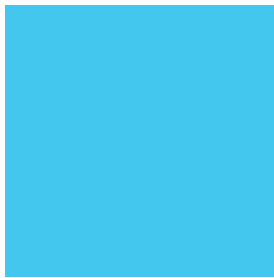


2026-2027 Student Handbook

Department of Clinical & Diagnostic Sciences

PhD in Health Physics



UAB
The University of
Alabama at Birmingham.
School of Health Professions

UAB SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL AND DIAGNOSTIC SCIENCES
PHD IN HEALTH PHYSICS
2026-2027 ACADEMIC HANDBOOK



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08/21/2026

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INTRODUCTION

DEAN'S WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Health Professions where you are joining a legacy of excellence!

We are one of the six schools comprising the renowned UAB Academic Health Center. We offer more than 30 programs and 40 offerings at the certificate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels. And we are home to nearly 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

You came here for an outstanding education, and we provide exactly that. However, **only you** can control whether you will become an excellent professional. To do so, you must challenge yourself every day and take advantage of all our vast resources, state-of-the-art facilities and research opportunities during your academic and clinical education. You also need to make the most of your access to the world-class faculty who are here to teach and support your journey. You didn't enroll here to be to be an amateur. You came to become a professional, and not an average one. I encourage you to become a "Pro" and an excellent one at that. Own it, live it, excel at what you do, and make both us and yourself proud.

I look forward to seeing you grow in your respective fields and watching you become the leader we know you can be.

Go Blazers!

Mark Merrick, Ph.D., AT, ATC, FNATA, FNAP, FASAHP
Dean, UAB School of Health Professions

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The UAB School of Health Professions (SHP) is one of the largest academic institutions of its type in the United States. What began in the 1950s as a collection of training programs in various para-professional disciplines has grown into an internationally recognized center of academic and research excellence.

Today, we have five academic departments – Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences, Health Services Administration, Nutrition Sciences, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy – that are housed in four buildings: Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building (WEBB), Learning Resource Center (LRC), the School of Health Professions Building (SHPB), and the Center for Biophysical Sciences and Engineering (CBSE).

We are proud of many accomplishments including:

- *U.S. News & World Report* ranks all eligible SHP programs in the nation's top 25.
- Research funding is at an all-time high of \$26+ million and growing.
- Nearly 10 of our programs you will only find in Alabama at UAB.

- Our school has never been stronger or better positioned as a national leader in health professions education. And this status will only grow stronger as we continue to welcome students like you.

DISCLAIMER

This Handbook is an overview of general academic regulations specific to SOHP programs at UAB. Although UAB will make its best efforts to abide by this handbook, UAB reserves the right to interpret and apply its procedures and policies, and to deviate from these guidelines, as appropriate in the particular circumstances and in accordance with the mission and goals of the program. UAB also reserves the right to address issues not covered in this handbook and to make changes to the policy without advance notice. Changes become effective at the time the proper authorities determine so and the changes apply to both prospective students and those already enrolled. Please refer to our website for the most up-to-date version.

All students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the general University rules and regulations pertaining to studying at UAB and the specific academic requirements of their particular degree program. This Handbook is not intended to nor does it contain all policies or regulations applicable to students. Each student is responsible for familiarizing him/herself with the contents of this Handbook. Although the policies contained herein are intended to reflect current rules and policies of the University, users are cautioned that changes or additions may have become effective since the publication of this material. In the event of a conflict, current statements of Board policy contained in the Bylaws, Rules, official minutes, and other pronouncements of the Board or Chancellor, or superseding law, shall prevail.

This Handbook does not constitute a contract and may not be deemed or construed as part of any contract between UAB and any student or student representative.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU SHOULD KNOW

Although UAB works hard to prepare students for future careers in their desired fields, employment and salaries are not guaranteed. Employment outcomes depend on a student's efforts and market conditions. Students are responsible for understanding their financial responsibilities. [Tuition costs can be found on this UAB website](#). Scholarships are competitive and not guaranteed. Admission to other graduate or professional programs is also not guaranteed. Advisors will provide students with guidance, but students are ultimately responsible for degree completion, and timelines for completion may vary based on individual circumstances.

SECTION 1 – SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

All dates related to registration, payments of tuition and fees, drop/add dates, other administrative requirements, and official school holidays are recorded on the [UAB Academic Calendar](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

The University established a new Academic Integrity Code effective August 23, 2021. This Code, which applies to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students as well as all academic activities, defines academic misconduct and outlines procedures for breaches of the code. The Academic Integrity Code process is managed by the Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC). In the School of Health Professions, the AIC is the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs, and the office is located in SHPB 660. [You can see the full text of the Academic Integrity Code online.](#)

ADVISING

Undergraduate student advising is provided through advisors assigned to each program as well as through the Office of Student Services. Advisor and recruiter contact information can be found on the [Office of Student Services Website](#). Graduate student advising is provided through the SHP graduate programs.

