

# **UAB** SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## **GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

Updated September 2018

This student handbook will provide an overview of procedures, policies and useful information not only for new students but returning students as well. We are confident that during your time here your relationship with the UAB School of Public Health will provide a conduit for your career goals and that we will benefit from the experiences that you bring to us. We wish you much success as you embark on your new career journey. Our primary goal is to prepare each graduate with the skills and competencies needed to go out into the community, the State, and beyond to lead innovation in public health and improve the health of the citizens of Alabama and the world. Please feel free to stop by The Office of Student and Academic Services, located in Suite 130, or call (205) 934-4993 if you have questions or concerns.

**Information in this booklet is subject to change especially as it pertains to deadline dates, tuition/fees and policies.**

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### **New Student Orientation**

The New Student Orientation is designed to welcome and acquaint incoming students with the school. The orientation process has two components: a required on-line process administered in Canvas LMS, and a one day on-campus process. During on campus orientation, which takes place in August each year, students will have the opportunity to meet and greet faculty, current students, and administrators. More specifically, students will have the opportunity to become more familiar with the campus, meet with an academic advisor to finalize their schedules and learn about the vibrant academic life at the university.

### **Biological Basis Competency Exam**

Incoming MPH students are required to show evidence of previous biological/biomedical sciences coursework at the time of admission. This requirement may be met by showing proof of a previously earned Medical, Dental, Nursing or Dietetics degree (registered or registration eligible dietitians only) or a BS in Public Health (from UAB), extensive and substantial education in biological or biomedical courses (grades of "B" or better) or by taking the Online Biological Basis of Public Health Exam and earning a grade of 70% or better. Admission letters indicate whether a student has met the competency requirement. If an exam waiver is NOT indicated in the admission letter, plans

should be made to take the exam at one of the proctored exam sessions during orientation, or for online students, at a scheduled time. The exam may be taken a total of three times prior to the last day to add & drop classes for the semester. A registration hold may be added to the student's account if this requirement is not met.

### **Blazer ID/E-Mail**

Get connected to the whole wired world with a [BlazerID](#). Your BlazerID is who you are at UAB – to the computers, at least. It's your e-mail address, your [BlazerNET](#) login, your Canvas username, and a whole lot of other important online services. It is the student's responsibility to obtain an official UAB e-mail address in a timely manner from the UAB e-mail registering system. Go to [www.uab.edu/students/one-stop/blazerid](http://www.uab.edu/students/one-stop/blazerid) to sign-up, get started, and get help.

### **University Campus Card (ONE Card)**

Your ONE Card serves as your UAB student ID as well as your library card, meal card, access card for residence halls, BlazerBucks declining balance card, and admission card for things such as the Rec Center and UAB sporting events. Go to [www.uab.edu/onecard](http://www.uab.edu/onecard) for more ONE Card information.

### **Ryals Building Access - ONE Card**

After 7:00 pm, the Ryals Building may be entered through the east entrance only using the UAB One Card (double doors facing the Webb Building). ONE Card access to all other entrances will be suspended until 7:00 AM each morning. All new students are granted building access. If you do not have building access, stop by the Office of Student and Academic Services, Room 130 Ryals Building. As long as you are an active student, your access card to Ryals Building will remain functional.

### **UAB Meal Plans**

Enrolled students living on campus and all undergraduate students taking twelve (12) or more credit hours who do not reside on campus will be assessed a \$225 Campus Dining Fee during fall and spring semesters. Enrolled students living on campus are also required to purchase a meal plan during fall and spring semesters. Students not residing on campus and UAB employees can elect to purchase a meal plan during fall and spring semesters. Go to [www.uab.edu/students/dining/meal-plans](http://www.uab.edu/students/dining/meal-plans) for more information.

### **Establishing Alabama Residency**

Do you think you might meet in-state residency requirements? There are a number of factors that may be considered in determining in-state residency for tuition purposes, and you must be able to clearly prove your residency. Go to [www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/in-state-residency](http://www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/in-state-residency) for more information.

### Two Methods of Requesting Residency Reclassification

#### **1. Academic Common Market**

Residents of every Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) state may participate in the SREB Academic Common Market, an agreement that enables students to pursue unique majors offered at public institutions in the other SREB states while paying in-state tuition. If the public institutions in your home state do not offer degree programs in your field of study, it may be possible to arrange a waiver of out-of-state tuition to attend a cooperating public institution of higher education in another

participating state. For detailed information and contact information about your state's Academic Common Market representative go to the SREB web site at [www.sreb.org](http://www.sreb.org).

#### **2. Alabama Residency Reclassification**

Alabama, like other states, restricts resident tuition to persons who have been residing in Alabama for purposes other than to obtain an education, and who are able to demonstrate contacts with the State of Alabama indicating intent to remain in this state.

Go to [www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/in-state-residency](http://www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/in-state-residency) to view the conditions for reclassification and to apply.

### **Career and Professional Development**

Curious about where a degree in Public Health will take you? The UAB School of Public Health has partnered with UAB Career & Professional Development (CPD) to ensure the comprehensive career counseling and life planning. The Career Center offers numerous resources to assist you in your career development and job search. They will assist you in finding a great internship or provide you with valuable resources to aide you in searching for public health career opportunities. Go to [www.uab.edu/students/cpd/](http://www.uab.edu/students/cpd/) for more information.

An overview of the Office of Career and Professional Development includes:

- One-on-One Appointments: The Career Center can assist you with strategies to most effectively communicate your skills and experiences with potential employers hiring in a variety of settings: academic, research, non-profit, government, client services, healthcare, and business settings.
- Career Seminar and Workshop Series: This series begins with an introduction to public health careers followed by seminars presented by professionals representing organizations such as private industry, health departments and federal government, just to name a few. We also have seminars on fellowship opportunities. We also offer an annual career workshop that covers such practical topics as resume creation and job

search skills.

