INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the student handbook for the doctoral program in Health Services Organization and Policy (HSOP) at the University of Michigan! This handbook is intended to be a resource for current HSOP students. It compiles a wide range of information that can help students navigate their HSOP careers successfully. The handbook may also be useful to prospective students who wish to learn about our program and to faculty who advise and mentor HSOP students.

You might be wondering what makes HSOP special, besides this amazing handbook. Most of us in the HSOP community would probably answer by referring to some combination of these five factors:

1) Community: We value a strong sense of community among the students, faculty, and staff who are involved in the program. This community operates at both intellectual and social levels, and is intended to be supportive while fostering challenges and growth. These principles are central to many of our activities, including advising and mentoring, seminars, dissertation groups, and social events.

2) Cognates: One of the most important and distinct features of our program is our emphasis on “cognate areas” (economics, sociology, organizational studies, political science, operations research/decision sciences, and finance). Whereas academic breadth is a natural benefit of multidisciplinary programs like ours, the cognate areas are essential for gaining depth in a set of theories and methods. The cognate allows students to connect with scholarship in a specific discipline throughout their careers, as an important supplement to connections with multidisciplinary health services and policy fields. The cognate system works especially well at the University of Michigan, which has highly ranked programs in every cognate area and a well-deserved reputation for connecting across schools and fields.

3) Curriculum: While HSOP students take many of their courses in the departments corresponding to their cognate areas, the curriculum also includes a rich and challenging set of multidisciplinary courses based in our department, Health Management and Policy. Starting in 2010, we modified the curriculum substantially, adopting an innovative model in response to feedback from students. Our courses introduce students to the most promising research areas pertaining to health services and policy, and also ensure that each student, regardless of cognate area, has a basic understanding of the perspectives and tools from the other cognate areas. The HMP-based courses also give all students a common foundation in empirical research methods. We will continue to refine this model as needed to make it as enriching as possible for students.
4) **Careers**: Our graduates consistently land excellent jobs at prestigious academic and non-academic organizations. Although most of our graduates go into academic jobs, we are also supportive of other career paths, such as research consulting companies. Our goal is to support whatever is best for each student.

5) **U-M and Ann Arbor**: As Brady Hoke famously said upon accepting the U-M football coaching job in 2011, “This is Michigan, for god’s sake!” U-M and Ann Arbor together represent a wonderful community for a doctoral education. The university is especially strong in the social and health sciences, and Ann Arbor is rated among the top cities in the country for quality of life and other key indicators of awesomeness: [http://www.annarborusa.org/living-here/facts-rankings](http://www.annarborusa.org/living-here/facts-rankings).

Now that you know why we think HSOP is great, here is some brief advice about how to use this handbook. Most importantly, do not consider this a substitute for talking to people! Rather, use the information and tips in here as a starting point for richer conversations with advisors or other faculty members, peers, and others. We compiled these materials to make those discussions more productive, not to replace them. Faculty, staff, and fellow HSOP students are generally glad to discuss any issues or questions you may have. And in the rare cases in which they are not happy to talk with you, please refer them to the previous sentence in this handbook.

The first version of this handbook was compiled in August 2012 with substantial contributions from HSOP students (Genna Cohen, Joel Segel, Don Sexton) and Mindy Niehaus-Fukuda.

We hope you find the handbook useful, and we always welcome feedback to improve it.

Sincerely,

Daniel Eisenberg

HSOP Program Director
TIMELINE FOR HSOP CAREER

The following is a typical timeline for a HSOP career. This is intended to give a rough sense of when important milestones often occur, but as always it is important to keep in mind that HSOP experiences vary across students. Perhaps most notably, students in dual degree programs (typically HSOP plus a doctoral degree in the cognate area) usually take somewhat longer to complete their course requirements. To see a fuller picture of the variation in timelines among HSOP students, see this database with examples from individual students:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AkF1xj3Kk91UdFVnSzlQV2FTOGZUZWQwSDV6MUxzbE#gid=0

