

## Guidelines for Completing a Professional Paper

### Introduction

This set of guidelines is intended to give graduate faculty advisors and public health graduate students (MPH and CPH) direction in preparing a professional paper. **It is not intended to be an exact prescription, since length and style may vary depending upon topic and the nature of the professional paper, as well as the interests of the student and the faculty advisor involved.**

Students should confer closely with their professional paper advisor before registering for PUBH 599 (Professional Paper) and developing a proposal for such a paper. The proposal should be one page single-spaced, and reviewed and approved by the professional paper advisor before other work begins. The proposal should be submitted to the advisor with the professional paper proposal form. In addition, it is the student's responsibility to be aware of all graduation and professional paper deadline dates.

### General Recommendations for Professional Paper Research

A professional paper represents a graduate student's attempt to make an original contribution to the body of knowledge in one of the following areas of public health: epidemiology, biostatistics, social and behavioral science, environmental health, and health service administration. Central to the purpose of each professional paper must be an original analysis, synthesis, application, or presentation that is based on existing knowledge, contributes to it, and most importantly, attempts to extend, enhance or clarify existing knowledge.

A professional paper may be the result of a data-driven research project, the result of a practicum project which may be either data-driven or driven by policy/administration recommendations, or an independent project developed solely in consultation with a faculty advisor based on shared academic and professional interests.

The professional paper product may be a research paper that is submitted to a professional journal for peer review and possible publication, a conference paper or poster submitted and accepted at a professional meeting and delivered by the student, a policy paper or recommendations for a health agency, or other similar products. These can include meta-analyses, traditional literature reviews, white papers, and book reviews, as well as original data-driven research papers, policy papers, and working papers.

### Professional Paper Format

The final professional paper draft may be in a variety of formats depending on what is being produced and the subject matter involved. The presentation approach should be guided by the faculty advisor involved.

## **Supervision and Grading**

The professional paper is envisioned as an opportunity for the student to receive direct mentoring while in the public health program. As such, one faculty member should serve as the supervisor for PUBH 599. This faculty member can be either a core faculty member or an affiliated faculty member, giving the student a wide range of potential exposure to professional activity across the wide range of faculty supporting the MPH and CPH programs at The University of Montana.

Individual grades for student performance in PUBH 599 should be forwarded by the supervising faculty member to the student's advisor (one of the public health core faculty) for posting at the end of the semester that the student carries out the professional paper activity.