

# THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

The Ph.D. thesis in Public Health should be of publishable quality and represent a substantial contribution to the advancement of knowledge in a field of scholarship. The graduate school policy in regard to the dissertation is as follows:

The dissertation should demonstrate the student's mastery of relevant resources and methods and should make an original contribution to knowledge in the field. Normally, it is expected that a dissertation will have a single topic, however broadly defined, and that all parts of the dissertation will be interrelated, but can constitute essentially discrete units. Beyond this principle, the faculty will apply the prevailing intellectual standards and scholarly practices within their fields in advising students with regard to the suitable scope, length, and structure of the dissertation, including what constitutes an original contribution to that field.

The dissertation may be presented as a single monograph resulting in a major publication, or as (typically) a minimum of three first-authored scientific papers. One or more of the papers should be published, accepted for publication, or be in submission. The collected paper option does not imply that any combination of papers would be acceptable. For example, three papers related to background material (review papers), or three papers that reported associations of three unrelated exposures, or three papers of the same exposure but reporting different outcomes would not be acceptable. Rather, it is expected that the papers represent a cohesive, coherent, and integrated body of work. For example, one paper might be a systematic review and meta-analysis of the topic, another might develop a new methodological approach, and the third might apply those new methods to an area of current public health interest. In the collected paper option, the final thesis must include introductory and discussion chapters to summarize and integrate the published papers.

The DAC reviews the progress of the dissertation research and decides when the dissertation is ready to be submitted to the readers. This decision is made based on a closed defense of the dissertation. The dissertation defense involves a formal oral presentation to the DAC. (Per the adviser's discretion, other invited faculty may be present.) Upon completion of the closed defense, the chair/adviser of the DAC submits its recommendation to the DGS along with the names of three appropriate readers for GSEC review.

There will be a minimum of three readers, one of whom is at YSPH. The second reader can be from YSPH or another Yale department. Both Yale readers must hold a graduate-school appointment, and at least one should be a senior faculty member. The third reader must be selected from outside the university. All readers must be recognized authorities in the area of the dissertation. The outside reader must submit a curriculum vitae for review by the GSEC. The outside reader should be an individual who has not coauthored a publication(s) with members of the student's DAC and/or the student within the preceding three years. However, this restriction does not apply to mega-multiauthored publications. Members of the DAC are not eligible to serve as readers. After the completed readers' reports are received by the graduate school, they are reviewed by the DGS prior to making a School of Public Health recommendation to the

graduate school that the degree be awarded. The DAC may be asked to comment on the readers' reports before recommendations are made to the graduate school.

### **ORAL PRESENTATION OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) dissertations in Public Health must be presented in a public seminar. This presentation is scheduled after the closed defense, after submission of the dissertation to the readers, and preferably prior to the receipt and consideration of the readers' reports. At least one member each of the DAC and GSEC is expected to attend the presentation. It is expected to be presented during the academic term in which the dissertation was submitted and must be widely advertised within YSPH.