- **Hire A Blazer:** HireABlazer is the place for all things career. You can find internships, part-time jobs, career jobs, and work-study jobs. But there is so much more...we know that UAB students want to be competitive. Your first step is to create a profile that gets you noticed by employers who are looking for interns and employees. **Website:** [www.uab.edu/students/cpd/hire-a-blazer](http://www.uab.edu/students/cpd/hire-a-blazer)

### **MPH Internships**

Internships play an important role in preparing students to assume leadership positions in the field of public health. As a student in the MPH program, you are required to complete three credit hours of an internship experience. The internship is a field experience which bridges professional academic preparation and public health practice. Knowledge and skills learned in coursework are applied in an agency setting under the supervision and guidance of an experienced public health specialist. Students should start preparing for their internship at least 3 months ahead of the date they plan to begin their experience. You may check with the school's internship coordinator or the school's Internship website named Intern Track at <http://www.soph.uab.edu/fieldplacements/> for internship opportunities. Faculty research projects are not appropriate venues for an internship, or are positions which are primarily administrative or focused on data management.

You should register under your academic advisor for the internship course (XXX 697). For three credit hours, you are expected to spend a minimum of 180 hours working for your internship site. The internship must be completed in one semester, and all hours must be completed by the last day of class. You are required to complete your core course work before registering for internship hours. Credit cannot be applied retroactively to work you have done prior to registering for the internship. You should feel free to contact the Graduate Program Director or Internship Coordinator if you have any questions or problems during the internship.

### **Internship Grading and Requirements**

The internship is a pass/fail course. Your grade will be assigned by your faculty advisor based on the completion of all the components below. All forms related to the MPH internship will be completed in the InternTrack program.

- Internship Description and Agreement Form
- Midpoint Meeting Form, and confirmed meetings with the faculty advisor and site supervisor
- Final student evaluation
- Final student paper
- Completion of poster and attendance at the internship poster session
- Evaluations (Midpoint and Final) from the site supervisor
- Any additional product required by your internship site

For complete internship requirements please visit the

<http://www.soph.uab.edu/fieldplacements/students> website.

### **Scholarships**

Scholarship applications are due February 1 for returning full-time masters students. Incoming Fall semester do not fill out a scholarship application. All incoming Fall semester students with at least a 3.0 GPA, who are US citizens or permanent residents, and that submit an application for admission by January 1 will be considered for scholarships. International students are eligible for scholarships during their second year of enrollment, meaning they should apply for scholarships the spring prior to their second year. (Ex: An international student admitted Fall 2018 would complete the current student scholarship application Spring 2019 for scholarships that will be available beginning Fall 2019). Further details about scholarships and their criteria are available on the School of Public Health website at

[www.soph.uab.edu/scholarships](http://www.soph.uab.edu/scholarships)

You may also apply for extramural support by contacting national, international and private foundations directly.

The University Financial Aid Office is responsible for administering financial support loans based on need and non-need option. For

more information about applying for loans at UAB, please refer to the University's Paying for College website, [www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/](http://www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/)

**International Students:** UAB offers several scholarships specifically for international students. All incoming freshman (first-year) international students are automatically considered for the UAB International Scholarship, which is based on Grade Point Average (GPA), upon application to UAB. Contact the International Scholar and Student Services Office at (205) 934-3328 or at [ISSS@uab.edu](mailto:ISSS@uab.edu) or go to [www.uab.edu/global/international-students-and-scholars/students/scholarships](http://www.uab.edu/global/international-students-and-scholars/students/scholarships) for more information.

### **Disability Support Services**

UAB Disability Support Services (DSS) provides a broad array of services and technologies to make the UAB campus – and a UAB education – accessible for everyone. DSS handles each request for services individually, which ensures you receive the accommodations that are appropriate for you. Registering for services is simple. Contact DSS at (205) 934-4205, [dss@uab.edu](mailto:dss@uab.edu) or [www.uab.edu/dss](http://www.uab.edu/dss).

### **Student Counseling Services**

Student Counseling Services offers students of all backgrounds, races, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, ethnicities, and cultures a safe place to discuss and resolve issues that interfere with personal and academic goals. We recognize and honor the complex intersectionality of all aspects of a person's identity and presenting concerns.

**Website:** [www.uab.edu/students/counseling/](http://www.uab.edu/students/counseling/)

### **International Scholars and Students**

The mission of International Scholar and Student Services (ISSS) is to provide quality services, programs, and activities that enhance cultural awareness, international educational and research opportunities, and global perspectives for students, faculty and staff.

ISSS advises foreign students and assists visiting international faculty and students in matters of immigration, federal and state taxation, and

orientation to the Birmingham community. Contact the ISSS at (205) 934-3328 or at [ISSS@uab.edu](mailto:ISSS@uab.edu), website:

[www.uab.edu/global/international-students-and-scholars](http://www.uab.edu/global/international-students-and-scholars).

### **Immunization Policy**

UAB requires all first-time entering students who enroll at UAB must show proof of specified immunizations as outlined by the UAB Student Health Service on their website:

([www.uab.edu/studentimmunizations](http://www.uab.edu/studentimmunizations)).

Enrolling students must show proof of the required immunizations with either an official certificate of immunization, a photocopy of an immunization certificate, or written documentation from their physician. *These requirements must be met to avoid having a registration hold placed on your student account.*

### **Mandatory Health Insurance**

To ensure that all students have adequate health care coverage, including ongoing primary and specialty care, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) requires all eligible students to have major medical health insurance. Students can provide proof of their own private coverage or be enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). **Website:**

[www.uab.edu/students/health/insurance-waivers](http://www.uab.edu/students/health/insurance-waivers)

### **Insurance Waiver**

Students who already have their own personal insurance coverage have the option to waive the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). Visit the UAB Insurance Waiver website for the minimum standards for insurance at

[www.uab.edu/students/health/insurance-waivers/waivers](http://www.uab.edu/students/health/insurance-waivers/waivers)

Please click this link to visit the UAB Student Health Services website:

[www.uab.edu/students/health](http://www.uab.edu/students/health)

### **Paying Tuition and Fees**

When you register for classes, you make a commitment to pay tuition and the appropriate fees. Students are required to know and understand the financial obligations associated with taking classes and are held accountable for

reading the UAB Detailed Tuition and Fees Charges information located on the following webpage at [www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/](http://www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/).

Tuition and fee payment details and deadlines can be found on the [UAB Academic Calendar](#).

