

Student Handbook

## **Doctor of Philosophy in Epidemiology**



# School *of* Public Health

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BROWN UNIVERSITY

Brown University School of Public Health  
Department of Epidemiology

Academic Year 2024–2025

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## Director's Note

Dear Student,

Welcome to the Brown University School of Public Health! On behalf of all members of our community, I would like to congratulate you on your choice to begin your journey as a doctoral student in our department.

The discipline of epidemiology is crucial for generating the knowledge needed to promote health and well-being for all people in all communities. It uses a range of methods to describe and predict changes in the health status of populations, uncover causes of disease as potential targets for intervention, and inform the deployment and evaluation of strategies to improve population health. As a doctoral program, we strive to promote excellence in the development and application of advanced epidemiological theories and methods through practice, research, and teaching. In doing so, we hope to prepare you to be a part of the next generation of leaders in epidemiology across a wide range of sectors and settings. As director of the doctoral program, few things are more fulfilling to me than helping you soar in all that you do. I hope that you will come to view me as a mentor and an advocate at all stages of your training at Brown and beyond.

We recognize that these goals cannot be achieved without meaningful engagement of all members of our community. As such, we are committed to creating and maintaining spaces that allow for the full participation of all individuals as their most honest and authentic selves. We expect that all faculty, staff, and students in the Department of Epidemiology will embrace opportunities to engage respectfully with one another, viewing the diversity of our identities and lived experiences as an asset to all personal and professional endeavors. In creating inclusive and collaborative environments, we hope to facilitate the ability of all members of our department to realize their fullest potential in their personal and professional lives.

Thank you for choosing the Brown University School of Public Health for your doctoral studies. As an alumnus of our doctoral program, I can think of no better place to receive advanced training in epidemiology. We are all looking forward to seeing what you will accomplish in the coming years.

Sincerely,

*William C. Goedel*

William C. Goedel, PhD  
Director, Doctoral Program in Epidemiology

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## Introduction

This handbook is intended to provide you with detailed information about the path towards the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in epidemiology. It serves as a complement to [the handbook of the Graduate School](#) that outlines policies, procedures, and rules for all graduate programs. In the event of conflicting information between these two documents, the handbook from the Graduate School will take precedent. While most updates to the handbook occur on annual basis, this handbook is subject to revision and change at any time. You are also expected to be aware of and comply with the [Academic Code](#) and the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

In your role as a doctoral student, we expect that you will take the primary responsibility for the successful completion of your degree. This involves being knowledgeable about requirements of your degree program and adhering to the policies, procedures, and rules of the Department of Epidemiology, the School of Public Health, the Graduate School, and Brown University. You should be proactive in soliciting and responding to feedback from your team of advisors about your progress through all stages of the program. It is especially important that you are responsive to communication from the doctoral program director, the academic team, and other faculty and staff who help to make sure you have the best experiences possible.

## **Program Description**

The doctoral program in epidemiology is one of over 50 doctoral programs at Brown University. Like most doctoral degrees at Brown University, it is primarily a research degree. As such, our program aims to facilitate achievement of mastery of advanced epidemiological theories and methods. Upon completion of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in epidemiology, we are hopeful and confident that you will be able to:

- Uphold the highest standards for the ethical conduct of epidemiological studies
- Synthesize epidemiological studies to identifying meaningful gaps in scientific knowledge
- Formulate clear stated research questions and objectives reflective of gaps in scientific knowledge
- Articulate testable hypotheses grounded in the current state of scientific knowledge (as appropriate)
- Design epidemiological studies to achieve clearly stated objectives or answer clearly stated questions
- Employ a range of strategies for mitigating potential sources of bias through study design and data analysis
- Analyze epidemiological data to achieve clearly stated objectives or answer clearly stated questions
- Integrate multiple lines of evidence to make recommendations based on epidemiological studies
- Communicate the results and implications of epidemiological studies in a range of formats

## Key Contacts for the Doctoral Program in Epidemiology

Our doctoral program is supported by many faculty and staff. These individuals bring a wealth of knowledge and experiences to their jobs that will be crucial for your success as a student. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the different roles so that you can get the support that you need. Most inquiries should be directed first to the doctoral program director who can connect you to the most appropriate person or resource.

### Chair, Department of Epidemiology

Current Chair: Katie B. Biello, PhD

The chair is a faculty member who provides oversight to all activities in the department, promotes the welfare of the department by fostering a cooperative and collegial atmosphere, and serves as the primary channel of communication to members of the administration. The department chair collaborates with faculty, staff, and students to foster the growth and development of the department.

### Director, Doctoral Program in Epidemiology

Current Director: William C. Goedel, PhD

The doctoral program director is a faculty member who serves as the primary point of contact for you during your doctoral training. As a liaison between students, faculty, and staff, the doctoral program director is an advocate for you and your classmates. The doctoral program director collaborates with faculty and staff to ensure smooth delivery of all curricular and cocurricular offerings.

### Administrative Core

The doctoral program in epidemiology is supported by staff members in our administrative core. This group provides critical coordinated administrative functions within the department and its affiliate centers and institutes. It includes a core lead, an academic team, an operations team, and a grants and research team. Each of these teams has specialized expertise that makes it possible for the department to thrive.

The Academic Team is responsible for faculty and student affairs. This includes activities related to advising, appointments to research and teaching assistantships, major program milestones (e.g., written qualifying exam, dissertation defenses), and cocurricular events (e.g., seminars, journal clubs).

The Operations Team is tasked with a range of responsibilities that allow the department to function effectively. This includes departmental communications, purchasing (including reimbursement from internal funding sources), and management of private and shared workspaces.

The Grants and Research Team support research activities in the centers and institutes affiliated with the department, including the Center for Children's Environmental Health, the Center for Epidemiologic Research, the Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute, the Incubator Lab, the Information Futures Lab, the International Health Institute, the Mindfulness Center, the Pandemic Center, and the Survey Center.

## Directory of Faculty in the Department of Epidemiology

Assistant Professors of Epidemiology		
Sarah Ackley	<a href="mailto:sarah_ackley@brown.edu">sarah_ackley@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Rachel Baker	<a href="mailto:rachel_baker@brown.edu">rachel_baker@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
William (Will) Goedel	<a href="mailto:william_goedel@brown.edu">william_goedel@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Nina Joyce	<a href="mailto:nina_joyce@brown.edu">nina_joyce@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Alexandria (Alex) Macmadu	<a href="mailto:alexandria_macmadu@brown.edu">alexandria_macmadu@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Shilo McBurney	<a href="mailto:shilo_mcburney@brown.edu">shilo_mcburney@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Erica Walker	<a href="mailto:erica_walker@brown.edu">erica_walker@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Hannah Ziobrowski	<a href="mailto:hannah_ziobrowski@brown.edu">hannah_ziobrowski@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Associate Professors of Epidemiology		
Ilana Gareen	<a href="mailto:ilana_gareen@brown.edu">ilana_gareen@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 7th floor
Annie Gjelsvik	<a href="mailto:annie_gjelsvik@brown.edu">annie_gjelsvik@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Chanelle Howe	<a href="mailto:chanelle_howe@brown.edu">chanelle_howe@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Allan Just	<a href="mailto:allan_just@brown.edu">allan_just@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Deborah Pearlman	<a href="mailto:deborah_pearlman@brown.edu">deborah_pearlman@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Andrew Zullo	<a href="mailto:andrew_zullo@brown.edu">andrew_zullo@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Professors of Epidemiology		
Francesca Beaudoin	<a href="mailto:francesca_beaudoin@brown.edu">francesca_beaudoin@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 9th floor
Katie Biello	<a href="mailto:katie_biello@brown.edu">katie_biello@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Joseph (Joe) Braun	<a href="mailto:joseph_braun_1@brown.edu">joseph_braun_1@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Stephen (Steve) Buka	<a href="mailto:stephen_buka@brown.edu">stephen_buka@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
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David Savitz	<a href="mailto:david_savitz@brown.edu">david_savitz@brown.edu</a>	-----
Tongzhang (Tong) Zheng	<a href="mailto:tongzhang_zheng@brown.edu">tongzhang_zheng@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor

Note: More detailed information about office locations is available from the operations team.

## Directory of Administrative Core Staff in the Department of Epidemiology

Core Lead		
Katherine (Katie) Vitug Director of Finance and Administration	<a href="mailto:katherine_vitug@brown.edu">katherine_vitug@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Academic Team		
Brittany Leclerc Academic Manager	<a href="mailto:brittany_leclerc@brown.edu">brittany_leclerc@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Brady Moore Academic Coordinator	<a href="mailto:brady_moore@brown.edu">brady_moore@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Operations Team		
Kathleen (Katie) Graham Operations Manager	<a href="mailto:kathleen_graham@brown.edu">kathleen_graham@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Megan (Meg) Calvo Administrative Coordinator	<a href="mailto:megan_calvo@brown.edu">megan_calvo@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Shannon Tacelli Administrative Coordinator	<a href="mailto:shannon_tacelli@brown.edu">shannon_tacelli@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Grants and Research Team		
Lisa Ward Grants and Research Manager	<a href="mailto:lisa_ward@brown.edu">lisa_ward@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
Tina Lawber Grants Financial Manager	<a href="mailto:tina_lawber@brown.edu">tina_lawber@brown.edu</a>	121 S Main St, 2nd floor
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Note: More detailed information about office locations is available from the operations team.



