advisor: ________________________________

Graduate Program Director: ________________________________

Doctoral Studies Committee
1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________

Approved by:

Advisor: ___________________________ Date: ______________
  (signature)

Graduate Program Director: ___________________________ Date: __________
  (signature)
Form DC
Establishing a Dissertation Committee

Student Name:

Brief Description of Dissertation Subject:

Recommended Dissertation Committee:
[Signature of Each Member Required]

____________________________________________________________________
(Name) Chair, Community Health Education

____________________________________________________________________
(Name) Member

____________________________________________________________________
(Name) Outside Member, Department

____________________________________________________________________
(Name) Member [optional]

____________________________________________________________________
(Name) Member [optional]

[Use full name, including middle initial but not degrees. Place an asterisk (*) before the name of the minor area representative if included.]

Approved: __________________________________________ Date:___________
Department Chair

____________________________________________________________________ Date:___________
Advisor

____________________________________________________________________ Date:___________
Graduate Program Director

GPD memo sent to Graduate School on:______________________________
(Date)
A POETIC PERSPECTIVE ON PUBLIC HEALTH

A Dissertation Prospectus Presented

by

EMILY JANE DICKINSON

Approved as to style and content:

__________________________
John H. Dewey, Chair, Community Health Education

__________________________
Harold S. Thomas, Member, Community Health Education

__________________________
Samuel Harrison, Member

__________________________
Elizabeth K. Richards, Outside Member, English

__________________________
Truman Capote, Graduate Program Director

(If the GPD is on the committee, the Dean must sign here)

(ORIGINAL SIGNATURES IN BLACK BALLPOINT PEN REQUIRED)
FORM DD
Announcement of Date for Final Doctoral Oral Examination

From: _________________________________________, Dissertation Committee Chair
To: ____________________________________________, Graduate Program Director
Re: Final Doctoral Oral Examination

FOR: ______________________________________________
     (Student’s Name and Number)

I recommend that an oral examination for the above candidate for the Ph.D. degree be scheduled as follows:

_________________________ Day of the week
_________________________ Date (dd/mm/yy)
_________________________ Time
_________________________ Place (Building & room number)

Public Health     Major

TITLE OF DISSERTATION:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

The student’s dissertation has been received and examined by all members of the Dissertation Committee and their approval given to conduct this examination.

_______________________________________________________________
     (Signature, Dissertation Committee Chair)

The candidate has met all the requirements and is ready for the dissertation examination.

_______________________________________________________________
     (Signature, Graduate Program Director)