### **Parking and Transportation**

Student parking is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. You must have a UAB ONE Card ID before you can purchase a parking permit. All student parking permit fees will be added to your student account. Go to [www.uab.edu/transportation/](http://www.uab.edu/transportation/) for more information.

### **Campus Safety**

The University of Alabama at Birmingham is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students, faculty, staff, patients and visitors. UAB Police patrols the campus 24 hours a day by car, foot, and bicycle. For other useful services offered by The Police Department please visit [www.uab.edu/police/](http://www.uab.edu/police/).

### **Campus Safety App**

Rave Guardian is one of the best ways to improve your personal safety and protect your friends by building your own private safety network. This free app provides instant communications with friends, family, co-workers, UAB Police, and even 911 in the event of an emergency.

[www.uab.edu/emergency/rave-guardian](http://www.uab.edu/emergency/rave-guardian)

### **Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences**

The Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences (LHL) at UAB is the largest biomedical library in Alabama and serves as a Resource Library for the Southeast/Atlantic Region in the National Network of Libraries of Medicine. **Website:** [library.uab.edu/locations/lister-hill](http://library.uab.edu/locations/lister-hill)

### **Mervyn H. Sterne Library**

The Sterne Library's collections support teaching and research in the arts and humanities, business, education, engineering, natural sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. In addition to more than 1 million print and electronic books and subscriptions to over 41,000 periodicals, the library also provides users with access to

specialized databases, audio-visual materials, microforms, and other electronic resources.

[library.uab.edu/locations/sterne](http://library.uab.edu/locations/sterne)

## **SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

[www.soph.uab.edu/students/studentforms](http://www.soph.uab.edu/students/studentforms)

### **Enrollment/Registration**

Students in the School of Public Health must be continuously enrolled each term until the completion of their degree unless approved for a leave of absence. Failure to remain consecutively enrolled may result in dismissal from the program requiring a re-admission application. If re-admitted, the student will be subjected to the catalog requirements existing at the time of re-admission.

### **Course Registration**

All registration is conducted on-line through BlazerNet, the University's official portal which provides centralized access to information and services that students, faculty and staff need on a daily basis. BlazerNet will provide you with up-to-date information about UAB news and events to access to class registration, financial aid, grading and much more. Go to [www.uab.edu/students/academics/register-for-classes](http://www.uab.edu/students/academics/register-for-classes) for more information on how to register for class. The UAB Class Schedule is available online ([www.uab.edu/classschedule](http://www.uab.edu/classschedule)) or can be viewed in [Blazernet](#).

The following course prefixes are assigned to courses offered by the School of Public Health:

**BST** - Biostatistics

**ENH** - Environmental Health Sciences

**EPI** - Epidemiology

**GHS**- Global Health Sciences

**HB** - Health Behavior

**HCO** - Health Care Organization and Policy

**PUH** – General Public Health

### Withdrawal from Courses

Graduate students are expected to complete courses for which they have registered, unless unusual circumstances require withdrawal. The procedures for withdrawal are as specified in the UAB Class Schedule.

- **Mere cessation of class attendance does not constitute withdrawal**, either academically or for tuition charges. A withdrawal form must be completed and submitted by the date specified by graduate school (typically mid-point within the semester)
- **A grade of F** will be assigned to any student who has not officially withdrawn from a course.
- **Withdrawal from a graduate course will show as a grade of "W" on the transcript.** Withdrawal is not possible after the specified time on the academic calendar. A processing fee is charged for schedule changes.

### Academic Performance

Students must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 (B average) and overall satisfactory performance on pass/no pass courses to be considered in good academic standing. Satisfactory performance on pass/no pass courses is defined as the earning of at least as many **P** grades as **NP** grades combined.

**Website:**

[catalog.uab.edu/graduate/completionofadegree/](http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/completionofadegree/).

### Request for Academic Appeal

There is a process by which a student can request an exception to the policy for Registration/Add Course(s), Deadline to Drop, Withdrawal, and Payment Deadline. These requests should have extreme extenuating circumstances and should be the exception rather than the rule. Completion of an Academic Appeal Form is necessary to begin this process. This process is a **request** not an **absolute**.

**Website:**

<http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/academicprogress/>

### Time Limitations for Degree Completion and Satisfactory Progress

The School of Public Health allows a maximum of five years from initial matriculation to complete an MPH, MSPH or MS degree and a maximum of seven years from initial

matriculation to complete a DrPH or PhD degree. International students are required to complete their degree in seven (7) semesters. Credits older than five years cannot be counted toward a master's degree; credits older than seven years cannot be counted toward a doctoral degree.

In general, retention in the school is contingent on the faculty's belief that a student is likely to complete the program in a timely manner. A student must complete the degree requirements within specified time limits or otherwise exhibit satisfactory progress in their academic program to avoid the risk of being dismissed from the program.

The request for an extension should include a plan and timeline for completion. Such requests require the approval of the student's dissertation committee and graduate program director and must be presented in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School for consideration and approval. All such requests must be accompanied by a written and signed Completion Plan. Instructions for preparing a Completion Plan may be downloaded from the Graduate School. **Website at <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/graduate-school-quicklinks/online-forms>.**

### Academic Probation

Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average to remain in good academic standing.

A student who has been in good academic standing, however, at the end of a semester fails to meet the criteria to continue in good academic standing, will be placed on probation. Such a student must re-establish good academic standing within the next two semesters of graduate study undertaken. Students who do not accomplish this level of performance will be academically dismissed from the School of Public Health. In addition, research course work earning more credit hours of **NP** than **P**, regardless of grade point average, will be placed on academic probation.

**NOTE: During a probationary period, students should not receive "I" or "N" grades.** Also, a student's academic advisor can petition the Academic Dean for an extension of the probationary period.

### **Re-admission after Academic Withdrawal**

Students dismissed for failing to meet scholastic or other degree requirements are considered withdrawn for academic reasons and will be considered for re-admission only with a written recommendation from the faculty responsible for the program. A written statement from the student's advisor and department chair justifying a readmission decision should support the student's written petition for readmission. The statement should clearly set forth conditions that the student must meet in order to establish good academic standing and complete the degree requirements within the required time limits for the degree.

