

PFRH Research Apprenticeship Requirement – PhD Program

PFRH requires that PhD students undertake one or more research apprenticeship activities with one or more faculty members. The goal of this requirement is to ensure that PhD students have a structured opportunity to master a specific set of competencies which will: a) ensure their utility as a public health practitioner after graduation; and b) represent skills that are best learned outside a conventional classroom setting in the context of an ongoing program or research project.

PhD students may begin activities aimed at fulfilling these competencies as early in their program of study as they wish. Typically, PhD students begin to plan for this requirement during the second half of their first year and begin the activities after passing the first year comprehensive exam.

PhD students may proceed to their departmental oral exam without having completed this requirement, although PFRH encourages them to have completed the research apprenticeship requirement and competency fulfillment before the departmental oral, whenever possible. If a PhD student has not completed this requirement at the time of his or her departmental oral exam, he or she will be expected at that time to: a) have demonstrated substantial progress toward that goal; and b) have a concrete plan for completion soon thereafter.

Progress towards completion of this requirement should be a major component of the discussion at the PhD students' annual reviews (see next section).

There are two options for fulfilling the PhD research apprenticeship requirement.

OPTION A

Under Option A, PhD students master each of the following six competencies by means of one or several research apprenticeships. The competencies are:

1. **Critical Review of the Literature**
PhD students must demonstrate the ability to synthesize and critically review a body of literature that is more comprehensive than what is expected for a standard term paper for a course.
2. **Framing a Research Question**
PhD students must demonstrate the ability to correctly identify a “researchable” question.
3. **Instrument Development**
PhD students must demonstrate the ability to design an instrument for collecting data. This ability includes the identification of existing instruments, the ability to adapt existing instruments for new modalities (e.g. self-administered questionnaire battery converted to a battery used in a telephone interview), and to create new instruments.
4. **Data Collection**
PhD students must document experience with primary data collection including activities related to data coding and data entry.
5. **Data Analysis**
PhD students who choose Option A must document experience with analyzing either primary data they have collected as part of a supervised research project, or data from a secondary source.

6. **Manuscript Preparation**

PhD students must have substantially participated in the preparation of a manuscript prepared in the form of an original peer-reviewed journal article.

PhD students who choose Option A may demonstrate several or even all the competencies by means of one research apprenticeship if the activities that were involved in that apprenticeship are comprehensive. Alternatively, PhD students may undertake several research apprenticeships over their program of study each of which results in mastery of one or more competencies.

When a PhD student who chooses Option A masters one or more competencies, he or she should indicate on the apprenticeship form with the signature of both the faculty member who precepted the apprenticeship and the student's advisor. A sample form is attached. The original form should be submitted to the student coordinator who will place it in the student's file. Students who master the competencies one-by-one will typically turn in one form per apprenticeship.

PhD students who choose Option A may petition the PFRH Doctoral Committee to certify that they have mastered a competency before they began the program. In such cases, students should attach to their petition documentation of their mastery (e.g. a senior authored journal article or letter testifying to the student's work as project manager of a data collection effort) and a letter from their advisor expressing support for the request.

PhD students who choose Option A may arrange their research apprenticeships with any faculty of JHU, or, with the approval of their advisor, with a qualified researcher outside JHU.

OPTION B

Choosing Option B, a PhD student, under the supervision of one or more faculty members, may either undertake the lead role in writing a paper that presents original research results in the form of a journal article or write a NRSA or dissertation grant proposal.

If the student chooses to write a publishable paper then it must be submitted to a faculty member in PFRH, other than the faculty member who is supervising it. Both the preceptor and the second reader of the paper must write a letter to the student's file (submitted to the Academic Program Manager) attesting to the originality and quality of the paper.

It is expected, although not required, that students will submit the paper for publication and present the results of his or her research in a public forum, such as the PFRH Research Seminar or a professional meeting.

If the student chooses to write a NRSA or dissertation grant, then the student's advisor and one other faculty must write a letter to the student's file (submitted to the Academic Program Manager) confirming that the proposal was written and the funding agency to which it was submitted.

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