## Overview of Degree Requirements

All doctoral degrees awarded by the Graduate School at Brown University have four general requirements.

- **Admission:** You must be formally admitted to a degree program.
- **Residence:** You must complete the equivalent of three academic years of full-time study beyond a baccalaureate degree. This requirement is reduced to two academic years of full-time study if you hold a graduate degree in a related field. During this period, you will be appointed to research assistantships and teaching assistantships that are to be completed on campus and should be in residence near campus.
- **Advancement to Candidacy:** You will advance to candidacy for the doctoral degree upon completion of all non-dissertation requirements. In our program, this involves receiving pass grades in required courses, satisfactory performance on the qualifying exams, and preparation and submission of an application for external funding by the end of Year 3. During this period, you will be appointed to research assistantships and teaching assistantships that are to be completed on campus and should be in residence near campus.
- **Dissertation:** You will prepare a dissertation on a topic related to your area of specialization that presents the results of original epidemiological research. Your dissertation provides evidence that you have mastered all core competencies for the doctoral degree. In our program, this includes the completion of three studies of appropriate quality for submission to peer-reviewed journals by the end of Year 5. During this period, you will be appointed to research assistantships and teaching assistantships that are to be completed on campus and should be in residence near campus. If you have received external funding, you may receive approval from the doctoral program director to reside elsewhere.

### Keeping Track of Progress on Major Degree Milestones

You can keep track of your progress on all degree requirements using the [Program Progression Checklist](#). Your checklist will be available to the department chair, the doctoral program director, and your team of advisors so be sure to regularly update this document at the end of each semester. This checklist helps us work with you to ensure that you are progressing through the doctoral program on an appropriate timeline.

In addition to the Program Progression Checklist, you should complete [an individual development plan \(IDP\)](#). This is a tool that gives you an opportunity to describe your short-, medium-, and long-term goals. You are required to complete an individual development plan once per calendar year and review it with your advisors. In addition to helping our program stay compliant with reporting requirements from the National Institutes of Health, it is an important opportunity for you to review your progress and set goals for the upcoming year. This individual development plan should be submitted to the doctoral program director by December 1.

## Funding Support for Doctoral Education

The Graduate School guarantees five academic years and four summers of support. This package includes the full cost of tuition, a stipend, and a range of benefits. To receive this support, you must maintain at least satisfactory academic standing. Throughout your time as a doctoral student, this support may take the form of a fellowship, a research assistantship, or a teaching assistantship. Appointments are made by the doctoral program director in consultation with students and faculty. The flexibility of this approach helps to ensure that you receive an appointment that is most appropriate for your professional development goals and that will support your progress while working within the constraints of other needs of the department. Given that our doctoral degree is research-focused, you will most often be supported through research assistantships, but are required to complete at least one teaching assistantship prior to graduation.

All appointments are not to exceed an average of 20 hours of work per week throughout the semester. Before starting an appointment as a research assistant or teaching assistant, you will work with your supervisor to complete [a contract](#) that details your specific responsibilities during the appointment. Regardless of the specific tasks included in a contract, you are expected to work an average of 20 hours per week (excluding [any holidays](#)). It is expected that most work will be conducted on campus, with some allowances for remote work in [one of ten other states](#) where Brown University is authorized to conduct business. Any plans for time away or time off should be discussed in advance with your supervisor, with care taken to minimize disruptions to your responsibilities. You should also be familiar with [tax responsibilities](#) associated with your stipend. Depending on your appointment, you may be part of the [Graduate Labor Organization](#).

### Fellowships

In some cases, you may be appointed to a fellowship supported through direct funding from Brown University such as the [Presidential Fellowship](#) or the [Mae Williamson Simmons Fellowship](#). You are required to apply for a fellowship from an external funding source. Example applications can be requested from the academic team. As a fellow, you are not expected to serve as a research assistant or teaching assistant, allowing you to pursue self-drive professional development activities. For more information about external funding, visit [this site](#).

### Research Assistantships (RA)

A research assistant works with a faculty member on the faculty member's research projects. The nature of the tasks may vary depending on the type of research being conducted. Research assistants are supervised by a faculty member. In general, we expect that duties associated with the research assistantship will allow you to contribute to manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals as lead author or a co-author.

### Teaching Assistantships (TA)

A teaching assistant works with a faculty member both inside and outside the classroom on activities related to the teaching of a course. The nature of the tasks may vary depending on the teaching needs of the individual department. Teaching assistants are supervised by a faculty member. Standard duties may include

the presentation of occasional lectures, leading discussion sections, supervising lab sessions, holding office hours, grading assignments, and other programmatic duties for a course.

#### Preparing to Serve as a Teaching Assistant

During your teaching assistantship, you should complete “[Teaching Essentials for Graduating Teaching Assistants](#)”, a self-paced, online program developed by the Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning. As a participant, you will reflect on your values as they relate to teaching and learning, learn about inclusive teaching strategies, set goals for your teaching, prepare to serve as a teaching assistant in a range of contexts, learn how to provide feedback to students, and discuss available resources to support your professional development as a teacher. This is a required activity for all teaching assistants. In addition, you will be required to complete a department-specific training held each year in late August.

The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning also offers [a series of certificate programs](#) in which participants develop and reflect on their teaching practices to better support learners from diverse backgrounds. Enrollment is limited, requiring advance registration. Additional information about these certificate programs can be found at the Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning.

If English is not your first language, you are required to complete an evaluation of English proficiency through the [English for International Teaching Assistants Program](#) before serving as a teaching assistant. If your English language skills do not meet the minimum standards for certification, you may be required to enroll in [one or more non-credit courses](#) as determined by the Center for Language Studies.

#### **Selecting an Appointment Type for Your First Semester**

In the summer prior to your first semester, you will meet with your academic advisor to select an appointment type (fellowship, research assistantship, or teaching assistant) for your first semester. Your choice of should be communicated in writing with [this form](#) to the academic team no later than August 15.

#### **Note on Volunteering**

The roles of research assistant and teaching assistants are to be held by doctoral students who are appointed to those roles only. Under no circumstances should you serve as a research assistant or teaching assistant in a volunteer capacity. Doing so is a violation of the collective bargaining agreement governing graduate labor.

#### **Note on Outside Employment**

Our doctoral programs are residential degree programs that require full-time dedication to reach the goals of excellence in scholarship envisions for all students. Funding support is provided with the expectation that you will devote yourself to your studies full-time. You are permitted to pursue paid opportunities outside of your appointment for up to 12 hours per week. However, any outside employment should be approved in advance by the doctoral program director to ensure it is done in line with policies from the Graduate School. For example, international students cannot work more than 20 hours per week during the academic year or when outside of the United States. Doing so may pose negative consequences for their immigration status.

## Maintaining Good Academic Standing

Following each semester, you will receive a letter from the doctoral program director that serves as formal communication regarding your academic standing. Academic standing is classified as good, satisfactory, warning, or termination. These letters will provide a summary of your performance and progress based on your current stage in the program. This will include evaluations from your academic advisor, your supervisors for assistantships, and/or your dissertation chair. Additional letters are provided as formal communication regarding performance on other major milestones (e.g., qualifying exams).

- Your academic standing is **“Good”** when you are making both good and timely academic progress. Depending on your stage in the program, this designation may require that you receive grades of “C” or higher in all courses taken for credit, satisfactorily complete tasks in your research assistantship or teaching assistantship, and/or make consistent progress on your dissertation research.
- Your academic standing is **“Satisfactory”** when you have encountered difficulties of some kind. This may include inadequate performance or progress in completing required courses, in your role as a research assistant or teaching assistant, and/or on your dissertation research. This status has no immediate impact on your funding package, but your status may shift to “Warning” should any concerns remain unresolved.
- Your academic standing is **“Warning”** when there are chronic or severe deficiencies. Per the policies of the Graduate School, this status is accompanied by a written notice of any deficiencies in performance, the consequence of those deficiencies, instructions for any steps to be taken to shift your academic standing to “Satisfactory” or “Good”, and any deadlines for completion of these steps. This letter will also document the resources that will be provided by the doctoral program to support completion of these steps. This status has no immediate impact on your funding package, but should any deficiencies not be appropriately remediated by the specified deadlines, your status may shift to “Termination”.
- Your academic standing is **“Termination”** when there are severe and irremediable deficiencies. This status triggers an immediate removal of matriculation/enrollment status and withdrawal of funding support. Per the policies of the Graduate School, a student must receive an academic standing of “Warning” for at least one semester with clearly documented expectations for remediation before termination.

## Advising

Throughout your time as a doctoral student, you will receive advising and mentoring from many individuals. The doctoral program director assumes responsibility for ensuring that you have an advisor at every point until you complete your degree. As you progress in the doctoral program, your team of advisors and mentors will expand to include your course instructors, your supervisors for your research assistantships and teaching assistantships, your dissertation chair, and the members of your dissertation committee. Each semester, these advisors and mentors will evaluate your performance to inform decisions about academic standing.