- Year 1
  - Required Courses
    o Introduction to health services research (HMP 802) (fall)
    o Inter-cognate area modules (HMP 803-806) (fall, winter)
    o Research design (HMP 809) (winter)
    o Cognate courses (fall, winter)
    o Preliminary exam for 1st year HSOP students (around late May)
  - Research
    o Get involved with faculty-led research project(s), especially in summer
    o Start formulating dissertation areas and ideas
      - It’s never too early to brainstorm
      - Ideas may be viable for projects such as your 2nd/3rd year paper (HMP 835)
  - Professional development
    o Attend WIDTH regularly, possibly other seminars relevant to cognate or interests
    o Attend AHRQ/NRSA conference and AcademyHealth (typically in June)
    o Possibly join dissertation group
    o Meet regularly with main advisor, at least occasionally with other advisors or mentors
- Year 2
  - Required Courses
    o Health econometrics (HMP 826) (fall) (sometimes taken in third year instead)
    o Interdisciplinary seminar (HMP 840) (winter) (sometimes taken in third year instead)
    o Cognate courses
  - Cognate area exam (May or June in most cases) (sometimes taken in third year instead)
  - Research
    o Increase involvement in faculty-led research
    o Develop firmer ideas for dissertation plan
  - Professional development
    o Attend WIDTH and other seminars; ideally present research ideas at least once
    o Participate in dissertation group
    o Meet regularly with main advisor, at least occasionally with other advisors or mentors
• Consider attending external (e.g., national and international) conferences

• Year 3
  • Courses
    o Research practicum (HMP 835) (fall and/or winter) (some students begin in second year)
    o Remaining cognate courses
  • Cognate area exam (typically May or June) (if not completed in second year)
  • Research
    o Develop and defend dissertation proposal (sometimes happens in fourth year)
    o Begin thinking about and putting together a dissertation committee
    o Continue involvement in faculty-led research
  • Professional development
    o Attend WIDTH and other seminars; present research at least once
    o Participate in dissertation group
    o Meet regularly with main advisor and other advisors or mentors
    o Consider presenting at external (e.g., national and international) conferences

• Year 4
  • Research
    o Work on dissertation
    o Continue involvement in faculty-led research
  • Professional development
    o Attend WIDTH and other seminars; present research at least once
    o Participate in dissertation group
    o Meet regularly with main advisor and other advisors or mentors
    o Present at external (e.g., national and international) conferences
    o Start preparing for job search

• Year 5
  • Research
    o Complete dissertation
    o Continue involvement in faculty-led research
  • Professional development
    o Search for and obtain amazing job
    o Attend WIDTH and other seminars; present research at least once
    o Participate in dissertation group
    o Meet regularly with main advisor and other advisors or mentors
    o Present at external (e.g., national and international) conferences

• Other
  o Graduate and have a very large party
HSOP Timeline: Key Events

- Start thinking about summer/funding
- COGNATE PRELIM(s)
  Typically 2nd or 3rd summer
- HMP 835 (INDEPENDENT STUDY)
  6 CREDITS DURING 2nd OR 3rd YEAR
  WORK ON DISSERTATION PROPOSAL
- Modal student advances to candidacy
- Dotted lines represent events with particularly variable timing; consult with your advisor to plan

YEAR 1 | YEAR 2 | YEAR 3 | YEAR 4 | YEAR 5
CURRICULUM

All course requirements and other degree requirements, by cognate area, are fully described in a separate document, the Curriculum Guide: http://www.sph.umich.edu/hmp/pdf/hsopcurriculum.pdf

We do our best to keep the Guide current and accurate, but like this handbook, it should not be your sole source of information to guide your decisions or planning. Students should discuss their course plans your plans and any questions related to curriculum and requirements with their advisors and fellow students (particularly more advanced students in the same cognate areas).
ADVISING AND MENTORSHIP

A successful HSOP experience depends crucially on advising and mentorship. Every student should expect to receive regular, high-quality advice and mentorship from faculty members. Making this happen requires initiative and effort from students as well as advisors.