### **Grading Policies**

Grading in the School of Public Health is based on a 4.0 scale. The grade of **A** is used to indicate superior performance; **B**, for adequate performance; **C**, for minimally adequate performance. Performance below **C** is recorded as an **F** and negatively affects the student's total quality point rating. Some classes are designated as pass/no pass courses, for which a grade of **P** (passing) signifies satisfactory work and the grade of **NP** (not passing) indicates unsatisfactory work. Temporary notations used by the school are **N** for no grade reported, **I** for incomplete. The **N** denotes late or no submission of a grade by the instructor.

### **Policy for Requesting an Incomplete Grade** [www.soph.uab.edu/students/studentforms](http://www.soph.uab.edu/students/studentforms)

If unforeseen circumstances affect a student's ability to complete their course requirements in a given, the student may request from the course instructor a "temporary" grade notation of **I** (*Incomplete*) prior to the end of the term. The course instructor has the discretion to consider the request. If the Incomplete grade request is approved, the instructor and student must discuss and agree upon a plan and a schedule for completing the course requirements. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this discussion and assure completion of course requirements. A **Request for Incomplete Grade Form** must be completed, signed by the appropriate persons and submitted to the Office of Student and Academic Services. If a "permanent" grade is not reported

by the end of the following term, a grade of **F** will be automatically assigned to replace the **I or N**. A grade extension may be petitioned to the Academic Dean by written request from the course instructor.

### **Course Repeat Policy**

Public Health courses may be repeated using the following guidelines:

1. Only a course with a grade of **C or F** is eligible for repeat.
2. A course can be repeated only once at UAB.
3. A course taken at UAB earning a grade of **C or F** that is repeated at UAB will have the credit and GPA of the first course removed and will have the credit and GPA of the second course retained. The UAB transcript will indicate both courses.
4. A course taken at another university, that a student requests be transferred to replace the credit of a **C or F** graded course at UAB, must have a **B or better grade** and follow all transfer of credit guidelines. In addition, the GPA will be retained but the credit of the first course dropped and both the credit and GPA retained for the second course. **The UAB transcript will show both courses.**

### **Cumulative Credits and Grade Point Average (GPA)**

#### ***Semester Hours Earned***

The student's "semester hours earned" are increased by:

1. Earning a grade of **C or better** in a course for which the student was registered on a regular (letter grade) basis, or
2. Earning a **P** grade in a course taken on a **pass/no pass basis**

#### ***Semester Hours Attempted***

The student's "*semester hours attempted*" are increased by:

1. Earning a grade of **A, B, C or F** in a course which the student was registered on a regular (letter grade) bases, or
2. Earning a **NP** grade in a course taken on a **pass/no pass basis**.

#### ***Quality Points***

Four quality points are awarded for each semester hour for which the student receives a grade of **A**, three quality points are awarded for each semester hour in which a **B** is earned, and two

quality points are awarded for each semester hour in which a *C* is earned. No quality points are earned for *F* or *P* grades.

### ***Grade Point Average***

The grade point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the total quality points awarded by the semester hours attempted. The transcript will show cumulative GPA's for students who have completed previous graduate work at UAB and those students who are enrolled in dual programs; however to determine the students current academic status the GPA for each program will be calculated separately by each program.

### **Grade Appeal Policy**

The only legitimate basis for appealing a grade assigned for School of Public Health courses are:

- A belief that an error was made in the determination of the grade; or
- A belief that a grade was arrived at unfairly or on the basis of inconsistent application among students of the stated evaluation standards.
- Should a student believe that either of these circumstances applied and that an appeal is warranted, the following procedures are to be followed:
  1. Clarification should be sought from the course instructor in an attempt to resolve the disagreement without further appeal.
  2. If the matter cannot be resolved in consultation with the course instructor, the student may submit a written appeal to the Academic Dean requesting consideration of the appeal. Appeals must be submitted within four weeks after the end of the semester when the disputed grade was received. This request should include a description of the basis for the appeal and the failed attempt to resolve it with the instructor. Upon receipt of such a request, the Academic Dean will bear responsibility to solicit information relevant to the situation from the student and the course instructor, and on the basis of that information to make a determination for or against the appeal. If in the judgment

of the Academic Dean there is a legitimate basis for the appeal, the chair of the course instructor's department will ensure that the assigned grade is appropriately changed.

3. If the Academic Dean determines that there is an insufficient basis for a grade change and rules against the appeal, the student may submit a final written appeal to the Academic Dean requesting him or her to convene a panel of three faculty and one student to consider the appeal and make a recommendation to him or her on its disposition. Similarly, if the Academic Dean rules for the appeal, the instructor may appeal the decision by going through the same process. Based on the recommendation of the panel, the Dean will issue a decision. This decision will be final.
4. Appeals of grades in courses taken outside the School of Public Health will be handled according to the policies and procedures of the schools within which the courses reside. Final disposition of grade appeals for courses in Graduate School programs resides with the Dean of the Graduate School.

### **School of Public Health Academic Grievance Policy** (*Procedures followed according to the UAB's Student Grievances Policy*)

Student complaints on academic matters are the responsibility of the department and school involved. Normally, such complaints can be resolved quickly through discussion with the involved faculty. In rare situations where such resolution does not occur, the student should contact the chair of the appropriate department to file a formal grievance. The student's grievance should be submitted in writing and accompanied by any documentation at the earliest possible time. Consideration will not be given to any grievance submitted later than the end of the term immediately following the term in which the matter in question arose. The department should acknowledge the date the grievance is received and notify the student about when an answer may be expected. It is the responsibility of the

department chair to provide an answer to the student within 10 working days. If the matter cannot be settled within the department, the student has 10 working days from the day of the department's response to appeal to the associate dean of the SOPH. The Academic Dean should acknowledge receipt of the student's appeal and inform the student of the course of action within 10 working days. At the Academic Dean's discretion, an advisory panel may be appointed to study the disagreement and make a recommendation to the dean. However, it is the responsibility and prerogative of the associate dean to make, in a timely manner, a decision on any academic disputes which have not been resolved at lower levels. The decision of the Academic Dean is final on academic matters.