### **What does an academic advisor do?**

Upon entry into the program, you will be assigned an academic advisor by the doctoral program director. This person is a faculty member who assists you in planning for completing all degree requirements. Your academic advisor is expected to be familiar with your prior educational experiences to assist in selecting courses that are most appropriate for your level of knowledge. You should expect to meet one-on-one with your advisor at least twice per semester. Your advisor should review your program progression checklist and your individual development plan at least once per semester to ensure you are making timely progress.

### **What does an assistantship supervisor do?**

Depending on your appointment type, you will have a supervisor for a research assistantship or a teaching assistantship. This person is a faculty member who works with you to define your responsibilities as a research assistant or a teaching assistant. As often as possible, these responsibilities should be mutually beneficial to the research being conducted or the course being taught and achievement of your professional development goals. Your supervisor should also aim to communicate disciplinary norms about research and teaching activities without making assumptions about your prior knowledge. You should expect to meet one-on-one with your supervisor at least once per month, but more frequent meetings are highly encouraged.

### **What does a dissertation committee do?**

These individuals are faculty members who provide supervision and consultation for the conceptualization, design, conduct, analysis, and interpretation of the dissertation. Amongst the members of the dissertation committee, the dissertation chair bears primary responsibility for ensuring the successful completion of the dissertation. You should expect to meet one-on-one with your dissertation chair at least once per month, but more frequent meetings are highly encouraged. You should expect to meet with all members of your dissertation committee at least once per semester, but more frequent meetings are highly encouraged. Additional details about the dissertation committee are provided in other sections of this handbook.

### **What are the expectations regarding communication?**

Effective communication plays a paramount role in establishing strong relationships between advisors and their advisees. Your advisors should initiate discussions about expectations for regular communication, with an understanding that the advisor and advisee should respond to e-mails within one week.

## Requirements for Credit-Bearing Courses

You are required to take a minimum of thirteen courses. This includes nine core courses that are intended to provide the skills needed to conduct independent epidemiological research. Beyond these core courses, you will take two selective courses intended to provide depth in substantive content areas and two selective courses intended to provide depth in specific types of methods. Course offerings (with course descriptions and syllabi) for recent and upcoming semesters can be found in [Courses @ Brown](#). Information about [course registration](#), including relevant timelines and deadlines, is available from the Office of the Registrar.

### Required Courses in Epidemiological Theories and Methods

PHP 2150	Foundations in Modern Epidemiologic Methods
PHP 2200	Intermediate Methods in Epidemiologic Research
PHP 2250	Advanced Quantitative Methods in Epidemiologic Research
PHP 2180	Interpretation and Application of Epidemiology

### Required Courses in Biostatistics

PHP 2510	Principles of Biostatistics and Data Analysis
PHP 2511	Applied Regression Analysis

### Required Courses in Human Biology

PHP 2130	Human Biology for Public Health
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### Required Courses for Research Grant Writing

PHP 2090A	Research Grant Writing for Public Health – Part A
PHP 2090B	Research Grant Writing for Public Health – Part B

### Options for Methods-Focused Selective Courses

These courses are focused on the design, analysis, or interpretation of public health studies, including tools for analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. You may choose any two courses from this list, but only one course in statistical programming (PHP 2260, PHP 2550, or PHP 2560) may be used to satisfy this requirement.

PHP 1855	Infectious Disease Modeling
PHP 1895	Mindfulness Epidemiology
PHP 2015	Foundations of Spatial Analysis in Public Health
PHP 2030	Clinical Trials Methodology
PHP 2040	Survey Research Methods
PHP 2060	Qualitative Methods in Health Research
PHP 2061	Qualitative Data Analysis in Public Health Research
PHP 2118	Genomics Epidemiology

PHP 2210	Surveillance Methods for Applied Epidemiology
PHP 2220B	Nutritional Epidemiology
PHP 2232	Contemporary History of Epidemiologic Methods
PHP 2260	Applied Epidemiologic Data Analysis
PHP 2415	Introduction to Evidence-Based Medicine
PHP 2440	Introduction to Pharmacoepidemiology
PHP 2455A	Health Services Research Methods I
PHP 2455B	Health Services Research Methods II
PHP 2465A	Introduction to Health Decision Analysis
PHP 2490	Methods in Pharmacoepidemiology
PHP 2514	Applied Generalized Linear Models
PHP 2515	Fundamentals of Probability and Statistical Inference
PHP 2516	Applied Longitudinal Data Analysis
PHP 2517	Applied Multilevel Data Analysis
PHP 2520	Statistical Inference I
PHP 2530	Bayesian Statistical Methods
PHP 2550	Practical Data Analysis
PHP 2560	Statistical Programming with R
PHP 2561	Methods in Informatics and Data Science for Health
PHP 2580	Statistical Inference II
PHP 2590	Design of Experiments
PHP 2601	Linear Models
PHP 2602	Analysis of Lifetime Data
PHP 2605	Generalized Linear Models
PHP 2610	Causal Inference and Missing Data
PHP 2620	Statistical Methods in Bioinformatics I
PHP 2650	Statistical Learning and Big Data
PHP 2670	Simulation Models for Public Health Decision Making
PHP 2690	Statistical Methods for Design and Analysis of Randomized Trials

### Options for Content-Focused Selective Courses

These courses are focused on the distribution and determinants of specific types of diseases or disorders or on diseases or disorders within defined populations. You may choose any two courses from this list.

PHP 1670	Public Mental Health: A Framework for Studying and Preventing Mental Disorders
PHP 1700	Current Topics in Environmental Health
PHP 1854	Epidemiology and Control of Infectious Diseases
PHP 1895	Mindfulness Epidemiology
PHP 1900	Epidemiology of Disorders and Diseases of Childhood and Young Adulthood
PHP 1920	Social Determinants of Health

PHP 1964	Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention
PHP 2018	Epidemiology of Cardio-Metabolic Health
PHP 2118	Genomics Epidemiology
PHP 2220B	Nutritional Epidemiology
PHP 2220F	Reproductive, Perinatal, and Early Childhood Epidemiology
PHP 2220H	Epidemiology, Treatment, and Prevention of HIV
PHP 2220E	Topics in Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology
PHP 2365	Public Health Topics in LGBTQ+ Communities
PHP 2440	Introduction to Pharmacoepidemiology
PHP 2490	Methods in Pharmacoepidemiology

### **Note on Grading**

All courses taken to meet degree requirements must be taken for a letter grade (“A”, “B”, “C”, or “No Credit”). A minimum grade of “C” carries credit towards your degree. Elective courses taken to supplement degree requirements may be taken with other grading options, such as “Satisfactory” or “No Credit”. At times, you may request a grade of “Incomplete”. However, receipt of a grade of “Incomplete” in two or more courses will result in a shift in academic standing from “good” to “satisfactory” until a final grade is awarded. Receipt of a grade of “No Credit” will result in a shift in academic standing from “good” to “warning”. You may be terminated from the program if a passing grade is not earned upon repeating the course.



## Requirements for Non-Credit-Bearing Activities

You must complete three non-credit-bearing activities during your first two semesters.

### Foundations of Public Health (PHP 1001)

“Foundations of Public Health” (PHP 1001) is a self-paced, zero-credit course that introduces the core areas and functions of public health. This course is delivered through Canvas, our online learning management platform. This course is required for all students at the Brown University School of Public Health. You will automatically be registered for the course upon activating your account as a student at the School of Public Health. You may opt to complete this course during the summer prior to your first semester. This course must be completed by the end of your first semester. If you have trouble accessing PHP 1001, contact the instructor, Jill Kern, PhD ([jill\\_kern@brown.edu](mailto:jill_kern@brown.edu)), as soon as possible.

### Training in Responsible Conduct of Research

“Training in Responsible Conduct of Research” – referred to as RCR – is a five-week, in-person short course that introduces the scope and complexity of ethical considerations that face us as scientists. It includes best practices for ethical conduct of research and discussions of our roles and responsibilities as individuals conducting research involving human subjects. The in-person sessions involve a combination of didactic lectures and small group discussions of relevant case studies with supplemental materials provided by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). Use [this step-by-step guide](#) to access these supplemental materials. You will automatically be registered for the course upon enrollment as a student at the School of Public Health. You must attend all five sessions and pass the written final exam. Additional training on these topics is available through the [Office of the Vice President of Research](#).

### Instruction in SAS Programming

You are required to complete two self-paced courses in SAS programming. These courses are delivered online via the SAS Institute at no cost to you. To access these courses, register using your Brown University e-mail address using the link [provided here](#) by following this [step-by-step guide](#). “SAS Programming 1: Essentials” must be completed by the end of your first semester. “SAS Programming 2: Data Manipulation Techniques” must be completed by the end of your second semester. We highly recommended that you complete both courses before the start of the second semester as your courses will assume a working knowledge of SAS.

## Modifying or Waiving Course Requirements

### Can I receive credit or waive a required course based on courses I took at other institutions?

With a graduate degree in a related field, your residence requirement is reduced from three years to two years of full-time study. You may receive up to eight credits towards your residence requirement by applying for transfer credit through the Office of the Registrar with [this form](#). Under certain circumstances, you may waive a required course with approval from the doctoral program director. To do so, you must demonstrate that you have completed an equivalent course during prior enrollment in a graduate degree program with a grade of B or higher. The instructor of the course you are seeking to waive may ask you to complete a recent final exam before approving your request. In the event of a waiver, you must complete an additional course for credit to meet your requirements. In general, waivers are only provided for introductory courses.