Before a new student begins the HSOP career, he or she is assigned one or two primary advisors. These assignments are typically made by the program director, after consulting with the student and relevant faculty members. The initial advisor has primary responsibility for mentoring the student during the first year, but students are also welcome and encouraged to seek additional guidance from other faculty members. Although the initially assigned advisors often remain the main advisors throughout HSOP careers, this does not have to be the case. Students are welcome to discuss possible changes of advisors with the program director and other faculty members. All HSOP students must have a primary advisor from the core HMP faculty, but other advisors, including a co-primary advisor if appropriate, can come from other units on campus. It is also useful to keep in mind that the eventual dissertation committee must consist of at least two HMP faculty members (including the chair or co-chair) and at least one faculty member outside HMP. Aside from those restrictions, we are open to advising and mentoring teams that involve significant roles, when appropriate, for non-HMP faculty at the university. In general, we encourage students to take advantage of resources at the university beyond just HMP.

Here are a few tips to help students achieve successful advising and mentoring experiences:

- First and foremost, keep in mind that your advising experience depends at least as much on you as it does on your advisors.
  - It will generally be up to you to schedule meetings and set the agenda for those meetings.
  - Do not wait for advisors to check in with you. Advisors and mentors expect to hear from you regularly, and if they don’t, they may just assume that things are fine and you don’t need their help.
  - Meet with your advisors even when there are no pressing problems—those are the best times to discuss proactively your research and academic development.

- A second tip related to the first: clarify with your advisor(s) the expectations that you each have for the advising relationship.
  - Clarify the issues that you want to discuss regularly (e.g., your research progress, career vision, skills development, etc.) and how you want to discuss them (e.g., frequency and mode of communication). This is sometimes referred to as establishing a “mentoring plan.”
  - We advise creating a mentoring plan near the beginning of your HSOP career, and revisiting it once every year or so.

- Finally, a third point building on the second: use the annual review process as a serious opportunity to assess your progress and strategize for the coming years.
  - Refer back to the annual report throughout the year as a template for major issues that may warrant mentoring discussions with your advisor.
  - Consider sharing your annual report with other secondary advisors as well.
In sum, the more effort and initiative you put into your advising and mentoring experience, the more your advisors will contribute in return. *What you get out of advising and mentoring is what you put in.*

For more advice on how to receive good mentoring as a graduate student, see Rackham’s guide: [http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/publications/mentoring.pdf/](http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/publications/mentoring.pdf/)
FUNDING

Students’ funding is a shared responsibility of the HSOP program and its students. HSOP is fortunate to be small, flexible, and generally successful in finding funding for everyone we admit. HSOP directly allocates some funding sources, most notably AHRQ traineeships for first-year students. Funding sources for 2nd and higher year students typically requires involvement by the students (applying for fellowships, dissertation grants, and GSRA and GSI positions). Historically, this process has been extremely successful, with nearly every student fully funded for five years or more, and we fully expect that to continue.

Examples of Pre-Candidate Funding:

- The HSOP Committee is committed to maintaining the AHRQ trainee fellowships for the program. This requires an intense re-application process every four or five years, and its continued renewal is a sign of the strength of the program.
- Rackham Merit Fellowships are also available for newly admitted students who meet certain qualifications. The program applies for these on behalf of admitted students. Rackham also offers pre-candidate research funding of up to $1500, and $3000 for candidates (link).
- The School of Public Health offers a competitive fellowship program, the Regents Fellowship, for first-years. The program also applies for this on behalf of qualified incoming students.
- There is a limited amount of departmental funding that can be used for special situations, and for cost-sharing that helps to leverage external funds that don’t quite cover 100% of tuition or stipend.
- For second- and third-year (and sometimes more advanced) students there are GSI jobs within the department (HMP 600, 660, 663, 615, and Public Health 200). Most HSOP students should plan on applying for these at some point, since the program depends on these positions to spread out funding and since teaching is good experience.
- The RWJF scholars program offers two GSRA jobs each year.
- There are GSI opportunities in other departments. More information is available online.
- There are various GSRA positions with faculty members in our department and other departments. Talking with faculty with similar research interests may help lead to opportunities for GSRA funding.
- There are various grants and fellowships that you may be able to research and apply for independently, with support from the program.