### **Transfer of Credit**

This policy pertains to transfer of credit from other universities, course work taken in other graduate degree programs or course work taken at the UAB School of Public Health as a non-degree seeking student.

Previously earned graduate credit (up to 12 semester hours) that has not been applied toward another degree is eligible to transfer into the student's current degree program if the following criteria are met:

- An official transcript showing the course work must be on file.
- Course content information must be provided to determine comparability.
- The course(s) must be at the graduate level.
- The course(s) must not have been used to complete another degree.
- No grades below "B" will be acceptable.

All transfers of credit requests must be initiated by the student and require completion of a *Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit Form*. Transfer of credit, including non-degree credit, cannot take place until one term of course work toward a degree has been completed and/or until probationary status has been removed. Once the transfer of credit has been accepted, it will be included in the grade point average (GPA) calculation in the student's current program.

### **Request for Course Substitution**

The substitution of a "Core", "Track" or

"Elective" course can be requested by the student. The Course Substitution Form must be completed and submitted along with a copy of the course syllabus or course description. The following rules apply for course substitutions:

- Documentation verifying that the course was not used to complete a previous degree (copy of transcript);
- Verification that the course is graduate level. If a course substitution is requested for a course taken at another university, a Transfer of Credit will be processed and if accepted will be included in the grade point average (GPA) calculation in the student's current program.

### **Request for Course Waiver**

A course waiver indicates that a course was completed, most likely as part of another degree, but it is felt by the student in consultation with his/her advisor that the student has sufficient knowledge in a particular area and is not required to complete a course that would be redundant. In the case of "core" courses, the core instructor must determine if the student can waive the course. A Course Waiver Form must be submitted with a copy of the course syllabus or course description. Receiving a waiver of a required class does not remove the obligation to earn sufficient credit hours as required for the degree. ***The deficit in credit hours due to course waiver must be made up by determining course options in consultation with the advisor.***

### **Inter-departmental Change of Status**

If a matriculated student wishes to transfer into a different department within the School of School of Public Health, they may complete an *Interdepartmental Change of Status Form* which must be approved and signed by the appropriate persons. New students may request a transfer only after the completion of one term in the department for which the student was admitted. All applicable changes must be indicated on the form and the requested signatures must be included on the form before submitting to the Office of Student and Academic Services for processing. A copy of the student's file will be forwarded to the department for which the student is requesting a transfer for review. The

student and the department will receive notification of the decision.

### **Intra-departmental Change of Status**

If a matriculated student wishes to transfer into a new degree, track or change advisors within the same department, the *Intradepartmental Change of Status Form* must be approved, completed and signed by the appropriate persons. All applicable changes should be indicated on the form and all required departmental signatures should be obtained before returning the form to the Office of Student and Academic Services for processing. The student and the department will receive notification of the decision. Students requesting a change of advisor should complete the *Change of Advisor Request Form*.

### **Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence**

All students are expected to remain continuously enrolled throughout his or her course of study, unless personal or financial circumstances necessitate a leave of absence. A leave of absence request may be submitted for one semester at a time. If an extension is needed, you must complete a new leave request form. Leave of absence requests will not be approved beyond one semester unless an emergency or extenuating circumstance can be proven. If a leave of absence is approved, it is still the student's responsibility to complete his or her degree requirements in the time period allotted (maximum of 5 years for masters' students and a maximum of seven years for doctoral students.) International students are required to complete their degree in seven (7) semesters including annual vacations.

**Note:** the Leave of Absence Request is not official until the form has been received, approved and processed in the Office of Student and Academic Services. Under no circumstances shall students enroll in coursework of any kind at UAB or engage in any work toward completion of a degree while on active leave of absence. This would include sitting for comprehensive examinations, being examined for admission to candidacy and defending dissertations.

Students enrolled in courses in the School of Public Health or other schools and/or departments on campus or are otherwise engaged

in degree-related work, will be considered **NOT** on a leave and must be enrolled for a minimum of three (3) credit hours applicable to their degree. Records of students who do not obtain written approval for a Leave of Absence and who fail to enroll in courses for one year, will be archived by the university student system and the student will be automatically administratively withdrawn from the school. Conversely, students who do not return from an approved leave of absence will be administratively withdrawn.

Whether or not a leave of absence is taken, the school allows a maximum of five years from initial matriculation to complete the MPH, MSPH and MS degrees and a maximum of seven years from initial matriculation to complete the DrPH and PhD degrees. **NOTE:** International students must complete a leave of absence form in the School of Public Health as well as any required documents in the International Scholars and Students Office when taking their "vacation".

### **Administrative Withdrawal**

Students who would be administratively withdrawn from the School of Public Health fall into the following categories:

- Students who voluntarily withdraw
- Students who do not request a leave of absence
- Students who do not enroll for a one year period and whose records are archived
- Students who do not return from an approved leave of absence by the designated and approved date.

### **Readmission after Administrative Withdrawal**

Students may be considered for re-admission into the program to which they were previously admitted in the School of Public Health if it was within the last five (5) years; they were administratively withdrawn; or were accepted within the past year but did not matriculate, and did not request a deferral of matriculation.

**Note:** Students who have attended another university in the interim must provide an official transcript from that school. The *Application for Readmission Form* must be completed, following all instructions and returned to the Office of

Student and Academic Services before re-admission will be considered.

If re-admitted, students will be required to meet the degree requirements of the current catalog at the time of re-admission. Credits older than five (5) years cannot be counted toward a master's degree and credit older than seven (7) years cannot be counted toward a doctoral degree.

### **Pursuing Two Degrees Concurrently**

It is against school policy to pursue two degree programs at the same time unless the programs are approved coordinated/dual programs.

Students who wish to pursue a degree other than that for which they were admitted in the School of Public Health must withdraw from the School of Public Health. Students found to be pursuing a second degree without having followed the withdrawal procedure, will be automatically withdrawn from the School of Public Health.

Once withdrawn, students may reapply to the School of Public Health but must follow the degree requirements of the catalog in force at the time of readmission.

