

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Graduate Program Head	Cheryl Thompson
Program Code	EPID
Campus(es)	Hershey (Ph.D.)
Degrees Conferred	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
The Graduate Faculty	View (https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/gpms/?searchType=fac&prog=EPID)

Epidemiology is the discipline for the study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events (including diseases) in specified human populations, and the application of this study to the prevention and control of health problems. Epidemiology is the primary source of the knowledge that underlies public health policy and practice. As such, well-trained epidemiologists develop and evaluate hypotheses about the effects of various factors (risk factors) on human health and develop the knowledge basis for disease prevention and control programs.

Admission Requirements

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-admissions/how-to-apply/>). Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

Applicants must complete prior to admission:

1. An M.S. or M.P.H. degree with a focus on epidemiology or biostatistics.
2. A two-semester graduate level course in Epidemiology, comparable to PHS 550 and PHS 551.
3. A two-semester graduate level course in Biostatistics, comparable to PHS 520 and PHS 521.

Prospective applicants must demonstrate:

1. Completion of an undergraduate bachelor degree program at an accredited U.S. college or university, or its equivalent in another country, with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended are required. (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/new-applicants/requirements-for-graduate-admission/>)
2. Completion of the Graduate School application, which includes three (3) letters of recommendation and a Curriculum Vita or resume.
3. Payment of the nonrefundable application fee.

The language of instruction at Penn State is English. English proficiency test scores (TOEFL/IELTS) may be required for international applicants. See GCAC-305 Admission Requirements for International Students (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-300/gcac-305-admission-requirements-international-students/>) for more information.

Degree Requirements

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Students enrolled in the Epidemiology Ph.D. program must successfully complete a minimum of 28 credits, including:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
PHS 554	Statistical Methods in Public Health I	3
PHS 555	Statistical Methods for Public Health II	3
PHS 510	Grant Writing for Clinical Research	3
PHS 500	Research Ethics for Clinical Investigators	1
A minimum of 12 credits in Substantive Epidemiology courses ¹		12
A minimum of 6 credits in either Substantive Epidemiology courses or other Biostatistics courses ¹		6
Total Credits		28

¹ The list of courses that will fulfill these requirements is maintained by the graduate program office.

Additionally, Epidemiology Ph.D. students are required to fulfill the following requirements:

- Epidemiology and biostatistics seminar series: Students are required to attend. Each student is required to present at least one seminar each year.
- Pass a qualifying examination which may be given after at least 18 credits have been earned in graduate courses beyond the baccalaureate, and must be taken within three semesters (excluding summer sessions) of entry into the doctoral program.
- Pass a comprehensive examination which will be a defense of the dissertation research proposal, administered by the entire Ph.D. committee after the student has substantially completed all course work.
- To earn the Ph.D. degree, doctoral candidates must write a dissertation that is accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.
- Pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense).

Minor

A graduate minor is available in any approved graduate major or dual-title program. The default requirements for a graduate minor are stated in Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>) and GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>), depending on the type of degree the student is pursuing:

- GCAC-611 Minor - Research Doctorate (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-611-minor-research-doctorate/>)
- GCAC-641 Minor - Research Master's (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-641-minor-research-masters/>)

- GCAC-709 Minor - Professional Doctorate (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-709-professional-doctoral-minor/>)
- GCAC-741 Minor - Professional Master's (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-741-masters-minor-professional/>)

Student Aid

Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding/>) section of The Graduate School's website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants/>) set by The Graduate School.

Courses

Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

Epidemiology (EPID) Course List (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/university-course-descriptions/graduate/epid/>)

Contact

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Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC)	Duanping Liao
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Program Website	View (https://med.psu.edu/epidemiology-phd/)