Examples of Candidate Funding (not an exhaustive list):

- AHRQ Health Services Research Dissertation Award (R36)
- NIH Predoctoral Fellowship for Minority Students (F31)
- Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship (for final year of dissertation work)
- Center for Global Health / Rackham Dissertation Fellowship
- Rackham one-term dissertation grants (for final semester of dissertation work)
- CRECH (both precandidate and candidate), often combined with Rackham Merit Fellowships
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We encourage you to take advantage of the myriad professional development opportunities within the department, school, university, and research community more generally. Below, we detail some of the opportunities that we encourage all students to consider.

It is also worthwhile to consult with your advisor and students in your research area to identify other events that might be relevant to your interests. As noted previously in this handbook, we have created an HSOP Experiences database (online at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AkF1xj3Kk91UdFVnSzlQV2FTOGZUZwSDV6MUxxbE#gid=0) to help track these opportunities (we encourage you to modify the list as you find new things to add or old things to remove!).

Attending seminars and conferences and meeting researchers and students from other programs represent invaluable opportunities to learn and grow as a researcher while also connecting with people who could serve on your dissertation committee or a hiring committee reviewing your application. Hearing about an issue outside of your normal purview may also spark new ideas for your research.

Please note, by the time conferences publicize opportunities for submissions it is typically too late to conceive of and implement a research project. Think ahead to these deadlines as you plan publications and projects for the upcoming year. The HSOP Experiences database includes information about conference submission deadlines and formats to help facilitate this process.

The following is a partial list of the many opportunities for professional development:

- **WIDHT**: Student presentations and invited speakers. Great forum to practice job talks, conference presentations, and receive feedback about ongoing research. Students typically begin presenting in their second or third year as they accrue research experience. Snacks provided.

- **RWJ Speaker Series**: The RWJ Health Policy Scholars program sponsors a seminar which meets 10-13 times per year on Thursday afternoons. Great opportunities to hear cutting-edge research and join faculty members in intellectual discourse. Snacks provided. You will be required to attend this series for at least one semester as part of HMP 840, but we encourage you to attend regularly throughout your HSOP career.

- **CHOP seminars**: Starting in 2013 our AHRQ training program is jointly run with the Center for Health Care Outcomes & Policy (CHOP) in the medical school. Each year the AHRQ program funds 5 doctoral students in HMP and 2 postdoctoral fellows in CHOP. We encourage HSOP students to attend CHOP seminars on Friday afternoons: https://umchop.org/news.html

- **Dissertation Groups**: Organized at the beginning of the year, students take initiative once they are assigned to groups to set up meetings and provide feedback on each other’s research ideas. Appropriate for all students (don’t be scared if you don’t have a dissertation topic yet)

- **American Public Health Association Meeting**: Yearly in October. APHA is the Public Health Professionals professional association. See http://www.apha.org/meetings.htm for details
- **AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting**: Yearly in June. AcademyHealth is the professional association for Health Services Researchers. See [http://academyhealth.org/events](http://academyhealth.org/events) for details.
  - Students receiving AHRQ funding are expected to attend the day-long meeting for AHRQ grantees on the Saturday prior to AcademyHealth. Other HSOP students are also encouraged to attend this.
- **Rackham professional development seminars**
- **CRLT teaching training seminars**
- **SPH Career Services seminars and office hours**
- **SPhD Professional Development Seminar Series**
CAMPUS RESOURCES

There are many resources available on campus to help assist you with your doctoral studies and research projects. This list is not all-encompassing. For additional campus resources, consult the SPH Handbook located at [http://www.sph.umich.edu/students/current/student_handbook.pdf](http://www.sph.umich.edu/students/current/student_handbook.pdf)

**Center for Statistical Consultation and Research (CSCAR)**

CSCAR provides statistical services to faculty, primary researchers, graduate students and staff of the University for up to one hour per week at no charge. They offer services for all aspects of statistical analysis, such as data preparation, choosing software and methods, and interpreting results. Statistical consulting is available by phone, walk-in visit, or email. More in-depth statistical consulting is available by appointment. More information can be found at [http://www.umich.edu/~cscar/index.html](http://www.umich.edu/~cscar/index.html)

**Sweetland Writing Center (SWC)**

The SWC is staffed primarily by professional writing teachers with faculty status. The SWC staff will help proofread your paper, organize your thoughts, formulate and argument, or help you get started. More information can be found at [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/)