### Can I take more than 12 courses while pursuing my doctoral degree?

You may take more than the minimum number of courses required for your doctoral degree. In the spirit of Brown University's [Open Curriculum](#), you are encouraged to take courses in a range of disciplines as electives. You may also enroll in independent studies by registering for "Graduate Independent Study and Thesis Research" (PHP 2980) for individualized learning experiences related to research or "SPH Doctoral Teaching Experience" (PHP 2988) for individualized learning experiences related to teaching. You can also take courses via [cross-registration](#) at Harvard University and the Rhode Island School of Design.

### Can I earn a master's degree while pursuing my doctoral degree?

While pursuing your doctoral degree, you may earn a transitional master's degree in the same discipline or a concurrent master's degree in a different discipline. Work on a concurrent master's degree should be part of an integrated plan of study approved by the doctoral program director and the director of the master's program you intend to complete. Additional information about support for concurrent master's degrees is available through the [Open Graduate Education](#) program. Transitional master's degrees are granted with the approval of the doctoral program director and can only be awarded if you do not already hold a master's degree in the same field of study. To receive approval to receive a transitional master's degree or to pursue a concurrent master's degree, you should complete an application via [UFunds](#).

### Can I take a course that has not been listed as a selective option?

Additional selective options can be approved at the discretion of our curriculum committee. This group of faculty and students provides oversight to the curricular offerings of the Department of Epidemiology. To receive consideration from the curriculum committee, you should send a copy of the course syllabus with a brief rationale delineating how the course's learning objectives align with the previously provided definitions of each type of selective. The doctoral program director will facilitate the review of these materials.

## Sample Course Schedule

### Year 1

#### Fall Semester

PHP 2150	Foundations in Modern Epidemiologic Methods
PHP 2510	Principles of Biostatistics and Data Analysis
	1 methods-focused or content-focused selective course

#### Spring Semester

PHP 2200	Intermediate Methods in Epidemiologic Research
PHP 2511	Applied Regression Analysis
PHP 2130	Human Biology for Public Health

### Year 2

#### Fall Semester

PHP 2090A	Research Grant Writing for Public Health (Part A)
PHP 2250	Advanced Quantitative Methods in Epidemiologic Research
	2 methods-focused or content-focused selective courses

#### Spring Semester

PHP 2090B	Research Grant Writing for Public Health (Part B)
PHP 2180	Interpretation and Application of Epidemiology
	2 methods-focused or content-focused selective course

### Years 3–5

Students who have completed their course requirements and qualifying exams and are conducting research on a full-time basis should register for “Thesis Preparation” (PHP 2990) during all subsequent semesters.

## Written Qualifying Exam

Upon completion of your course requirements, you will complete a written qualifying exam that aims to assess your mastery of epidemiological theories and methods as covered in our core curriculum. The written qualifying exam is developed and scored by a committee of faculty members known as the written qualifying exam committee. Typically, the written qualifying exam is administered annually on the first Monday in June.

A result of “**Unconditional Pass**” means that you have shown mastery of core competencies with no deficiencies identified during the written qualifying exam. When you receive this designation, you maintain good academic standing and are permitted to begin preparation for your oral qualifying exam.

A result of “**Conditional Pass**” means that you have shown mastery of most core competencies. However, minor deficiencies were identified during the written qualifying exam. When you receive this designation, you maintain good academic standing and are permitted to begin preparation for your oral qualifying exam. However, you must satisfactorily complete any requirements for remediation based on your performance as detailed by the chair of the written qualifying exam committee before starting dissertation research.

A result of “**No Pass**” means that you may have achieved mastery of some core competencies. However, major deficiencies were identified during the written qualifying exam. When you receive this designation, you will have your academic standing changed to “Warning”. You must retake the written qualifying exam and receive a result of “Unconditional Pass” or “Conditional Pass” to return to good academic standing and be permitted to begin preparation for your oral qualifying exam. A result of “No Pass” on the second attempt of the written qualifying exam will result in termination from the program.

## Preparing Your Dissertation Prospectus

In advance of the oral qualifying exam, you will prepare a written proposal that describes the work that you intend to complete as part of your dissertation research. Standard typeface set to print at 10-, 11-, or 12-point font are acceptable. All text should be double-spaced. This document should be about 30 pages (excluding figures, tables, and references) and include the four sections outlined below. Example proposals can be requested from the academic team to assist in the development of your proposal. In addition, we have created [this template](#) to assist in the conceptualization of dissertation research.

- A **summary** that provides an overview of the proposed research, including statements of the objectives to be achieved or questions to be answered in each of the three chapters. It should be 1 to 2 pages long.
- A **background** that includes a literature review that describes the current state of the science on the topics being studied. This section should offer an assessment of current gaps in scientific knowledge. This can ensure that the proposed research will be original and innovative. It should be 5 to 7 pages long.
- A description of **preliminary studies** that you may have completed that support the feasibility of the proposed research. This section is helpful in making a case that the proposed research can be completed in a timely fashion. It should be 4 to 5 pages long.
- An explanation of the **proposed work** that describes the proposed research in detail. This should state the objectives to be achieved or questions to be answered in each of the three chapters, outline processes for data collection and analysis, provide rationale for choices of design and analysis, and articulate expected impacts of the proposed research should it be successful. It should be 15 pages long.

## Oral Qualifying Exam

Upon successful completion of the written qualifying exam, you will complete an oral qualifying exam that involves preparing and defending the proposal for your dissertation research. This process begins with the identification of at least three faculty members to serve as members of the oral qualifying exam committee. Typically, these individuals will become members of your dissertation committee. Once these individuals have been identified, you will prepare a written proposal that must be delivered to the members of the oral qualifying exam committee at least three weeks prior to the exam date. On the exam date, you will give a 30-minute oral presentation followed by up to 90 minutes of questioning from the members of the oral qualifying exam committee. These proceedings are chaired by a member of the oral qualifying exam committee who is not expected to serve as a dissertation chair. The exam date is scheduled using [this form](#). The oral qualifying exam should be scheduled within 12 months of passing the written qualifying exam.

The oral qualifying exam committee will assess the written proposal and oral presentation to determine the extent to which these materials show evidence that you can (a) review, critically analyze, and synthesize epidemiologic studies to identify meaningful gaps in current knowledge; (b) demonstrate appropriate knowledge of human physiology as it pertains to the health outcomes or processes being studied; (c) develop clearly stated research questions with testable hypotheses that are reflective of gaps in current knowledge; and (d) select study designs appropriate for their stated research questions, with careful consideration for ethical conduct and of approaches to mitigate potential sources of bias. Results from the oral qualifying exam are communicated using [this form](#) and accompanied by a letter providing further detail about the decision.

A result of **“Unconditional Pass”** means that the proposal for dissertation research shows evidence that you meet expectations for performance of the four skills listed above. When you receive this designation, you maintain good academic standing and advance to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

A result of **“Conditional Pass”** means that the proposal for dissertation research shows evidence that you meet expectations for performance for most of the four skills listed above. When you receive this designation, you maintain good academic standing but must satisfactorily address the concerns of the oral qualifying exam committee before advancing to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

A result of **“No Pass”** means that the proposal for dissertation research does not show evidence that you meet expectations for performance for the four skills listed above. When you receive this designation, you will have your academic standing changed to “Warning”. You must retake the oral qualifying exam and receive a result of “Unconditional Pass” or “Conditional Pass” within 6 months of the original exam date to return to good academic standing and advance to candidacy for the doctoral degree. A result of “No Pass” on the second attempt of the oral qualifying exam will result in termination from the program.

## Conduct of Dissertation Research

### Beginning Dissertation Research

Upon completion of all qualifying exams, you will advance to candidacy for the doctoral degree. This means that you are eligible to begin your dissertation research. It is expected that your dissertation will be completed and defended by the end of your fifth year in the program.

### Selection of a Dissertation Chair

A dissertation chair is a faculty member with an appointment in the Department of Epidemiology. This faculty member should have expertise in the area that you are conducting research in and should be willing to take primary responsibility for the timely completion of your dissertation by making expectations clear from start to finish. This individual will assist in the process of selecting other members of the dissertation committee. You are encouraged to learn about the research interests of various faculty members to gather information about prospective dissertation committee members in advance of completing all qualifying exam activities.

#### What happens if a faculty member serving as a dissertation chair leaves Brown University?

Under typical circumstances, when a faculty member leaves Brown University, their advisees will be required to seek a new advisor. Subject to approval from the department chair, faculty who leave Brown University may continue to serve as dissertation chairs for students who they were advising at the time of their departure. However, approval will only be granted if another member of the dissertation committee has an affiliation with the Department of Epidemiology. Otherwise, a new dissertation chair must be identified.

#### Can a faculty member with emeritus standing serve as a dissertation chair?

Faculty members may be granted emeritus standing that allows them to participate in departmental affairs following retirement. Faculty members who retire and move into emeritus standing may, at the request of the relevant student(s) and program(s), continue to serve as advisors to students who were under their tutelage at the time of retirement. With approval from the department chair, an emeritus faculty member can serve as a reader on a dissertation provided there are no other emeritus faculty members on the dissertation committee. An emeritus faculty member can also serve as co-chair on a dissertation committee along with a regular member of the faculty with approval from the department chair. However, an emeritus faculty member cannot serve as the sole primary advisor on a dissertation committee.