### **Application for Degree**

As you are approaching your final term, you must notify your program and the Graduate School of your intent to graduate by submitting the Application for Degree Application for Graduate Degree online through BlazerNET. The application must be submitted by the deadline date listed [here](#); however, check with your department as some programs have earlier deadline dates. The fee for graduate degrees is \$50 and the fee for graduate certificates is \$20.

### **UAB Graduation Planning System**

Students can review their degree progress online at their convenience with the Graduation Planning System (GPS). Students are able to view the satisfied requirements – as well as those not yet satisfied – for their degrees. Students can also view their remaining coursework if they change to different majors, and they may also use several GPA calculators.

Students should review degree requirements with their academic advisor. Student can access the GPS in Blazernet.

### **Public Health School Competencies**

Upon graduation, all MPH and DRPH graduates should be grounded in foundational public health knowledge.

Visit the website with both school-wide and departmental competencies: <http://www.soph.uab.edu/competencies>.

### **Student Conduct**

As members of an academic community, students, faculty, and administrators share a responsibility to seek truths and communicate them to others. As we pursue knowledge and encourage learning, we acknowledge the need for a free exchange of ideas and recognize the importance of listening to and maintaining respect for the views of others. We must always aspire to learn, apply, and communicate to others the best scholarly standards of the disciplines in which we are involved. High scholarly standards demand high ethical standards.

The university expects mature and honorable behavior from every student and reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action when such behavior is not forthcoming. All UAB students are expected to be familiar with the UAB Academic Honor Code as well as any honor codes that are specific to their schools or disciplines.

For the UAB Honor Code and the SOPH Honor Code, please visit the following site: [www.uab.edu/students/conduct/student-conduct-code](http://www.uab.edu/students/conduct/student-conduct-code)

The School of Public Health's Honor Code - [www.soph.uab.edu/students/honorcode](http://www.soph.uab.edu/students/honorcode)

**Student Honor Code**  
**University of Alabama at Birmingham**  
**School of Public Health**

*adopted by the Faculty Assembly August 11, 2000*  
*Updated April 11, 2016*

## **Preamble**

Honor has been defined as a keen sense of ethical conduct and a showing of usually merited respect. Preservation of the integrity of the educational enterprise and of every earned degree, whether masters or doctoral, from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Public Health is the underlying premise of this School's Honor Code. The UAB School of Public Health Honor Code, jointly developed and adopted by students and faculty, assumes all students to be honorable and honest and assumes all members of the academic community maintain the highest ethical and professional standards. In an educational institution in which honesty is assumed, it is imperative that everyone conduct himself or herself in a professional manner with other students, faculty, and administration. Further, every student, faculty and staff member is expected to be familiar with, abide by and uphold the values of the School of Public Health. These values include open and honest communication, respect for every individual, and an appreciation of diversity, integrity, teamwork, excellence, and making a positive contribution in the community. Appropriate academic, professional, and personal conduct of each member of the student body is essential for the School of Public Health to maintain an environment conducive to its educational mission.

Students, faculty and administration have an obligation to take action whenever there is a suspected breach of the School of Public Health Honor Code. Violations of academic integrity covered by Honor Code include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, knowingly furnishing false information to any agent of the University for inclusion in the academic records, noncompliance with University research ethics, including human subjects review, and professional misconduct. A student determined to have violated the Honor Code shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Every student matriculated in the UAB School of Public Health will be provided a copy of the Honor Code at orientation or registration. Students, faculty, and administration are obligated to familiarize themselves with the Honor Code. Copies are also available online for the benefit of those students who take classes in the School of Public Health but are not enrolled in public health degree programs.

## **Article One: Misconduct**

Misconduct may include behavior that is academic or non-academic in nature, but may also be a combination of the two. Allegations of academic misconduct, unless informally resolved, shall be referred to the Honor Court. Allegations of non-academic misconduct may be referred to the Honor Court but may also involve behavior that is subject to disposition outside the School of Public Health, including civil and criminal processes.

Academic misconduct may include, but is not limited to, the following types of dishonest or otherwise inappropriate behavior:

**1. Cheating** - Cheating is defined generally as a dishonest act in which the cheater tries to maintain that he or she has learned something when, in truth, learning has not taken place. Cheating includes but is not limited to the unauthorized use of notes, books or other sources of information during an academic exercise; copying the work of another on an examination or allowing someone to copy the work of another student obtaining unauthorized assistance during a formal academic exercise (e.g. take home examination, homework assignment or written essay); misrepresenting the work of others as one's own effort; misrepresenting work substantially done for one class as

work done for another class; and, allowing oneself to be represented by another student as in the case of an online assignment or examination.

**2. Plagiarism** - Plagiarism is the misrepresentation of the work of others as one's own or the representation of one's own work as original, whether found in print or electronic media. Plagiarism includes both the direct use and paraphrasing of the words, thoughts or concepts of another or one's prior work without having given proper attribution to the source of the information. Accepted standards of attribution expected of all students in this School are as follows:

A direct quotation must always be identified by quotation marks, indentation, and single spaces or use of reduced type/font size of the quoted material. A footnote or citation must be used to show the exact source of verbal and quantitative material. A quoted passage may range from a single word or phrase to an entire work. A paraphrase (the restatement of a text or portion of text for the purpose of simplifying, shortening or reinterpreting information) also requires an exact citation to or the acknowledgment of the original author.

UAB Library online plagiarism resource - <http://www.mhsl.uab.edu/2009/plagiarism/toc.html>

**3. Misconduct in research** - The School of Public Health adheres to the policy described in the Graduate School Handbook, UAB Policies Section, UAB Policy Concerning Maintenance of High Ethical Standards in Research and Other Scholarly Activities. Students and faculty should refer to this document for clarification of expectations regarding professional conduct in research endeavors.

**4. Breach of Confidentiality** - A breach of confidentiality is to disclose information, data, research, etc., concerning departmental and/or academic or administrative affairs of the School of Public Health that is deemed confidential and was known to be so. Breach of confidentiality shall include the unauthorized disclosure of confidential information that is presented at a hearing before the Honor Court.