AMBASSADORS

Ambassadors help to spread awareness of the School of Health Professions and its multifaceted undergraduate and graduate programs, serve as liaisons between the department and university-wide student organizations, and serve as a student voice in school and university committees. The SHP Ambassadors help to support the programs within the school that will impact recruitment and retention initiatives. [You can learn more about the SHP Ambassadors on their webpage.](#)

AskIT

AskIT is the technology help desk for faculty, staff, and students. You will be asked to supply your BlazerID when you request assistance. Contact them by phone at 205-996-5555 or [via email](#) or [visit the AskIT service portal online](#).

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is expected in all SHP programs. Specific class, laboratory, or clinical site attendance requirements may be more stringent than university guidelines. Refer to the program requirements in this handbook and in course syllabi for policies. The UAB attendance policy is as follows:

The University of Alabama at Birmingham recognizes that the academic success of individual students is related to their class attendance and participation. Each course instructor is responsible for establishing policies concerning class attendance and make-up opportunities. Any such policies, including points for attendance and/or participation, penalties for absences, limits on excused absences, total allowable absences, etc., must be specified in the course syllabus provided to students at the beginning of the course term. Such policies are subject to departmental oversight and may not, by their specific prescriptions, negate or circumvent the accommodations provided below for excused absences.

The University regards certain absences as excused and in those instances requires that instructors provide a reasonable accommodation for the student who misses assignments, presentations, examinations, or other academic work of a substantive nature by virtue of these excused absences. Examples include the following:

- Absences due to jury or military duty, provided that official documentation has been provided to the instructor in a timely manner in advance.
- Absences for students who have approved disability-related absence accommodations through Disability Support Services may follow the reasonable number of absences outlined in their flex plan or as determined by the instructor. Students are responsible for notifying instructors of these and any other approved accommodations through their Notice of Accommodations letter.
- Absences due to participation in university-sponsored activities when the student is representing the University in an official capacity and as a critical participant, provided that the procedures below have been followed:
 - Before the end of the add/drop period, students must provide their instructor a schedule of anticipated excused absences in or with a letter explaining the nature of the expected absences from the director of the unit or department sponsoring the activity.
 - If a change in the schedule occurs, students are responsible for providing their instructors with advance written notification from the sponsoring unit or department.
- Absences due to other extenuating circumstances that instructors deem excused. Such classification is at the discretion of the instructor and is predicated upon consistent treatment of all students.
- Absences due to religious observances provided that students give faculty written notice prior to the drop/add deadline of the term.

In these instances, instructors must give students the opportunity to complete assignments in a way that corresponds as much as possible to the nature, scope, and format of the original. Options may include making up exams or other assignments, rescheduling student classroom presentations, or arranging for early or late submission of written assignments. The course make-up policy should be included in the syllabus.

BLAZERID / BLAZERNET / EMAIL

BLAZERID

All students receive a unique identifier, the BlazerID, established at [BlazerID Central](#). Your BlazerID is required for accessing BlazerNET and other campus resources. To activate one's BlazerID, select "Activate Accounts."

BLAZERNET

[BlazerNet](#) is the official portal of the UAB information network and is accessible from any Internet-accessible computer, on- or off-campus.

EMAIL

UAB student email is provided through Microsoft Office 365, a cloud-based system. Students have 50 GB of email space and 25 GB of free file 1 TB storage. The UAB email is the official communication medium for courses, news, information, and announcements. Students should not forward their UAB account to a personal email account. UAB is not responsible for information not received by the student due to the 'redirecting' of a UAB account to another email server.

BLAZER EXPRESS

The UAB Blazer Express Transit System provides transportation throughout the UAB campus. With a valid UAB ID badge, students can enjoy fare-free bus transportation. All buses are ADA-accessible and can seat approximately 35 riders. For an updated schedule, route maps, and hours of operation please [visit the Blazer Express website](#).

BOOKSTORE

There is one bookstore located on the UAB campus in the Hill Student Center. It offers a wide variety of products and services to students, including online purchasing and shipping. The bookstore stocks UAB memorabilia and college wear in addition to all required textbooks and course material. Visit [the UAB Barnes and Noble Bookstore online](#) for more details.

CAMPUS ONECARD

The UAB OneCard is the official university identification card. It is used for personal identification, for entry to campus events and the recreation center, for library checkout, and for other UAB services. It also serves as a declining balance card for the UAB meal plans and for Blazer Bucks accounts. Additional information is available on the [UAB OneCard website](#).

CAMPUS MAP

[UAB's campus map can be found online](#).

CAMPUS SAFETY

[Campus safety procedures and resources can be accessed online](#).

CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Canvas Learning Management System is the platform used for managing instructional materials online. Canvas course sites are accessed through BlazerNET or at the [UAB Center for Teaching and Learning website](#). Students should monitor their course sites routinely for communication from faculty and to manage course assignments.

CATALOG

The UAB Catalog is published annually and includes UAB's courses, policies, and curricula. Students can [find the Undergraduate or Graduate catalog online](#).

COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

[Community Standards and Accountability](#) is responsible for upholding the integrity and purpose of the University through the fair and consistent application of policies and procedures to students' behavior to ensure a community that respects the dignity and right of all persons to reach their highest potential. UAB Student Advocacy, Rights & Conduct (SARC) delivers programs and services in order to promote student safety and success, the pursuit of knowledge, respect for self and others, global citizenship, personal accountability and integrity, and ethical development. More information can be found at the [UAB SARC website](#). [The UAB student conduct code may be accessed online](#).

COUNSELING SERVICES

Student Counseling Services offers no cost, confidential counseling for UAB students related to physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or spiritual concerns. Student Counseling Services is located on the 3rd floor of the Student Health and Wellness Center at 1714 9th Avenue South. For more information, call 205-934-5816 or [visit the Student Counseling Services website](#).

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

UAB is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students. If you are a student with a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and you require accommodations, please [contact Disability Support Services for information on accommodations, registration, and procedures](#). Requests for reasonable accommodations involve an interactive process and consist of a collaborative effort among the student, DSS, faculty, and staff. If you have a disability but have not contacted DSS, please call 205-934-4205 or visit [the DSS website](#).

If you are a student registered with Disability Support Services, it is your responsibility to contact the course instructor to discuss the accommodations that may be necessary in each course. Students with disabilities must be registered with DSS and provide an accommodation request letter before receiving academic adjustments. Reasonable and timely notification of accommodations for the course is encouraged and provided to the course instructor so that the accommodations can be arranged.

EMERGENCIES

Report suspicious or threatening activity to the UAB Police Department immediately. Law enforcement officers are available 24 hours, seven days a week. Also, more than 300 emergency blue light telephones connected directly to the police dispatch are located throughout campus.

BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT (BTAM)

The UAB and UAB Medicine Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Team (BTAM) is an interdisciplinary team dedicated to maintaining a safe, secure, and healthy campus environment for all students, employees, and visitors. BTAM uses a structured, proactive process to identify, assess, and manage behavioral threats to campus safety and well-being. Concerning behaviors—such as a significant change in academic performance or conduct, aggressive or irrational behavior, expressions of severe distress, or inability to control anger—should be reported promptly. Non-emergency situations involving students may be reported through the Division of Student Affairs at (205) 975-9509 or via the online reporting form. For more information, visit the [UAB BTAM website](#).

UAB POLICE:

For an emergency, dial 911 *from a campus phone*. For non-emergencies call: 205-934-3535 or 205-934-HELP (4357) or 205-934-4434.

Emergencies affecting campus are communicated via the following:

- UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline 205-934-2165
- [UAB home webpage](#)
- [UAB Emergency Management webpage](#)
- Announcements on [BlazerNET](#)
- Cell phone messages and SMS text via B-ALERT. [Register for B-ALERT online](#).

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:

UAB is an [Equal Employment/Equal Educational Opportunity Institution](#) dedicated to providing equal opportunities and equal access to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), genetic information, age, disability, and veteran's status. As required by Title IX, UAB prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to UAB's Assistant Vice President and Senior Title IX Coordinator. [The Title IX notice of nondiscrimination is located online](#).

FERPA TRAINING

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 provides protection for all educational records related to students enrolled in an educational program. UAB has a dedicated [FERPA website](#) with information about your rights and protection of your records. You may [email any questions or concerns about FERPA issues](#) to FERPA@uab.edu. All SHP students are required to complete FERPA Training. The course can be accessed at [THIS WEBSITE](#).

FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid Counselors are available each day in the One Stop Student Services Office located in the Hill Student Center, [1400 University Blvd](#), Suite 103. If you have general

questions, you can contact the Office of Student Financial Aid at 205-934-8223 or [via email](#). For additional financial aid information [visit the UAB Cost & Aid website](#).

FOOD SERVICES

There are several dining facilities available on campus. The [campus dining map](#) can show you the closest to the SHP buildings. For additional information about meal plans and campus dining facilities [visit the Campus Dining website](#).

GRADUATE SCHOOL

The UAB Graduate School offers doctoral programs, post-master's specialist programs, and master's level programs. Graduate programs in SHP are coordinated through the Graduate School, and students must adhere to the Graduate School policies and procedures. Graduate School information for current students is available at [the UAB Graduate School website](#). Policies and Procedures for the Graduate School can be found in the [Graduate School Catalog](#).