**SPH Writing Lab**

Assistance with writing just steps away within SPH: [http://sitemaker.umich.edu/sphwritinglab/about_sph_writing_support](http://sitemaker.umich.edu/sphwritinglab/about_sph_writing_support)

**The Poster Shop at GroundWorks**

This is a facility for printing large-format color academic posters, such as those for class presentations or professional conferences. You are not required to use this facility to print your posters—there are other resources available off campus. This center is located in the Duderstadt Center on North campus. More information can be found at [http://www.dc.umich.edu/posterprinting/index.html](http://www.dc.umich.edu/posterprinting/index.html)
JOB SEARCH

For students on track to graduate in five years, preparation for the job search typically begins during the fourth year. Key steps in preparation include:

1) Discuss your timeline and job preferences with your advisors. They will often know about opportunities before they are officially advertised, and they can also start telling colleagues at other institutions about the star student who is going to be on the market soon.

2) Monitor job postings. Good places to look include:
   
   - http://healthsciences.academicians.com/
   - http://www.academyhealth.org/training/content.cfm?ItemNumber=964&navItemNumber=2021
   - listings specific to cognate areas (ask your advisors and other students)

3) Prepare your job market paper. Most job opportunities ask you to provide at least one paper for which you are the leading author. And you will typically present this paper at on-site interviews.
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN HSOP AND BEYOND

As mentioned previously, HSOP values its sense of community. Social activities are an important way to promote that sense of community. Each year there is typically at least three program-sponsored events: a welcome barbeque in September, a holiday party around the New Year, and an end-of-year picnic to honor graduates in the spring. In addition, there are many outings and events organized throughout the year by the HSOP Social Committee, an organization feared and admired for its devotion to fun.
APPENDIX : HOUSING (MAINLY FOR NEW STUDENTS)

Renting

The Ann Arbor housing market can be somewhat difficult to navigate for outsiders due to a quirky local regulation that results in an early search period for fall leases (the earliest landlords can offer September leases is November of the previous year, so people regularly sign leases nearly 10 months before moving). Despite this early rush there are many good housing options available throughout the year. Craigslist is probably the best place to look for available housing; if you are planning to visit in-person, so we recommend looking at available listings 2-3 days before your trip. Students often email sph-marketplace@umich.edu to find roommates as well, either advertising that they are looking for a roommate to fill an apartment/house or inquiring about available rooms. There also may be housing options available on the UM off campus housing website.

Buying

Some students have purchased houses in Ann Arbor, typically through a real estate agent. If you're interested in recommendations, please contact Mindy for contact information for students who have recently purchased a home.

Locations

The School of Public Health (SPH) is located near the hospital and arboretum at one of the most northeastern points of central campus. Because HSOP is an interdisciplinary program students regularly take classes in other departments, most of which are 15+ minutes away from SPH. We recommend speaking with students in your cognate/research area to learn more about which other parts of campus you can expect to be visiting regularly before deciding on a location. We have made a map in Google highlighting some of the academic departments students frequent and a few other establishments people typically ask about when they first come to Ann Arbor.

Students who want to be able to walk to the School of Public Health typically look for housing in Kerrytown or Island Drive/Nielsen Square apartments, the latter of which is stereotypically home to many medical students. There is also housing south of campus, which can be convenient for students anticipating to spend a lot of time in the business school or economics department. Although typically less popular with past students University housing is also available near North Campus. There are also many housing options available to the north of campus, which typically tend to be slightly larger but may be slightly further away. There are housing options west of campus, which tend to typically be houses when closer to campus or apartments/condos further away. One thing to look for when searching past walking distance of campus is whether the housing is close to a bus line (students can ride the busses for free with their Michigan student ID), buses that stop by the School of Public Health are the 1U, 2, 4, 14, 18, 609, 710, 711, north campus buses. Some students also purchase parking passes to either lots near the School (typically more difficult and more expensive) or to park and ride lots (more information here).
In summary, although it may take a little work there are a lot of good housing options available. Incoming students should also feel free to contact current students or talk to their buddy about housing to figure what will work best.