**5. Non-Academic Misconduct** - Non-academic misconduct may include any act that is alleged to be a violation of School or University policy or a violation of the law. To the extent possible, the Academic Dean shall determine which allegations of non-academic misconduct are capable of resolution before the Honor Court. A student alleged to have committed non-academic misconduct should be aware that the resolution of such a charge may not be possible within the School of Public Health or within the University, but may be subject to civil and/or criminal adjudication. The commencement of civil or criminal action shall not, however, deprive the School of the right to proceed with action before the Honor Court.

UAB Non-Academic student Code of Conduct resource - <http://www.uab.edu/students/sarc/services/student-conduct-code>

## **Article Two: Responsibilities of Students, Faculty and Staff**

Students, faculty and staff are obligated to comply with the Honor Code at all times. The Honor Code is applicable to any student enrolled in a School of Public Health course and matriculated students from the moment they arrive at the School of Public Health until the moment the degree is conferred. Students must not only abide by the Honor Code themselves, but are expected to report any suspected violations when they occur, as described in Article Four. Faculty are responsible for conducting classes and examinations, communicating their expectations regarding course requirements, providing guidance as to whether work is to be completed independently or in groups, advising students what sources, if any, may be used in completing course work, and for reporting suspected violations of the Honor Code. Staff are responsible for reporting suspected violations of the Honor Code to the faculty member responsible for the course in which the suspected violation occurred or to the Academic Dean.

### **Article Three: The Honor Court**

The Honor Court shall consist of seven members; five students, elected to Public Health Student Association (PHSA) senator positions representing each of the five departments in the School of Public Health and two faculty members. Student members of the Honor Court shall be individuals in good academic standing. The PHSA President shall appoint two alternates to serve in the event that a standing member has a conflict of schedule or conflict of interest. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Academic Dean) shall appoint two members and one alternate from among the faculty. Terms of students shall be for the duration of their PHSA term of office, or one year. Faculty members will serve two-year, staggered terms.

The Honor Court shall elect a chairperson from among the seven regular members at the beginning of the academic year. The Chair may be either a student or faculty member. The duties of the Chair include convening the Honor Court, presiding over hearings and communicating with the administration of the School of Public Health on behalf of the Honor Court. The Honor Court shall also appoint for one year an Investigative Team, comprised of two students appointed by the Honor Court and one faculty member appointed by the Academic Dean (See Article Four.) No member of the Investigative Team shall simultaneously be a member of the Honor Court.

The Academic Dean shall convene all members of the Honor Court at the beginning of the academic year for an introductory meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to review the roles and responsibilities of the Honor Court and its members, to elect a chairperson and to appoint an investigative team for the year. In all matters, the members of the Honor Court and the Investigative Team are to treat the information put forward to them in the strictest of confidence. Breaches of confidentiality are themselves violations of the Student Honor Code and will be treated as such.

The Honor Court shall have the discretion to amend its procedures, as necessary, by a two-thirds vote of the members, provided that proposed procedural modifications do not conflict with School of Public Health or University policy and are not prohibited by law.

### **Article Four: Preliminary Procedures for Handling Suspected Violations**

Students are expected to report an alleged violation of the Honor Code either to the faculty member in charge of a course in which the suspected violation occurred or directly to the Academic Dean within seven days of the discovery of the alleged incident. Faculty who witness an incident or have allegations of an Honor Code violation reported to them must report such allegations to the academic Dean within seven days of learning of the incident. Individual faculty may attempt to informally resolve an incident that occurs in a course he/she teaches, however, every alleged violation of the Honor Code must be reported in writing to the Academic Dean. No further action will be taken if an informal resolution is reached by the student(s) and the faculty member. The Academic Dean shall keep a record of all alleged violations of the Honor Code and a summary of the disposition of the charge.

While an informal resolution is preferred when at all possible, if an informal resolution is not reached between the faculty member and the alleged violator, the Academic Dean may also attempt to informally resolve the impasse between the student and the faculty member. In the event this attempt is unsuccessful, the Academic Dean shall refer the allegation(s) to the Honor Court for investigation. The investigation shall be conducted by the three-person investigative team appointed for this purpose (See Article Three.) The Investigative Team shall review materials pertinent to the allegation, e.g. a statement from the accuser, any supporting evidence, and shall gather testimony from witnesses. The team, once convened, has two weeks to conduct its investigation. In the event that more time is needed, the team shall petition the Chair of the Honor Court for an extension. The team should forward any requests for information not clearly known to be relevant to the investigation to the Academic Dean who will determine whether such information is in fact germane to the investigation. Following the investigation, the Investigative Team shall transmit to the Chair of the Honor Court a concise written report of the team's findings regarding the allegation(s).

The written findings of the investigative team shall include a statement of the allegation(s) against the accused

student, a description of the evidence and supporting documents (if available), and the names of witnesses interviewed and a summary of their respective testimony. The investigative team shall conduct its investigation impartially, in confidence, and shall be available to assist the Honor Court throughout any subsequent hearing. The written report of the Investigative Team shall be hand delivered to the Chair of the Honor Court or his/her designee, in confidence, upon completion of the report.

Upon receipt of the investigative report of a violation of the Honor Code, the Honor Court shall convene to formalize a statement of the charge or to issue a statement dismissing the allegation(s) on the ground that insufficient substantiating evidence exists. The Honor Court shall provide notice of the specific charge or of the dismissal of the alleged violation to the accused student by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery, and to the Academic Dean. The statement of the charge shall include a brief summary of the alleged violation and the evidence presented in support of the charge, in enough detail as to allow the accused the opportunity to rebut the charge, and shall provide notification to the accused student of his/her right to a hearing. The accused student must respond to the charge within five days, unless excused by the Honor Court. In his/her written response to the Honor Court, the accused student must admit or deny the charge and must formally request or waive his/her right to a hearing before the Honor Court.

Once notice of the specific charge has been provided to the accused student and to the Academic Dean, the Honor Court shall decide on a time for the hearing and any preliminary deadline(s) for the submission of supporting documents and the names of proposed witnesses. Granting a request from the accused or from the School to reschedule the hearing is within the discretion of the Honor Court, but shall not be unreasonably denied. The Honor Court shall provide written notice to the accused student of the time and place for the submission of documentary evidence and the names of witnesses to be called in his/her defense with a statement describing the testimony of each witness. The Honor Court shall review documentary evidence in advance of the hearing.