### Selection of Dissertation Committee Members

Including the dissertation chair, the dissertation committee should include at least three faculty members. At least two of the dissertation committee members must be faculty members with primary or secondary appointments in the Department of Epidemiology, with at least one holding a primary appointment. The third member must be a faculty member at Brown University but can be appointed in any department. Additional members from other institutions may also be included. The committee should provide relevant substantive and methodological expertise to support the conduct of the dissertation research.

The process of selecting dissertation committee members is student-initiated. You should contact potential members to inquire about their willingness to serve on your dissertation committee, receiving assistance in connecting with potential members from your dissertation chair as needed. You should meet with potential members to discuss expectations regarding their role on the dissertation committee. The final composition of the dissertation committee is provided to the doctoral program director using [this form](#).

### **Selection of Outside Readers**

Under certain circumstances, you may wish to select outside readers external to Brown University. In general, these individuals have recognized expertise related to your dissertation research. An outside reader serves as a consultant to the dissertation committee, providing periodic feedback on your progress as it relates to their specific expertise. These individuals do not vote on the outcome of the dissertation defense, but their input can be used at the discretion of the dissertation committee when rendering their decision.

### **Conducting Dissertation Research Outside of the United States**

Depending on your interests, you may wish to conduct primary data collection activities outside of the United States. If you have received external funding for your dissertation research, you are permitted to work abroad without prior approval from the doctoral program director. If you are appointed as a research assistant or a teaching assistant while completing your dissertation research, you must receive prior approval from the doctoral program director to work abroad. When working abroad, you must provide the academic team with details regarding your location and associated dates of stay and notify the academic team when you return. Additional processes may be necessary for international students depending on the terms of their visas.

### **Writing the Dissertation**

Your dissertation will include an introductory chapter that provides background information relevant to the entirety of the dissertation, chapters detailing three studies completed at the level required for submission for publication in peer-reviewed journals, and a conclusion chapter that describes the overall intended impacts of the dissertation research. It should be formatted in line with [guidelines from the Graduate School](#), including a cover page, signature page, table of contents, and abstract. The dissertation committee should receive the penultimate draft of the dissertation (including introduction and conclusion chapters) at least three weeks prior to the scheduled dissertation defense to allow sufficient time for review and preparation.

### **Publishing Dissertation Research**

We expect that all dissertation research will be of appropriate quality for submission for publication in peer-reviewed journals. You should receive written approval from your dissertation committee should you wish to submit any manuscripts based on your dissertation research prior to the dissertation defense. While we do not place any restrictions on the number of manuscripts that can be submitted prior to the dissertation defense, the dissertation cannot include any manuscripts submitted prior to completion of the oral qualifying exam. At least one member of the dissertation committee must be involved in the conceptualization, design, conduct, analysis, or interpretation of the content for all manuscripts included in the dissertation.



## Dissertation Defense

### Scheduling a Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense is scheduled using [this form](#). The dissertation committee must receive a complete draft of the dissertation (including introduction and conclusion chapters) at least three weeks prior to the scheduled dissertation defense to allow sufficient time for review and preparation. You should work with the academic team to identify and reserve an available space on the proposed defense date. With the exception of extraordinary circumstances, the dissertation committee is expected to attend the defense in person.

### Format of Dissertation Defenses

All activities associated with the dissertation should be completed in 3 hours, including 45 minutes for an oral presentation by the candidate, 15 minutes for questioning from members of the audience, 60 minutes for questioning from members of the dissertation committee, and 60 minutes for private deliberation by the dissertation committee regarding the candidate's performance. The choice of public or private questioning from the dissertation committee must be determined in advance of scheduling the dissertation defense through unanimous decision by the candidate and all members of the dissertation committee.

### Evaluation of Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense will assess the written work and oral presentation to determine the extent to which these materials show evidence that you can select and justify epidemiological methods that are appropriate for your stated research objectives or research questions, conduct analyses of epidemiological data that are appropriate for your stated research questions or research questions, effectively communicate the results and implications of epidemiological studies, and interpret and integrate multiple lines of evidence to draw conclusions. Results from the defense are communicated using a form provided by the Graduate School.

A result of **“Unconditional Pass”** means that the dissertation defense shows evidence that you meet expectations for performance of the skills listed above. When you receive this designation, you are recommended to receive a degree of Doctor of Philosophy at commencement.

A result of **“Conditional Pass”** means that the dissertation defense shows evidence that you meet expectations for performance for most of the skills listed above. When you receive this designation, you must satisfactorily address the concerns of the dissertation committee within 1 month before being recommended to receive a degree of Doctor of Philosophy at commencement.

A result of **“No Pass”** means that the dissertation defense does not show evidence that you meet expectations for performance for the skills listed above. You must attempt to receive an unconditional pass on a second defense of the dissertation within 6 months after making substantial revisions. A result of **“No Pass”** on the second attempt of the dissertation defense will result in termination from the program.

## Completing Your Degree

### Submitting Completion Documents to the Graduate School

You are eligible to have your degree conferred at three different times over the course of the academic year depending on when you complete your degree requirements. Your dissertation and all associated forms and documents related to the completion of a doctoral degree must be submitted to the Graduate School on the [deadlines](#) listed below. No exceptions will be granted. In addition to submitting an electronic version of the dissertation with a completed signature page, you will also complete [an exit survey](#) for the Graduate School and the [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) conducted for the National Science Foundation and other agencies. With these requirements complete, you should complete an [Application to Graduate](#).

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
When did you complete your degree requirements?	Summer	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
When do you have to complete the application to graduate?	July to September	October to January	February to April
When will your degree be conferred by Brown University?	October	February	May

### Supporting Public Access to Dissertations

All doctoral candidates at Brown University must file their dissertations for the Brown University Library's electronic theses and dissertation system. Dissertations submitted through this system will appear in the library's discovery service. In the spirit of the dissemination of new knowledge that is a hallmark of higher education, dissertations will be subject to web searches and unrestricted downloads unless you request to opt out of that system and have your dissertation unavailable for download outside the Brown University community. A request to restrict download access to a dissertation has an initial two-year window from the time the degree is conferred that can be renewed every two years for up to ten years, with some exceptions. In cases where the dissertation is a co-worked piece and there is disagreement between you and your advisor over whether the dissertation will or will not be available for download outside of the Brown University community, the dispute will be brought before the Graduate Council for resolution. Electronic submission will only be possible once you have successfully defended your dissertation and had it approved by your committee. In addition, the Brown University Library offers [thesis binding services](#) should these be desired.

### Off-Boarding from the Department of Epidemiology

Upon approval of an application to graduate, you will be expected to return your university-issued laptop and keys to any office spaces to the academic team. You will also complete an exit survey for the Department of Epidemiology that allows us to better understand the experiences of students at the end of their degrees.

## Commencement and Beyond

Brown University holds one graduation per year. All commencement exercises and the conferral of degrees take place on the Sunday before Memorial Day. However, you may file your dissertation at any time of the year in advance of the filing deadline. You may choose to request a [Certificate of Completion](#) from the Office of the Registrar to show that you have completed all degree requirements before beginning employment. Only students who are receiving advanced degrees (including those whose degrees were awarded in the prior October and February) are permitted to participate in commencement exercises. Additional [information about commencement](#) is available from the Graduate School.

### Doctoral Regalia

If you choose to attend commencement, you must purchase or rent regalia from the [Brown University Bookstore](#). When renting regalia is not an option, the Department of Epidemiology will cover the cost of the purchase of doctoral regalia. This purchase is to be coordinated with the academic team.

### Alumni Privileges

Upon graduating, you will transfer from student status to alumni status. This transition entails a number of practical changes that you should be aware of. Card access is terminated on May 31. If you need access to card-controlled buildings at the School of Public Health after graduation, you should request this access from the operations team. You must return keys to any facilities once you graduate unless other arrangements are made with the operations team. Your student email account will migrate from a “brown.edu” domain to a “alumni.brown.edu” ten days after commencement. If you were covered by health insurance through Brown University, you will continue to be covered until August 14. While insurance coverage remains active during the summer, access to University Health Services, athletic facilities, and other benefits provided to active students will end with the close of the academic year.

### Alumni Relations

Brown University is proud of the accomplishments of its students. We encourage you to remain in contact with faculty and staff at the School of Public Health and beyond. Upon graduating, you may contact the [Brown Alumni Association](#) to access the range of benefits available to you as alumni of Brown University. You may order documents such as transcripts at any time from the Office of the Registrar. Distinguished alumni are recognized by the Graduate School for their contributions to their field with the [Horace Mann Medal](#).

## Co-Curricular Events

### Doctoral Program in Epidemiology Journal Club

The doctoral program in epidemiology hosts a journal club at least once per month on Wednesdays from 12:00pm to 1:00pm. These sessions are designed to provide you with opportunities to connect with your classmates for semi-structured discussion of applications of epidemiological theories and methods. Each semester, the journal club is facilitated by a faculty member who serves as the instructor of record and by two students who serve as student directors. These individuals are responsible for ensuring that all journal club activities involve thoughtful and supportive discussions. Most sessions will involve a pair of student volunteers selecting a published paper, presenting an overview of key details regarding the application of relevant epidemiological theories and methods in the selected paper, and facilitating a discussion of these concepts with their peers, but other formats are possible. You are required to attend all journal club sessions in person until you have advanced for candidacy unless you have been granted a waiver by the doctoral program director using [this form](#). Non-attendance may result in consequences for your academic standing.