GRADUATION

All students must complete an application for degree six months prior to graduating and no later than the deadline in the academic calendar. The University holds commencement every semester. Check the [UAB commencement website](#) for the most current information.

HEALTH INSURANCE

To ensure that all students have adequate health care coverage, including ongoing primary and specialty care, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) requires all students to have major medical health insurance. Students can provide proof of their own private coverage or be enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan. The plan is a 1-year commercial policy provided by United HealthCare and is re-negotiated annually. This policy is a comprehensive health insurance policy at an affordable cost that is specifically designed to meet the needs of UAB Students. If you are required to have insurance but have sufficient coverage on another plan and wish to opt out of the Student Health Insurance Plan, you are required to submit a waiver to Student Health Services at the beginning of every semester. More information including submitting a waiver can be found at the [UAB Student Health Insurance Waivers website](#).

HIPAA TRAINING

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) includes significant requirements for protecting individual privacy of health information. All students in the School of Health Professions must complete an online tutorial and be tested on HIPAA regulations at the time of program admission. A BlazerID is required to access the training site, located at [UAB Online Learning](#). Compliance with the training requirement is monitored by the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs.

HONOR SOCIETIES

All students in the School of Health Professions are eligible for consideration for the Alpha Eta Honor Society. The UAB Chapter of this Society recognizes students registered in the final term

of a baccalaureate or graduate health professions program. Inductees must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (4.0 = A) and be in the upper 10% of their program. Nominations are made by program directors in spring and summer terms.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

To provide a safe and healthy environment for all students, faculty, and staff at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), first-time entering students, international students and scholars, and students in clinical & non-clinical programs, must provide proof of immunization against certain diseases, unless they have an approved medical or religious exemption. Full details can be found on the [UAB Immunizations webpage](#).

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN USE (IRB)

Student researchers must comply with all requirements for protection of human subjects. Detailed information is available on the [IRB website](#).

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Intellectual property refers to an asset that originated conceptually, such as literary and artistic works, inventions, or other creative works. These assets should be protected and used only as the creator intends. Training materials defining inventor status, patent criteria, and other intellectual property issues, as well as University Policies on Patents, Copyright, and Intellectual Property are on [the Office of Compliance & Risk homepage](#).

LACTATION CENTERS

The University has provided several lactation centers for students, faculty, and staff across the campus. Visit [the UAB Lactation Resources webpage](#) for a resource guide and a location map. The School of Health Professions' lactation room is in the Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building at [1675 University Blvd](#), Room 431. Lactating students enrolled in the School of Health Professions have access to the room via their student ID/OneCard. If you cannot access the room, contact the building administrator, Julia Tolbert-Jackson at 205-873-5666.

LIBRARIES AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

[UAB's libraries](#) house excellent collections of books, periodicals, microforms, and other media. Students have online remote access to catalogs and online collections. Computers are available for student use during regular hours of operation.

SHP LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER (LRC)

The School of Health Professions Learning Resource Center (LRC) provides a unique set of enterprise solutions that promote an exciting, intriguing, and innovative learning environment. It provides audio/visual support, and information technology management of public, classroom, and testing labs. The building is at [1714 9th Avenue South](#), and the SHP student space is on the second floor. You can contact LRC staff [via email](#) or via phone at 205-934-5146.

LISTER HILL LIBRARY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES

[Lister Hill Library](#) (LHL) is the largest biomedical library in Alabama and one of the largest in the south. It is located [across the crosswalk](#) from the School of Health Professions.

MERVYN H. STERNE LIBRARY

[Mervyn H. Sterne Library](#) has a collection of more than one million items supporting teaching and research in the arts and humanities, business, education, engineering, natural sciences and mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences. It is located at [917 13th Street South](#).

UAB STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The Student Conduct Code promotes honesty, integrity, accountability, rights, and responsibilities expected of students consistent with the core missions of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. This Code describes the standards of behavior for all students, and it outlines students' rights, responsibilities, and the campus processes for adjudicating alleged violations. Behavior that violates UAB standards of conduct listed within the Student Conduct Code and elsewhere will be subject to disciplinary action through the appropriate conduct process. Whether it is determined that an individual or group is responsible for the violation(s), either by direct involvement or by condoning, encouraging, or covering up the violation, appropriate response will occur with respect to the individual(s) and/or group involved.

[Undergraduate Non-Academic Policies](#)

[Graduate Non-Academic Policies](#)

ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES

The mission of the One Stop is to provide a single point of professional integrated service to students. The One Stop serves students who need assistance with academic records, financial aid, registration, student accounting, OneCard, and other related topics. One Stop is located in the Hill Student Center, [1400 University Blvd.](#) Suite 103. You may contact the [One Stop](#) office by phone or email at 205-934-4300, 855-UAB-1STP (855-822-1787), [or via email](#).