## **Article Five: The Hearing**

Although the specific procedure for the conduct of the hearing may vary somewhat, the process shall generally include the following: (1) call to order by the Chair; (2) introduction of those present; (3) statement of the Charge and possible penalties if the charge is proven; (4) statement of the evidence and testimony in support of the charge, and questioning of witnesses; (5) statement of evidence and testimony in opposition to the charge (rebuttal), and questioning of witnesses; (6) closing statement. All questioning of witnesses shall be by the Honor Court unless the Honor Court shall decide otherwise.

A hearing before the Honor Court shall not be bound by formal rules of evidence or judicial rules of procedure. The Honor Court may hear any testimony or receive any supporting evidence that it deems to be pertinent to the charge. Both the accused and a representative of the School may be present throughout the hearing. The accused student shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard, to question witnesses indirectly through the Honor Court, to rebut adverse evidence, and to make a brief closing statement. Members of the Honor Court may ask any questions at any time during the hearing and may elect to disallow or to curtail testimony that the Honor Court determines to be unnecessarily redundant or not probative of the issue(s) being heard. Throughout the hearing, all persons present shall conduct themselves in an orderly manner.

The accused may be accompanied at the hearing by an advisor of his/her choosing, however, the advisor may not participate in the hearing. The Honor Court shall be responsible for the conduct of the hearing at all times and shall keep a record of the proceedings in a format it chooses. Hearings before the Honor Court are confidential proceedings and only those persons determined by the Honor Court to have a need to be present shall be included. Except for the accused (and an advisor if invited by the accused) and the representative of the School, all other witnesses shall be excluded from the hearing room, except when testifying. No more than one witness shall be called to testify at a time. The School or the Honor Court may elect to invite UAB Security to be present at an Honor Court hearing.

As soon as practicable following the conclusion of the hearing, the Honor Court shall meet in private session to

consider all of the evidence presented, and shall decide on one of two outcomes. The decision of the Honor Court shall be that the charge is either (1) proven by a preponderance of the evidence or (2) not proven by a preponderance of the evidence. A vote of five of the seven members shall be required for the charge against the accused to be proven. Following the vote, the Honor Court shall record the vote and shall provide a brief narrative statement explaining the rationale for their finding(s). The written decision and rationale of the Honor Court shall be transmitted to the Academic Dean, by internal communication, upon the conclusion of the Honor Court's deliberations. The Honor Court shall notify the accused of the outcome by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery. A decision of the Honor Court in favor of the accused student shall conclude the case.

### **Article Six: Penalties for Violation of the Honor Code**

Violations of the UAB School of Public Health Academic Honor Code are punishable by a range of penalties from receiving a failing grade on an assignment, to an F in the course, to dismissal from the program. Generally, a first violation of the Honor Code shall result in the assignment of a failing grade in the assignment or in the course in which the violation occurred, at the discretion of the instructor. A notation on the student's permanent academic record may also be made to indicate that a reduced or failing grade was assigned because of an Honor Code violation (e.g., "F, Honor Code Violation, June 15, 2001"), on the judgment of the Honor Court. Any course grade of F for academic misconduct supersedes any other grade or notation for that class. Effective Spring 2009, the course repeat policy will not apply to course grades resulting from instances of academic misconduct. In these cases, the grades of F received will be computed in the UAB grade point average. Withdrawal from a course while a possible violation of the Honor Code is under review will not preclude the assignment of a course grade that appropriately reflects the student's performance prior to withdrawal if the violation is substantiated. No student may graduate from the UAB School of Public Health until pending allegations of an Honor Code violation have been resolved. A second violation of the Honor Code shall result in expulsion from the School of Public Health. No student expelled from the School of Public Health because of an Honor Code violation shall be eligible for readmission.

### **Article Seven: Appeal**

Within ten days of receipt of a decision by the Honor Court that the charge(s) have been proven, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean of the School of Public Health (Dean). If no appeal is made within ten days, the Academic Dean shall notify the student of the penalty assessed against him/her and shall impose the penalty accordingly. The written notice of appeal must include a brief statement of the reason for the appeal and may be accompanied by any new evidence that the appellant wishes to call to the attention of the Dean. The Dean shall review the appeal statement, any new evidence presented by the appellant, and any evidence presented to the Honor Court that is deemed by the Dean to be relevant to his consideration of the appeal. The appellant is reminded that an appeal to the Dean is not intended to provide a forum in which to reiterate the same facts or arguments that have already been considered by the Honor Court, but is an opportunity to present either a challenge to the procedures followed by the Honor Court or to offer newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome.

As soon as practicable and within 30 days after receiving the notice of appeal and any supporting documentation, the Dean shall consider the appeal. Once the Dean has completed his review, he shall issue a written decision, which shall: (1) affirm the decision of the Honor Court; (2) affirm the decision but reduce the penalty in consideration of mitigating facts; (3) vacate the decision of the Honor Court on the ground that procedural error may have prejudiced the outcome, and resubmit the charge for rehearing, or (4) vacate the decision and resubmit the charge to the Honor Court for reconsideration on the ground that newly discovered evidence might alter the outcome. If the Dean elects to vacate the decision of the Honor Court, he shall provide a concise written statement explaining the bases for such action. If the Dean affirms the decision of the Honor Court, or affirms the decision with a reduced penalty, the decision becomes final and the appropriate penalty shall be imposed. The Dean's decision shall be transmitted to the Academic Dean and the Honor Court by internal communication, and notice to the appellant shall be provided by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery. The Honor Court's decision based on a rehearing or reconsideration following appeal is final.

## **Article Eight: Documentation**

Following the resolution of an Honor Code violation and any appeal process, all records of disciplinary action taken pursuant to this Honor Code shall be maintained in the Office of the Academic Dean for a period of five years or until the student leaves the University, whichever is longer. These files are considered confidential and are not publicly accessible.

If you have any questions regarding the UAB School of Public Student Honor Code please contact the Office of Student and Academic Services at 205/934.4993 or come by Room 120 in the Ryals School of Public Health Building. Website: [www.soph.uab.edu/students/honorcode](http://www.soph.uab.edu/students/honorcode)

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