### Doctoral Program in Epidemiology Research in Progress Presentations

The doctoral program in epidemiology aims to host a “research in progress” session at least once per semester. These sessions are designed to provide you with opportunities to receive feedback on your work and gain practice with oral presentations. Most sessions will involve a student presenting for up to 30 minutes followed by up to 20 minutes of question and answer from the audience. You may also consider using these sessions as opportunities to practice upcoming presentations at conferences and other venues.

### Department of Epidemiology Seminar Series

The Department of Epidemiology aims to host a seminar at least once per month. These seminars include a 45-minute presentation from the invited speaker and a 15-minute period for question and answer from the audience. These seminars provide valuable opportunities to engage with experts in the field from outside of the School of Public Health. You are required to attend all seminars in person. Opportunities to meet one-on-one with the invited speaker can also be scheduled with the academic team.

### Department of Epidemiology Faculty Spotlight Series

The Department of Epidemiology aims to host a series of faculty spotlight sessions throughout the academic year. These sessions consist of brief presentations from faculty members in the Department of Epidemiology that outline their career paths, interest areas, and current research and teaching activities followed by time for question and answer. You are strongly encouraged to attend these sessions, especially when you are beginning to make decisions about faculty members who will serve on your dissertation committee.

## Managing Challenging Circumstances

From time to time, issues may arise. Brown University's [Ombuds Office](#) is available as a confidential, neutral, informal, and independent resource. That should be viewed as a good, safe, and logical first place to go when figuring out what to do next when faced with conflicts or concerns. It is also a place to go when you are not sure where to go to address a matter or obtain more information about a situation. Whether your issue feels small, medium or big, or the conflict is new, ongoing, or deeply entrenched, or your questions concern policies and practices, interpersonal disputes, difficult decisions, ethics, bias, discrimination, or anything else, you are welcome to contact this office. In addition to the Ombuds Office, the doctoral program director and the department chair should also be viewed as resources for assistance in resolving conflicts involving your academic advisor, your supervisors for research assistantships or teaching assistantships, and members of your dissertation committee. You can request changes to advisors at any time and for any reason.

We share Brown University's commitment to sustaining a campus culture in which each individual's humanity and dignity are acknowledged through policies that are intended to provide a fair, prompt, and reliable mechanism for determining whether anti-discrimination policies and guidelines have been violated and, if so, to provide a resolution. If you ever need to report an incident of bias, discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence, please use of the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity's [incident reporting process](#). If one of the more specialized processes (e.g., [Title IX](#) process, [Student Conduct](#) process, incident reporting process) are appropriate for addressing alleged inappropriate treatment, there is a [grievance process](#) available. For example, this grievance process may be used to address a case of alleged inappropriate application of program requirements or concerns about advising. Within this context, this process can be used by graduate students pursuing concerns with other graduate students, faculty members, or academic units. In cases involving staff members, you may need to contact [University Human Resources](#). In cases where it is unclear which process applies, please consult the [Associate Dean of Academic Affairs](#) in the Graduate School.

In addition, you should be aware of our policies regarding [conflicts of interest and commitment](#). A conflict of interest or commitment may take many forms but arises when a member of our community might be able to use the authority of their position at Brown University to influence business decisions in ways that give improper advance or benefit to oneself, a family member, or associate or obtain for oneself, a family member, or an associate a benefit beyond the compensation they are authorized to receive for performing their responsibilities. Compliance with this policy requires disclosure of potential, actual, or perceived conflicts.

## Policies for Leaves of Absence

The Graduate School recognizes that you may need to request a leave of absence at times. If you are considering a leave of absence, you are encouraged to make an appointment with a dean in the Graduate School to review your options. Depending on individual circumstances, you may also be referred to other offices for additional support, such as Student Accessibility Services, the Office of International Students and Scholar Services, and the Office of Financial Aid. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to review whether reasonable accommodations might make it possible to continue as an active registered student.

Requests for leaves of absence should be submitted to the Graduate School at least four weeks before the start of the semester in which the leave is to be taken. If you need to address a medical need, you may request a medical leave of absence at any time. If you experience an urgent personal matter, you may request a personal leave of absence at any time. Students who have not been approved for a leave by the Graduate School will still be considered active. Until you receive written confirmation of the approval of their leave of absence request from the Graduate School, you are considered registered and will be expected to fulfill your academic and other responsibilities as enrolled students, including completing coursework. All leave of absence applications require approval by the doctoral program director via the appropriate form in UFunds.

### Initiating a Request for Leave of Absence

To initiate a request for a leave of absence, you must use the relevant UFunds application under “Graduate Student Leaves and Accommodations”. For leaves other than medical leave, the request process starts by submitting a request via UFunds for review and approval by the doctoral program director and/or department chair. If approved, the form is then reviewed by the relevant dean. If you have existing Title IV aid funding or prior federal student loans, the request must also be reviewed and approved by the [Office of Financial Aid](#) as you will lose your eligibility for loan repayment deferral while on leave and may enter or continue repayment while on leave. If you are an international student, this request must also be reviewed and approved by the [Office of International Student and Scholar Services](#). There are additional processes for medical leave.

### Eligibility for Leave of Absence

If you are in good academic standing, you are eligible to apply for a leave of absence. If you have completed less than one full term or are not in good academic standing, your request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Leaves are available only in instances when your academic standing would permit you to continue in the degree program upon return from leave and when there is a viable path to degree completion. If your academic standing is “Warning”, your request for leave may be denied.

### Possible Length of Leave of Absence

Leaves of absence may range in length from one semester to one full year (two semesters and a summer term). Leaves of absence are not regularly granted for the summer term only. Readmission from a leave for the summer term requires additional approval by the doctoral program and will be reviewed on a case-by-

case basis. To request an extension to a second year of leave, you must file a request for an extension with the Graduate School prior to the expiration of the initial leave. This request must be accompanied by a letter of support from the doctoral program director. If you do not file a request for an extension or if a request for an extension is not approved, you may be withdrawn automatically from the doctoral program.

### **Changes to Student Status on Leave of Absence**

When you are on leave, you retain your admitted student status only. Because you are not registered and enrolled at Brown University, you will not have the rights and privileges of registered and enrolled students. Taking leave may have significant implications for student loans for all students and for visas for international students. All types of leave “stop the clock” on your academic requirements for the duration of the leave except for requirements that should have been met prior to the leave. Therefore, you may be expected to complete work from previous terms before being readmitted. However, taking a leave of absence in and of itself should not affect your academic progress or standing. When on leave, you will retain access to your Brown University email account and can request continued access to libraries and recreation facilities, unless otherwise noted, for the period of the leave. You may also request continued building access, which is reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis. Importantly, as students on leave are not active students, you will not have continued access to University Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, free use of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority buses, or student membership to recreation facilities.

All leaves of absence are recorded in the academic transcript as “Leave of Absence”.

Health Insurance: If you are approved for a leave of absence and you were previously insured under the student health insurance plan for the enrollment period immediately prior to taking the leave of absence, you are eligible to enroll in the student health insurance plan for a maximum of one year. In most cases, you are responsible for payment of the premium. The Graduate School assumes responsibility for payment of the premium if you are on medical leave. It is not possible to extend enrollment beyond one year.

Financial Terms: No financial support is provided during a leave of absence. You should consult with the Office of Financial Aid regarding the implications of a leave for financial aid and student loans. Most types of leave allow you to defer funding commitments from Brown University. However, personal leaves will not allow you to defer funding commitments from Brown University except by petition in exceptional cases with approval by the Graduate School. If you receive funding from an external source, such as a grant from the National Institutes of Health, you are subject to the conditions established by the funding source.

International Students: If you hold an F-1 visa or J-1 visa and are seeking a leave of absence, you are required to contact the Office of International Student and Scholar Services as soon as possible for advising. You must enter the contact of a staff member from the Office of International Student and Scholar Services on your request for leave of absence in UFunds. With some exceptions for medical leave, you will not be allowed to remain in the United States as you are no longer enrolled as a student when taking a leave of absence. You must request to remain in the United States while on medical leave.

## Categories of Leave

### Family Leave of Absence

Subject to the conditions above, you may take an unpaid family leave of absence for the birth or adoption of a child within one year of birth or placement for adoption or for care of your spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent with a serious health condition. In cases where you and your spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent are both students at Brown University, only one student may take a family leave at a time. You may take a family leave for up to one year (two semesters and a summer term). Requests for extension of leave by one year or for repeated family leave may be made. Approval for extensions, deferral of funding, and continued academic accommodation is at the discretion of the deans of the Graduate School. You are expected to notify the doctoral program director in writing of plans to take family leave at the earliest possible date so that appropriate arrangements can be made to cover any research or teaching responsibilities.

