



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF HEALTH

PHD IN HEALTH PROGRAM GRADUATE HANDBOOK

For Students & Supervisors

Dal.ca/phdhealth

phdhealth@dal.ca

902-494-7809

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Welcome to the Faculty of Health

Dalhousie University operates in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples. These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Congratulations on your acceptance into Dalhousie's PhD in Health program. With the largest collection of health-related programs in Canada, Dalhousie's Faculty of Health offers a vibrant and uniquely inter-disciplinary environment. Our more than 100 PhD Supervisors are influential academic leaders and successful health researchers who share a passion for improving health and social well-being at the local, national and international levels.

The strengths of the Dalhousie PhD in Health program include its interdisciplinary model, which reflects real-world work environments; innovative research methodologies across natural, medical, rehabilitation, and social sciences; emphasis on experiential learning and hands-on training with experienced health researchers; small but diverse classes; and our supportive student community.

Within a few years you and your fellow PhD in Health graduates will be taking your places as successful academics, researchers, public policy leaders, community leaders, among many other career possibilities. Use your time at Dalhousie to develop research networks, collaborative partners, and critical companions that will extend beyond your PhD experience. We look forward to providing mentorship, creating opportunities, and learning together as you pursue your health research interests and career goals.

This handbook describes the structure of Dalhousie University's PhD Health program, along with course requirements, academic standards, and key deadlines. It is intended to help you plan your research program and make the most effective use of your time. Included are many links to important web pages, documents, and forms. Your supervisors will be able to assist with any questions you may have about selecting courses to prepare for your thesis work, formulating a committee that will strengthen your research, planning and preparing for candidacy, thesis proposal and research design, thesis format and defence, to name a few. You can also reach out to the PhD Program Specialist and Program Coordinator with questions about the program, policies, and processes.

A Message from the PhD Health Student Society (PhD HSS)

On behalf of the PhD HSS, welcome to the PhD in Health program! As a PhD in Health student, you are automatically a member of the PhD HSS. The objectives of the society are to represent your interests, foster a strong social and academic community, and promote the unity of PhD in Health students. The PhD HSS aims to provide opportunities for networking, student leadership, and research promotion to help you succeed as you work toward your PhD. The PhD HSS organizes both social and academic/professional development events for the PhD in Health community – we hope you will join us at these events throughout the year! To stay up to date with all things PhD HSS, [join the PhD in Health Network on Facebook](#), [follow @phdhss on Twitter](#), or [visit our website](#). If you have any questions, ideas, or would like to get involved, please feel free to contact us at phdhss@dal.ca.

Diversity and Inclusion: Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported. (read more: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>)

Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS)

As a Graduate Program at Dalhousie University, the PhD in Health program is governed by the rules and regulations of the University and, more specifically, **the Faculty of Graduate Studies**. It is the responsibility of all graduate students to familiarize themselves with the regulations that govern the conditions of their program of study at the University. These can be found in the [Faculty of Graduate Studies Academic Calendar](#). While this handbook provides an overview of the PhD in Health program specifically, students and supervisors are also highly encouraged to visit their respective [Current Students](#) and [Faculty & Staff](#) sections of the Faculty of Graduate Studies' web page for more information including deadlines, forms and documents.

Governance

The PhD in Health Program is Faculty-wide program in the [Faculty of Health](#) which operates under the guidance of the Program Coordinator and Governance Council. The Governance Council is chaired by the Program Coordinator and includes 4 additional faculty members from the PhD in Health program, a student representative and a student alternate. The Council is responsible for setting policies and processes for such areas as faculty membership, supervisory status, admissions, funding allocation, student programs, and ensures FGS guidelines are adhered to. Council members, with the exception of the student representatives, also act as the review committee for admission and scholarship applications.

Program Structure

The PhD in Health program is offered as a two-year residency for students who have completed a thesis-based Masters and a three-year residency for students with a non-thesis-based Masters. Students in the three-year program will complete research experience courses and a small-scale research/pilot project in their first year: **HLTH 5101 and HLTH 5102**. These must be completed before the student pursues the regular program requirements: **HLTH 6000 and HLTH 6100**. All students **MUST** be registered in the program on a **full-time** basis. Please note that it is an expectation that students attend all scheduled classes and that distance attendance (i.e., remote participation) is not permissible. In the case of the current pandemic, this requirement may be adapted on a case-by-case basis and subject to change based on the University guidelines.

Please note that the terms **two-year** and **three-year** refer to the amount of time a full-time student is expected to take to complete required coursework and comprehensive exams. It is generally expected that **research and dissertation completion will take approximately two to three additional years**. Please visit the [PhD in Health website](#) for full course descriptions, a list of suggested elective options and registration information for the upcoming academic year.