PARKING

Student vehicles must be registered with [UAB Parking and Transportation Services](#), located at [608 8th Street South](#). Parking is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Parking fees are established by location, payable by semester or year, and are billed to the student's account.

PLAGIARISM AND TURNITIN

Plagiarism violates the Academic Integrity Code and will be addressed in accordance with it. All papers submitted for grading in any SHP program may be reviewed using the online plagiarism monitoring software. Please note that all documents submitted to [Turnitin](#) are added to their database of papers that is used to screen future assignments for plagiarism.

RECREATION CENTER

The [Campus Recreation Center](#) is located at [1501 University Blvd](#). A valid student identification card or membership card is required for access. Facilities include basketball courts, racquetball courts, weight rooms, swimming pools, exercise rooms, and indoor track.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS AWARDS

All students in the School of Health Professions are eligible for consideration for [the SHP Student Awards Program](#), which includes the following awards:

- Alfred W. Sangster Award for Outstanding International Student – This award is presented annually to an international student in recognition of their academic and non-academic achievements.
- Cecile Clardy Satterfield Award for Humanism in Health Care – This award is made annually to recognize one outstanding student for humanitarianism, professionalism, and commitment to health care.
- Charles Brooks Award for Creativity – This award is made annually in recognition of creative accomplishments such as written publications or artistic contributions which complemented the student's academic activities.
- Dean's Leadership and Service Award – Presented to a maximum of three outstanding SHP students annually, this award recognizes leadership to the School, UAB, and the community.

A call for nominations will be sent to program directors each year. Please refer to the program section of this handbook for awards available to students in individual programs.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOLARSHIPS

SHP has several scholarship opportunities for students enrolled in SHP programs. The Scholarship Committee, comprised of faculty from each department, reviews and selects awardees. Please go to [the SHP Scholarship Application webpage](#) for a list of scholarships and instructions for application.

Application announcements are made by the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs. Many programs in SHP also have scholarships available to currently enrolled students in those programs. Please refer to the program section of this handbook for more information.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SHARED VALUES

- Collaboration
- Compassion & Caring
- Excellence & Achievement
- Integrity
- Respect
- Service
- Social Responsibility
- Stewardship

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can serve as useful communication tools. However, health professions students should use the forums judiciously. For more information visit [the UAB Social Media Guidelines webpage](#). The school's official sites are on the following platforms:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Vimeo](#)
- [X/Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

The University provides prevention, counseling, and treatment services to students through [Student Health Services](#) (SHS) located at [1714 9th Avenue South](#). Appointments may be scheduled via [their online portal](#).

TITLE IX

In accordance with Title IX, the University of Alabama at Birmingham does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its programs or services. The University is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on sex and expects individuals who live, work, teach, and study within this community to contribute positively to the environment and to refrain from behaviors that threaten the freedom or respect that every member of our community deserves. For more information about Title IX, policy, reporting, protections, resources, and supports, please visit [the UAB Title IX webpage](#).

TUITION AND FEES

[UAB tuition and fees are published online](#). They may be paid through BlazerNET. SHP programs have specific fees attached to programs, courses, and/ or laboratories. Payment deadlines for each semester are published on the official academic calendar. Please note that failure to meet payment deadlines can result in being administratively withdrawn from courses.

WEATHER

Severe weather situations that may affect the safety of students, faculty, and staff are communicated through the same channels as other emergencies. UAB has a dedicated [Preparedness webpage with Severe Weather Gathering Points and supply lists](#). Other information sources include the [B-ALERT System](#) (contact information must be setup and current) and the UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline 205-934-2165.

WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSE / PROGRAM

Withdrawal from a course or from your program is an official process and should be discussed with your academic advisor and/or program director. Most programs in the School of Health Professions are full-time and the curricula specifically sequenced. Withdrawal from a course

may risk you having to wait to register for the class again. Withdrawals are made through the UAB registration system via the Student Resources tab in BlazerNET. Notice of program withdrawal should be given in writing to the program director. For more information [visit the UAB Add/Drop, Extended Drop and Withdrawal Policy webpage](#), which also includes a medical withdrawal policy.

SECTION 2 – SHP AND UAB POLICIES

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS POLICIES

DISMISSAL OF STUDENT FOR FAILURE TO MAKE SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

[Dismissal of Student and Appeal Process](#)

EMERGENCY PLAN – SHPB/LRC/WEBB

[SHPB/LRC/WEBB Emergency Plan](#)

BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREEN POLICY

Students in SHP programs are required to undergo a background check and drug screen using the school's approved vendor, [Disa Healthcare Technology](#), at the time of program admission, and again, prior to placement in a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.). Additional checks/screens may be required by the individual sites therefore; students should work with the program to ensure compliance requirements are met. Instructions for requesting the background check and drug screens are provided to students by their programs. Students in SHP undergraduate programs must complete a module on drug screening and background checks during their first semester. The module will be located in Canvas, UAB's learning management system.