### Medical Leave of Absence

Subject to the conditions above, you may take a medical leave of absence to address a medical need. If you are considering a medical leave, you should consult with the Associate Dean of Student Support in the Graduate School as well as University Health Services and/or Counseling and Psychological Services. You may request a medical leave at any time. In exceptional circumstances and where program structures allow, you may be approved for medical leave for periods that do not fully align with the semester and summer term periods. If you are seeking to return to Brown University following a medical leave, you should follow the [guidelines for clearance to return from medical leave](#) from the Graduate School. Requests for extensions beyond the initially approved period may be made with approval from the Graduate School. If you are a student with a disability considering a medical leave, you are encouraged to review whether a reasonable accommodation through Student Accessibility Services might either make it possible to continue as an active registered student and/or be appropriate once you have returned from leave.

The Graduate School recognizes that a medical leave of absence, particularly the temporary interruption of a stipend, can be a financial challenge. To help graduate students prioritize their health and well-being and alleviate these potential financial difficulties, you are eligible to apply for a medical leave grant to be paid at the onset of a medical leave. You should apply for these funds via UFunds. Students with disabilities can request reasonable modifications to these procedures by contacting the Graduate School.

### Professional Development Leave of Absence

You may take one or two semesters of leave for approved professional development opportunities that advance your pedagogic goals. Examples of reasons for professional development leave include full-time professional internships or short-term research or teaching appointments at other institutions. Applications for professional development leave require the approval of the doctoral program director and the Graduate School. Requests for this type of leave should be made at least four weeks before the start of the semester in which you would like to take the leave. These leaves are normally for a maximum of one year. The Graduate School will consider a request for one, and only one, extra year in extraordinary circumstances.



### Probationary Leave of Absence

You may take one or two semesters of probationary leave at the recommendation of the doctoral program for deficiencies related to academic performance. For all probationary leaves, the Graduate School will require written confirmation that both the doctoral program and the student agree to the leave of absence. A probationary leave allows you additional time to meet academic requirements while on leave, preserving any funding commitments and the possibility of a return to active student status. In some circumstances, the doctoral program may recommend probationary leave following a term of semester of academic standing of “Warning”. These leaves must be accompanied by a plan of action that describes what you need to accomplish during the leave to be considered for reenrollment in the program. Applications for leave must be completed with the doctoral program and the Graduate School and must be made at least four weeks before the start of the semester that you would like to take leave. Probationary leaves are granted for one to two semesters, with the probability of extension for up to one additional year. You may only reenroll with the written permission of the doctoral program director and approval by the Graduate School.

### Personal Leave of Absence

You may take one or two semesters of leave for personal reasons, including military services. Applications for personal leave must be completed with the doctoral program and with the Graduate School. Requests should be made at least four weeks before the start of the semester that you would like to take leave. Personal leaves are granted for one to two semesters, with a possibility of extension for up to one year. Funding commitments from Brown University are not deferred while you are on personal leave. This means that you will forfeit guaranteed funding from the Graduate School equal to the duration of the personal leave. In exceptional cases, the doctoral program and the Graduate School may allow funding commitments to be deferred while a student is on personal leave. If you receive funding from an external source, such as the National Institutes of Health, you are subject to the conditions established by the funding source.

### **Readmission from Leave of Absence**

To return to active status and to be eligible for funding in the next term, you must notify the Graduate School in writing by May 1 for return in the fall semester or November 1 for return in the spring semester. Requests for return in a summer term will require additional approval by the doctoral program on a case-by-case basis, but requests must be submitted no later than April 1. For readmission from leaves other than medical leave, you should write to the doctoral program director requesting readmission. Once approved, the doctoral program director will endorse and forward the request to the Graduate School. Additional processes are needed to return following a medical leave as detailed by the Graduate School. Before being readmitted after an extended absence, the department chair and the doctoral program director will need to take special care to reorient you to any changes to the doctoral program that may have occurred while on leave.

## **Policies for Accommodations**

Additional information about the range of accommodations offered at Brown University is available through [Student Accessibility Services](#). Student Accessibility Services is committed to creating a campus where every student can fully participate in curricular and cocurricular activities. This office ensures that all students have the tools and opportunities that they need to excel in their degree programs. We can provide [a range of accommodations and services](#) to registered students with documented disabilities or medical conditions.

### **Short-Term Medical Accommodation**

The Graduate School recognizes that there are times when an acute medical matter may arise that requires accommodations but not a medical leave of absence. A short-term medical accommodation allows you to take one to four weeks away from academic responsibilities to focus on your health and well-being. You may apply for short-term medical accommodation at any point during the academic year to receive temporary relief from your academic duties due to illness, injury, or a temporary acute phase of a chronic condition. If you are approved for short-term medical accommodation, you maintain active, full-time students status and all accompanying privileges, including stipend, where applicable. As short-term medical accommodation may not fundamentally alter the essential nature of your course, curriculum, or program, a medical leave may be required if an accommodation for the period requested would result in a fundamental alteration.

If you experience an acute medical matter, you must meet as soon as possible with the Associate Dean of Student Support in the Graduate School. You should submit the appropriate request form in UFunds. The relevant dean will review the application and share the accommodation request with the department, asking the department chair, doctoral program director, or advisor, as applicable, to determine if the short-term medical accommodation would be reasonable in the context of the doctoral degree program. If a reasonable accommodation cannot be identified, a medical leave of absence may be necessary. To receive short-term medical accommodation, you must register with Student Accessibility Services. Medical documentation will be required at the end of the accommodation period, clearing you to resume all full-time academic duties.

### **Support for Student Parents**

Brown University is committed to supporting our students in their professional development while finding ways to accommodate major life events in that process. Our policies for family leave and parental relief are aimed at helping you successfully balance your parenting responsibilities and your professional pursuits. Both parental relief and family leave provide ways of “stopping the clock” for students facing special family needs that require their full-time attention. These policies establish minimum standards for accommodation. It is expected that the department will work with sensitivity and imagination to provide more than this minimum. We encourage you to maintain open lines of communication with the department as these policies do not replace communication, cooperation, and good faith efforts by all parties to accommodate family needs.

### Parental Relief Support

Parental relief is designed to ameliorate academic and professional demands on parents who are primary caregivers of newly born or adopted children. Recognizing the demands of being the primary caregiver for a newborn infant or adopted child under 16 years old, parental relief will provide you with an additional semester or summer of stipended support at the standard rate set annually by the Graduate School. Parental relief “stops the clock” on your academic requirements for the duration of one semester or summer. You may take this relief during the semester or summer in which birth or adoption occurs or in the immediately following semester. You will retain full-time student status. As such, health insurance coverage, eligibility for deferment of student loan repayment, and visa status for international students are maintained during the relief period. If you receive funding from an external source, such as a grant from the National Institutes of Health, you are subject to the conditions established by the funding source.

You are encouraged to meet with the Associate Dean of Student Support in the Graduate School early when anticipating the birth or adoption of a child to address questions about parental relief. You should submit a request for parental relief in UFunds. You are encouraged to communicate with your advisors, supervisors, and the doctoral program director as soon as possible to rearrange research and teaching responsibilities. When you are approved for parental relief, you will be required to submit supporting documents of the adoption or birth 15 days before or after the event occurs.

## **Additional Resources for Doctoral Students**

### **Office Space**

The Department of Epidemiology will make every effort to ensure that all faculty, staff, and students are provided with adequate space to work at the School of Public Health. This includes rooms on the second and third floors designated for doctoral student use only. There are 31 workstations on the second floor. Room 242 is designated as an absolute quiet workspace and Room 243 is designed for collaborative work requiring conversation. There are 15 workstations on the third floor across from Room 374 and Room 377. In addition, there are several private spaces that can be reserved in Room 243A, 243B, 351, 360, 362, and 378. In addition, you will be provided with a mailbox located on the third floor. Wireless internet is available throughout the building, allowing you to use a range of [open spaces available to students](#) at the School of Public Health.

### **Laptop Computers**

The School of Public Health provides each incoming doctoral student with a new laptop computer to be used while enrolled in their doctoral program. This laptop computer will be maintained by the Office of Information Technology. While the doctoral program will make the initial purchase, you are responsible for any costs that are not covered under warranty. As different components are subject to different warranties, you should contact the Office of Information Technology before requesting repairs or replacements. If a laptop computer needs to be sent out for repair, you will be temporarily loaned a laptop computer. These laptop computers are the property of Brown University. As such, the laptop computer must be returned to the School of Public Health upon graduation or any other exit from the doctoral program.

### **Textbooks for Teaching Assistantships**

If you are serving as a teaching assistant in a course with a required text, you are eligible for textbook purchase by the Department of Epidemiology if no copies are currently available. However, these instructional copies are to be used year-to-year and will need to be returned to the course instruction at the end of the teaching assistantship. If you purchase a copy for personal use as a teaching assistant, you will be reimbursed.

### **Scholarly Development Funds from the Department of Epidemiology**

The Department of Epidemiology provides support for scholarly development to all doctoral students. You may apply for these funds once per semester. Each student is limited to \$1,000 per fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). Funding is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The application for funding will close once the allotted scholarly development funds for the fiscal year have been used. Requests for funding for students who are beyond their fifth year in the doctoral program must receive approval from the doctoral program director before applying. Any questions about these funds can be directed to the academic manager.