Two-Year Residency Program Requirements

Requirement	Expected Completion Date
HLTH6000 Seminar Series (3 credits), HLTH6100 (3 credits), Advanced Research Methods/Statistics elective (3 credits) and two additional electives (6 credits) 15 credits total	End of Year 1
Comprehensive Exams: HLTH8000	After coursework has been completed
Thesis Proposal: HLTH9530	End of Year 2
Research and Dissertation Completion	End of Year 4/5

Three-Year Residency Program Requirements

Requirement	Expected Completion Date
Research Project HLTH5101 and HLTH5102 (6 credits) Additional Advanced Research Methods/Statistics elective (3 credits)	End of Year 1
All coursework, including required courses as per two-year requirements (15 credits) 24 credits total	End of Year 2
Comprehensive Exams: HLTH8000	After coursework has been completed
Thesis Proposal: HLTH9530	End of Year 3
Research and Dissertation Completion	End of Year 5/6

HLTH 7001/7002 – Independent Study/Directed Reading/Special Topics

The PhD in Health program offers the option for students to complete independent study/directed reading courses which may fulfil up to two elective requirements, (course codes for which are HLTH 7001 and HLTH 7002) each worth 3 credits. Students wishing to enroll in HLTH 7001 and/or 7002 are asked to complete the [appropriate form](#) which has been provided by FGS and return it to phdhealth@dal.ca along with a complete syllabus provided by the instructor who may be the supervisor or another Dalhousie faculty member. More details can be found in the [course outline](#).

Additional Requirements

- Present at a local (e.g., The Crossroads Interdisciplinary Student Health Research Conference, Mini Three Minute Thesis) or other scholarly conference at least once.
- Produce at least 2 peer-reviewed publications.
- Apply for at least one funding/scholarship award either prior to or during their program – please note that to be considered for program (i.e., internal) funding, students in the PhD Health program MUST apply for external funding.

Milestones and Important Dates

Please visit the [For Current Students](#) section of the **Faculty of Graduate Studies** website where you will find important deadlines, required forms and documents related to your program. Regarding departmental specifics of the PhD Health program, we have provided a brief overview below.

Month	Requirement	Action
August 1 st EACH YEAR	s	Students must register online for REGN9999 AND AT LEAST ONE OTHER COURSE for ALL THREE TERMS of EACH YEAR of their program. Failure to do so may result in delays in scholarship payments. If at any time, a student is not registered in another course (i.e. summer term or upon completion of regular coursework), students must ALSO register in HLTH 9530 which is the thesis course for PhD in Health students.
By January 1 st FIRST YEAR	Meet with supervisor(s) and establish supervisory committee	It is recommended that students meet with their supervisor(s) to discuss a program of study and establish a Supervisory Committee by January 1 st of their first year.
At least twice/year EACH YEAR	Supervisory Committee Meeting	Students should meet with supervisory committee. Supervisor(s) must complete a Supervisory Committee Meeting Form and submit it to phdhealth@dal.ca after each meeting.
August 31 st FIRST YEAR (2nd FOR 3 YR RES)	All coursework completed	All final grades to be submitted by instructor/supervisor, program coordinator or coordinator proxy.
By August 1 st EACH YEAR	Progress support submitted	Complete in consultation with supervisor: How to Submit a Progress Report
AFTER COURSEWORK HAS BEEN COMPLETED	Comprehensive Exams and Thesis Proposal completed	Comprehensive Examinations should be completed prior to the Thesis Proposal and students should register in HLTH8000 for the term during which they expect to complete the exams. Submit copies of evaluation and thesis forms to phdhealth@dal.ca .

Student Accessibility and Accommodations

The Student Accessibility Centre (Halifax) and the Student Success Centre (Truro) are Dalhousie's centres of expertise on student access, inclusion, and accommodation support. The Centre is responsible for administering the university-wide [Student Accommodation Policy](#) working across all programs and faculties. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this program that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact the [Student Accessibility Centre](#).

Scholarships and Funding

Students in the PhD in Health program are encouraged to apply for funding from a variety of sources. In addition to internal awards, students are eligible for awards from major granting agencies such as **NSERC**, **SSHRC**, **CIHR** and **Research NS**. Further details on the application process can be found on the agency websites and application announcements will be shared with students via email as they become available. More details and deadlines can be found on the [Admissions](#) page of the **PhD in Health** website under **Funding and Support**.

Students of the PhD in Health are strongly encouraged to supplement scholarship funding by securing part-time employment within the Faculty of Health or other departments in the university. We are a Faculty-wide program,

and several of our academic units regularly advertise teaching assistant (TA), research assistant (RA), tutor, marker and lab demonstrator positions. These are excellent opportunities to build your research and teaching portfolios. Students will be made aware of these opportunities as they become available.

Under the guidelines of the PhD in Health Funding Plan, supervisors of students entering the PhD in Health program as of September 2027, **who are not otherwise funded to the FGS scholarship cap** (\$40,000 for doctoral students) are required to commit a minimum of \$15,000 per year of enrollment in research funding to each student they supervise in the program. These funds will be entered into the Graduate Funding Payment System and distributed to students as part of their monthly stipend.