The [SHP Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs](#) is responsible for ensuring student compliance with the Background Check and Drug Screen Policy throughout the program. Students found to be non-compliant with this policy will not be allowed to matriculate in the program (orientation, attend class, fieldwork placement, etc.) until all requirements are met. Program Directors, Fieldwork Coordinators, and students will be notified of non-compliance and a hold will be placed on the students' account.

- Fees for these screenings will be the responsibility of the student.
- The rules and regulations governing individual fieldwork placement sites may include additional provisions and/or more stringent guidelines which supersede this policy. Fees for these screenings are the responsibility of the student.
- Should your criminal background check contain issues, or if you fail a drug screen that may prevent you from receiving or sitting for board certification/licensure, a representative from the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs will contact you. Depending upon the outcome, students will have a registration hold placed on their account until in compliance and this may result in being dismissed from the program. See your program's guidelines regarding specific consequences.

Programs requiring a criminal background check and drug screening by the end of the first semester of enrollment and again, prior to fieldwork placement (if applicable in the program requirements), are the following:

- Administration Health Services, PhD
- Biomedical Sciences to Biotechnology Fast Track
- Biomedical Sciences to Clinical Laboratory Science Fast Track

- Biomedical Sciences to Health Physics Fast Track
- Biomedical Sciences to Nuclear Medicine & Molecular Imaging Sciences Fast Track
- Biomedical and Health Sciences, MS
- Biotechnology, MS
- Biotechnology, PhD
- Dietitian Education Program, Graduate Certificate
- Genetic Counseling, MS
- Health Administration (Residential), MSHA
- Health Care Management to Healthcare Quality and Safety Fast Track
- Health Care Management to Health Informatics Fast Track
- Health Care Management to Occupational Therapy Doctorate Fast Track
- Health Physics, MS
- Medical Laboratory Science, MS
- Nuclear Medicine & Molecular Imaging Sciences, MS
- Nutrition Sciences, MS
 - Dietetic Internship Clinical Track
 - Dietitian Education Program
 - Research Track
- Nutrition Sciences, PhD
- Occupational Therapy, OTD – (entry level)
- Physical Therapy, DPT
- Physician Associate Studies, MSPAS
- Rehabilitation Science, PhD

The following students enrolled in SHP undergraduate programs will complete a learning module related to background checks and drug screens in Canvas, UAB's learning management system by the first semester of enrollment. If a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.) is required, students must complete criminal background checks and drug screens prior to the first day of the semester of a fieldwork placement:

- Health Care Management, BS
- Biomedical Sciences, BS
- Nutrition Sciences, BS
- Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Science, BS

Programs waived from the Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening requirements are the following:

- Applied Mixed Methods Research, Graduate Certificate
- Biotechnology Regulatory Affairs, Graduate Certificate
- Clinical Informatics, Graduate Certificate
- Health Administration (International and Executive tracks), MSHA
- Health Informatics, MSHI
- Healthcare Finance Management, Graduate Certificate
- Healthcare Leadership, DSc

- Healthcare Leadership, Graduate Certificate
- Healthcare Quality and Safety, MS
- Healthcare Quality and Safety, Graduate Certificate
- Health Services Research, MS
- Healthcare Simulation, MS
- Healthcare Simulation, Graduate Certificate
- Nutrition for Community Health, Graduate Certificate
- Nutrition Sciences, MS
 - Clinical Track-Prior Learning
 - Lifestyle Management and Disease Prevention Track
- Low Vision Rehabilitation, Graduate Certificate
- Multi-Tiered Approach to Trauma, Graduate Certificate
- Occupational Therapy Doctorate (Post Professional)
- Physical Therapy Residencies (Neurologic, Orthopedic)
- Primary Care Physical Therapy for Underserved Populations, Graduate Certificate

Students enrolled in exempt programs who participate in a course(s) incorporating community, corporate or other high impact, out-of-classroom activities such as service learning, capstone projects or other hands-on learning experiences, may be required by placement sites to submit background check and drug screening results. Students are responsible for the fees associated with such screening.

DISA HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTIONS

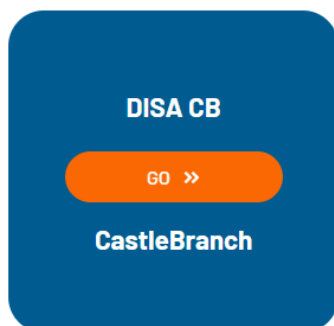
[Disa Healthcare Technology](#) is a secure platform that allows you to order your background check & drug test online. Once you have placed your order, you may use your login to access additional features, including document storage, portfolio builders and reference tools. Disa Healthcare Technology also allows you to upload any additional documents required by your school.