### **Funding Support for the Society for Epidemiologic Research Annual Meeting**

Each year, the [Society for Epidemiologic Research](#) (SER) hosts an annual meeting that serves as a forum for epidemiologists and other public health professionals to gather and share their latest research. This multi-

day event features various sessions, including workshops, oral presentations, poster presentations, and panel discussions that highlight all kinds of advancements in the field of epidemiology. We encourage you to submit your work for presentation and for recognition for student awards. The Department of Epidemiology has a conference travel fund to help support those interested in attending this conference. Some funds may also be available to support participation in workshops and other sessions that may require an additional fee. Guidelines for reimbursement will be provided on an annual basis by the academic team, with exact amounts covered varying depending on the location of the annual meeting. All questions about attending the Society for Epidemiologic Research Annual Meeting should be directed to the academic team.

### **Scholarly Development Funds from the Graduate School**

The Graduate School offers a range of funding opportunities to support travel to conduct research and to present research findings at conferences. This includes the [Conference Travel Fund](#), the [International Travel Fund](#), the [Research Mobility Fellowship](#), the [Joukowsky Summer Research Award](#), and the [Doctoral Research Travel Grant](#). We also encourage you to seek additional sources of funding, including the [Graduate Student Council](#) and the Graduate School's [distinctive opportunities](#).

### **Awards and Honors**

#### Award for Outstanding Publication by a Doctoral Student in Epidemiology

Each year, the Department of Epidemiology recognizes a doctoral student for their achievement in the form of a manuscript accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. To be eligible for consideration, the manuscript must reflect work that was completed while enrolled as a doctoral student at Brown University as the lead author and have been accepted for publication in the 11 months prior to the stated deadline. Submissions – including the accepted manuscript and a brief cover letter explaining the significance of the work to their area of study – are due to the academic manager by February 28. The awardee will be identified by a committee of family members who were not involved in any of the submitted manuscripts. The awardee will be expected to give an oral presentation of the published work at the end of the academic year in May. Along with this public recognition, the awardee will receive a \$500 honorarium from the doctoral program.

## **Links to Important Documents**

### **Keeping Track of Major Degree Milestones**

- [Program Progression Checklist](#)
- [Individual Development Plan](#)

### **Student Appointments**

- [Selecting an Appointment Type for First Semester](#)
- [Contract for Research Assistantship or Teaching Assistantship](#)

### **Non-Credit-Bearing Activities**

- [Instructions for Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative \(CITI\) Certification](#)
- [Instructions for SAS Programming Modules](#)
- [Requesting a Waiver of Journal Club Requirements](#)

### **Dissertation Research**

- [Template for Conceptualization of Dissertation Research](#)
- [Scheduling an Oral Qualifying Exam](#)
- [Reporting Results of an Oral Qualifying Exam](#)
- [Selecting a Dissertation Committee](#)
- [Scheduling a Dissertation Defense](#)

## Information for Academic Advisors

In line with [best practices from the Graduate School](#), all advisors are expected to:

- Understand and respect that each advisee brings different perspectives, experiences, and interests
- Listen to and support an advisee's professional development goals
- Meet regularly with an advisee to review progress, goals, challenges, and future plans
- Communicate clearly and frequently with an advisee about expectations and responsibilities
- Help an advisee develop a timeline for completing academic requirements and meeting professional goals
- Encourage an advisee to be open about any challenges or difficulties that impact their progress
- Be aware of institutional resources that can provide support to advisees during their training
- Be knowledgeable about rules, policies, and procedures governing graduate education at Brown University
- Respond to all communication from doctoral program leadership and staff in a timely fashion
- Commit to growth and development as an advisor by seeking regular feedback from advisees

### Responsibilities Specific to Academic Advisors

Academic advisors help to familiarize their advisees with requirements and expectations of the doctoral program. This includes communicating departmental and disciplinary norms while avoiding assumptions about prior knowledge. Academic advisors should stay up to date on the program's structure, requirements, and deadlines and engage in regular discussions with their advisees about these topics. Academic advisors are primarily responsible for assisting their advisees in making plans for completing all degree requirements and making progress on achieving their professional goals by reviewing their individual development plans. In addition to meeting with their advisees at least twice per semester, academic advisors will provide formal feedback to the doctoral program director about their advisees' academic progress twice per year.

## Information for Supervisors of Assistantships

In line with [best practices from the Graduate School](#), all advisors are expected to:

- Understand and respect that each advisee brings different perspectives, experiences, and interests
- Listen to and support and advisee's professional development goals
- Meet regularly with an advisee to review progress, goals, challenges, and future plans
- Communicate clearly and frequently with an advisee about expectations and responsibilities
- Help an advisee develop a timeline for completing academic requirements and meeting professional goals
- Encourage an advisee to be open about any challenges or difficulties that impact their progress
- Be aware of institutional resources that can provide support to advisees during their training
- Be knowledgeable about rules, policies, and procedures governing graduate education at Brown University
- Respond to all communication from doctoral program leadership and staff in a timely fashion
- Commit to growth and development as an advisor by seeking regular feedback from advisees

### Responsibilities Specific to Supervisors of Research Assistantships

Supervisors of research assistantships are expected to create opportunities for their advisees to make meaningful contributions to their program of research that qualify them as lead authors or coauthors on manuscripts to be submitted for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Supervisors should meet with their advisees at least once per month, but more frequent meetings are highly encouraged. During these meetings, the supervisor should confirm that their advisee's activities are progressing in accordance with expectations outlined in the research assistantship contract. If activities are not progressing as expected, the supervisor will meet with their advisee to develop solutions for potential challenges. The supervisor is also expected to defray relevant expenses if off-campus travel is required for completion of any tasks. Each semester, the supervisor will provide formal feedback to the doctoral program director about their advisee's performance.

### Responsibilities Specific to Supervisors of Teaching Assistantships

Supervisors of teaching assistantships are expected to create opportunities for their advisees to contribute to the delivery of a course. Standard duties may include some classroom teaching, the presentation of occasional lectures, leading discussion sections, supervising lab sessions, holding office hours, grading assignments, and other programmatic duties for a course. Supervisors should meet with their advisees at least once per month, but more frequent meetings are highly encouraged. During these meetings, the supervisor should confirm that their advisee's activities are progressing in accordance with expectations outline in the teaching assistantship contract. If activities are not progressing as expected, the supervisor will meet with their advisee to develop solutions for potential challenges. Each semester, the supervisor will provide formal feedback to the doctoral program director about their advisee's performance.



## Information for Dissertation Chairs

In line with [best practices from the Graduate School](#), all advisors are expected to:

- Understand and respect that each advisee brings different perspectives, experiences, and interests
- Listen to and support and advisee's professional development goals
- Meet regularly with an advisee to review progress, goals, challenges, and future plans
- Communicate clearly and frequently with an advisee about expectations and responsibilities
- Help an advisee develop a timeline for completing academic requirements and meeting professional goals
- Encourage an advisee to be open about any challenges or difficulties that impact their progress
- Be aware of institutional resources that can provide support to advisees during their training
- Be knowledgeable about rules, policies, and procedures governing graduate education at Brown University
- Respond to all communication from doctoral program leadership and staff in a timely fashion
- Commit to growth and development as an advisor by seeking regular feedback from advisees

### Responsibilities Specific to Dissertation Chairs

Dissertation chairs hold the primary responsibility of ensuring timely completion of all dissertation activities. The dissertation chair should stay up to date on all dissertation-related requirements and timelines and engage in ongoing discussions with their advisees regarding their progress. The dissertation chair should meet with their advisees at least once a month, but more frequent meetings are recommended. During these meetings, the dissertation chair should ensure that their advisee is progressing in their knowledge of the discipline, reading the scientific literature both broadly and deeply, making timely progress on the proposed research, and improving their skills in oral and written scientific communication. The dissertation chair is also expected to provide timely feedback on written products submitted by their advisee. The dissertation chair should also discuss policies regarding authorship and collaborate with their advisee to publish their work.

## Information for Dissertation Committee Members

In line with [best practices from the Graduate School](#), all advisors are expected to:

- Understand and respect that each advisee brings different perspectives, experiences, and interests
- Listen to and support an advisee's professional development goals
- Meet regularly with an advisee to review progress, goals, challenges, and future plans
- Communicate clearly and frequently with an advisee about expectations and responsibilities
- Help an advisee develop a timeline for completing academic requirements and meeting professional goals
- Encourage an advisee to be open about any challenges or difficulties that impact their progress
- Be aware of institutional resources that can provide support to advisees during their training
- Be knowledgeable about rules, policies, and procedures governing graduate education at Brown University
- Respond to all communication from doctoral program leadership and staff in a timely fashion
- Commit to growth and development as an advisor by seeking regular feedback from advisees

### Responsibilities Specific to Dissertation Committee Members

The dissertation committee should meet with their advisees at least once a semester, but more frequent meetings are recommended. During these meetings, the dissertation committee should ensure that their advisee is progressing in their knowledge of the discipline, reading the scientific literature both broadly and deeply, making timely progress on the proposed research, and improving their skills in oral and written scientific communication. All dissertation committee members are expected to provide timely feedback on written products submitted by their advisee. Dissertation committee members should refrain from making requests for changes to pre-planned activities without rationale, especially those out of scope of the aims of the dissertation research, to ensure that advisees can complete their dissertations in a timely manner.