Tuition and Fees

Scholarships are paid to the student in **regular monthly payments on the 27th of each month**. University fees (tuition fees, medical insurance, incidental fees, international differential fees etc.) for each term will be deducted from scholarship funds in the first month of each term and the balance will be paid to students. TAs, markers, and lab demonstrators are paid bi-weekly if there are no other monthly payments to the student; otherwise TA funds are normally added to the monthly payment. Please note that **scholarship payments** are entered into the Graduate Funding Payment System by the PhD in Health Program Specialist and can be viewed on your DalOnline account generally by mid-August. **Salary payments** (such as for RAs, TAs, markers, lab demonstrators) are administered by the unit/school/department in which you are employed.

[Graduate Student Funding from the Faculty of Graduate Studies.](#)

For inquiries related to graduate student funding, there are several points of contact available:

phdhealth@dal.ca

payroll@dal.ca

student.accounts@dal.ca

gradfunding@dal.ca

Brightspace

Students enrolled in the PhD in Health program will receive an email invitation to join our [PhD Health Resource Hub on Brightspace](#), Dalhousie's Learning Management System. Features of this community include announcements, discussion boards, and resources such as important documents and forms. Additionally, you will have access to course materials via Brightspace (e.g., HLTH 6000, HLTH 6100, other Dalhousie courses you enroll in).

Supervisory Committee

Admission to the PhD in Health program requires that a student have a supervisor or two co-supervisors in place. Here are the [potential supervisors](#) for students of the PhD in Health.

In accordance with the [regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies](#), all faculty members listed here are members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and have been approved by the PhD Health Governance Council and granted Supervisor or Co-supervisor/Committee Member status.

Current Dalhousie faculty members wishing to supervise or co-supervise students in the PhD in Health program are welcome to complete the [membership application form](#) and return it to phdhealth@dal.ca for review by our Governance Council. Guidelines for determining eligibility for supervisory status with the program are attached to the form.

All members of supervisory committees must be Regular, Adjunct (FGS) or Adjunct (Scholar) members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. All thesis candidates shall have one supervisor or two co-supervisors and at least two additional members, at least one of whom is a faculty member of the PhD in Health program (i.e. who has a regular appointment in the Faculty of Health and/or is an approved supervisor or co-supervisor in the PhD in Health program). Regular members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies should constitute no less than 50% of the membership of a supervisory committee. Supervisory Committees are selected by the supervisor in consultation with the student. A supervisory committee should complement the expertise available to the student in completing their research program. The membership of all Supervisory Committees must be recorded in the Graduate Student Information System (GSIS), and changes to membership must be submitted on the student's program update form and recorded by the department in GSIS. This is the responsibility of the student.

Faculty members from outside Dalhousie may sit on a student's supervisory committee provided they have received the appropriate [adjunct membership status with FGS](#). Please forward the completed form, along with a copy of the prospective member's most recent CV to phdhealth@dal.ca for review and approval by the Program Coordinator and FGS.

In the case of co-supervision of a PhD student, at least one of the supervisors must have a Doctoral degree or its equivalent. In the event of a dispute over equivalency, the Faculty of Graduate Studies' Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee will be the final arbiter. Members holding post-retirement appointments or active in research in retirement cannot normally take on new students to supervise, but they can co-supervise with a regular member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies has provided some helpful information related to [Supervisory Relationships](#). Familiarity with and discussion of these guidelines by both parties is strongly encouraged to establish a mentorship plan, roles, expectations and build a positive supervisory relationship.

Comprehensive Exam, Thesis Proposal, and Defence

You can find detailed guidelines for the [Comprehensive Examinations](#) and [Thesis Proposal](#), along with additional information and forms on the [For Current Students and Supervisors](#) section of our website.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies organizes defences for PhD candidates and facilitates format checking and submission for all graduate students. Information on this process, frequently asked questions, and forms and documents can be found on the [Theses and Defences](#) section of their website.

Students are strongly encouraged to begin planning for their thesis defense well in advance and to have ongoing discussions with both the supervisor and program coordinator during this time. The Faculty of Graduate Studies has provided a [timeline](#) to help guide students through the process.

***Thesis by Manuscript:** Some students choose to complete a thesis by manuscript. The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) permits programs to allow students to submit theses or dissertations including individually or co-authored works currently published or intended for publication. Please visit the [Thesis Formatting Checklist](#) on the FGS website for guidelines. Students and Supervisors are encouraged to maintain regular contact with the Program Coordinator throughout the thesis preparation and defence process.

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. (read more: http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html). If you are ever unsure about any aspect of your academic work, contact your supervisor, course instructor and/or program coordinator. Here are other resources:

- [Academic Integrity Website](#): Links to policies, definitions, online tutorials, tips on citing and paraphrasing
- [Writing Centre](#): Assistance with learning to write academic documents, reviewing papers for discipline-specific writing standards, organization, argument, transitions, writing styles and citations
- [Dalhousie Libraries](#): Workshops, online tutorials, citation guides, Assignment Calculator, RefWorks
- [Senate Office](#) : List of Academic Integrity Officers, discipline flowchart, Senate Discipline Committee

Contact Information

PhD Program Specialist

James Hall

Pronouns: He/Him/His

phdhealth@dal.ca

902.494.7809

Program Coordinator

Lori Weeks, PhD

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Professor and Director, School of Health Administration

lori.weeks@dal.ca