Order Summary

- Required Personal Information
 - In addition to entering your full name and date of birth, you will be asked for your Social Security Number, current address, phone number, and email address.
- Drug Test (LabCorp)
 - Within 24-48 hours after you place your order, the electronic chain of custody form e-chain will be placed directly into your CastleBranch account. This e-chain will explain where you need to go to complete your drug test.
- Payment Information
 - At the end of the online process, you will be prompted to enter your Visa or MasterCard information. Money orders are also accepted, but will result in a \$10 fee and additional turn-around-time.

Place Your Order

[Visit the website](#), click “place order” and choose the Disa CB platform (see logo screenshot below).



Enter package code AHO1 – Background Check and Drug Test. You will be required to enter your program under “Student Information” classification. You will then be directed to set up your Disa/CastleBranch profile account. This package code is for the following majors:

- Health Care Management
- Biomedical Sciences
- Biotechnology
- Biomedical and Health Sciences
- Genetic Counseling
- Health Administration – Residential (MSHA)
- Health Care Quality and Safety (not employees of health care organizations)
- Health Informatics
- Health Physics
- Medical Laboratory Sciences
- Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Sciences
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Associate Studies
- Rehabilitation Sciences

View Your Results

Your results will be posted directly to your Disa/CastleBranch profile account. You will be notified if there is any missing information needed to process your order. Although 95% of background check results are completed within 3-5 business days, some results may take longer. Your order will show as “In Process” until it has been completed in its entirety. Your school’s administrator can also securely view your results online with their unique username and password. If you have any additional questions, you may contact the Service Desk at 888-723-4263 x 7196 or submit a question [using the online contact us form](#).

ACCIDENTS / INJURIES OCCURRING ON CAMPUS:

All accidents/injuries occurring while involved in a program associated with the School of Health Professions are to be promptly reported to the faculty member in charge of class. Incident reports for accidents and injuries must be filed with the Department Administrative Office within 48 hours of the incident. Failure to report accidents or injuries within 48 hours of the incident may impact UAB's ability to address the accident or injury.

ACCIDENT / INJURY REPORTING PROCEDURE

When a student, visitor, faculty, or staff is involved in an accident or sustains an injury while involved in a program associated with the School of Health Professions, an accident / injury report is required. The faculty member in charge of the class where the injury occurs, or who is the first point of contact following the injury should download and complete this [Incident Report Form](#).

NEEDLESTICK/ BLOOD OR BODY FLUID EXPOSURES

When a student, visitor, faculty, or staff is involved in a body fluid or needlestick exposure while involved in a program associated with the School of Health Professions, they should follow the procedures on [the UAB Human Resources website](#). The faculty member in charge of the class where the exposure occurs, or who is the first point of contact following the injury should download and complete this [Incident Report Form](#).

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE VOLUNTEER RESEARCH:

Undergraduate or graduate volunteer students wanting to conduct research in a School of Health Professions laboratory should contact [Dr. Samantha Giordano-Mooga via email](#) for requirements.

UAB POLICIES

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

[UAB ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS](#)

[UAB ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS](#)

HEALTH

[UAB POLICY ON IMMUNIZATIONS](#)

[UAB POLICY ON NEEDLE STICKS AND EXPOSURES](#)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

[UAB POLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT](#)

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

[UAB POLICY ON CAMPUS SAFETY](#)

[UAB POLICY ON FIREARMS, AMMUNITION, AND OTHER DANGEROUS WEAPONS](#)

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

[UAB POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE](#)

[UAB POLICY ON ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RESEARCH AND OTHER SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES](#)

[UAB POLICY ON PATENTS](#)

SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE

[UAB POLICY ON ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, USE AND CONSUMPTION](#)

[UAB POLICY AS A DRUG FREE CAMPUS](#)

[UAB POLICY ON NON-SMOKING](#)

TECHNOLOGY

[UAB POLICY ON TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES](#)

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

[UAB COMPLAINT POLICY](#)

SECTION 3: PROGRAM SPECIFIC INFORMATION

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HEALTH PHYSICS PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Health Physics Program. This handbook has been compiled to provide you with an information source for the PhD in Health Physics. It describes the doctoral milestones, expectations, and policies specific to the program; where the doctoral requirements draw on the same standards as the Master of Health Physics (MHP), that shared content is reproduced here for convenience. The campus directory and academic calendars are in the quicklinks tab of the main UAB homepage.

The UAB Graduate Catalog and the Graduate School website are the authoritative sources for university-wide doctoral requirements and deadlines. When in doubt, refer to [Completion of a Degree](#) and the Graduate School's thesis and dissertation resources.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

To provide a quality educational and research experience that prepares graduates to be independent scholars and skilled, certified professionals across all health physics disciplines. UAB Health Physics graduates will advance the science and practice of radiation protection throughout their careers while upholding the highest standards of ethics and integrity, both personally and professionally.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Our faculty and staff are teachers, scholars, researchers, and leaders who provide exceptional mentoring and training. They are prepared to deliver high-quality education to all our students. [Visit the Health Physics website to see our current faculty and staff.](#)

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

DOCTORAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of the PhD in Health Physics will be able to:

- **Original research:** formulate and pursue significant, original research questions in health physics and generate new knowledge that contributes to the field.
- **Problem solving:** analyze broadly defined technical and scientific problems in health physics and formulate solutions by applying advanced principles of mathematics, science, and engineering.
- **Design:** design a system, process, procedure, or program that meets specified health physics needs and constraints.

- **Experimentation and analysis:** design studies, analyze and interpret data from experiments or hypothesis tests, and use scientific judgment to draw valid conclusions.
- **Communication:** communicate technical information effectively to both specialist and non-specialist audiences in written and oral form, including peer-reviewed publication.
- **Professional and ethical responsibility:** evaluate the ethical, professional, and societal implications of health physics solutions in global, economic, and environmental contexts.
- **Leadership and mentorship:** contribute to and lead teams by setting goals, planning tasks, meeting deadlines, and analyzing risk and uncertainty.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- **Professionalism.** Graduates will employ responsible teamwork, clear communication, effective project management, professional attitudes, and a clear understanding of the ethical issues faced by the profession. They will engage in life-long learning and professional development, as demonstrated by participation in technical seminars, professional conferences and symposia, discipline-specific trainings, and advancement in the professional certification process.
- **Problem solving.** Graduates will integrate technical knowledge, applied skills, and professional judgment to design and evaluate radiological systems considering safety, reliability, security, economics, and societal impact.
- **Community.** Graduates will contribute to the growth of their professional and scientific field, provide for their own development, and contribute to the development of their colleagues while engaging the radiation safety community inclusively and equitably.
- **Breadth.** Graduates will employ broad technical knowledge to identify, formulate, analyze, and solve radiological problems, coupled with a continuing awareness of contemporary issues, influences, and trends needed to understand the impact of radiological issues in global and societal contexts.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Multiple options for board certification are relevant to health physics. Two are discussed below; additional options are discussed during program courses. Certification is relevant to the doctoral qualifying examination for students entering with an MS in Health Physics (see the Doctoral Milestones section).

CERTIFIED HEALTH PHYSICIST (CHP)

Certification in health physics requires passing the Certified Health Physicist (CHP) examination. The exam has two parts and is administered by the [American Board of Health Physics \(ABHP\)](#).

CERTIFICATE IN MEDICAL HEALTH PHYSICS

The [American Board of Medical Physics \(ABMP\)](#) certifies physicists and related scientists to practice clinical medical physics and to perform research on human subjects. More information is available on [the ABMP website](#).

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

UAB Health Physics admissions requirements can be found on [the Health Physics webpage](#).

ENTRY PATHWAYS

Doctoral students enter the program through one of two pathways. The pathway determines the timing and, in some cases, the format of the qualifying examination:

- **Pathway A — Direct entry (without an MS in Health Physics):** students progress through a qualifying examination at the end of their first spring or summer semester, a preliminary (comprehensive) examination during spring or summer of their second year, and the dissertation defense in year 3 or 4, depending on the pace of research. Students who fail the qualifying or preliminary exams may be considered for the MS in Health Physics at the discretion of the Program Director.
- **Pathway B — Entry with an MS in Health Physics:** students complete the qualifying examination in the first semester, the preliminary examination at the end of the first academic year (spring or summer of year 1), and the dissertation defense at the end of the second or third year, depending on pace. Failure to satisfactorily complete either the qualifying or preliminary exams will result in removal from the program.

Full details for each pathway are provided in the Doctoral Milestones section.

DEFERRAL POLICY

Once accepted into the program, students may defer their admission for up to one year (e.g., a student accepted for Fall 2026 may defer to Fall 2027) under exceptional circumstances. All deferrals are subject to approval by the Program Director.

TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY

Transfer of graduate credit is subject to UAB Graduate School policy and the discretion of the Program Director. Students should discuss any anticipated transfer credit with the Program Director during admission and plan-of-study development.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

The Health Physics Program follows [the UAB Graduate School enrollment requirements](#).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE, RE-ENTRY, AND WITHDRAWAL

The Health Physics Program follows [the UAB Graduate School enrollment requirements](#).

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Each candidate for the doctoral degree must signify the intention to complete the requirements by a particular graduation date by completing the online application for the degree in the graduation planning system. Because this form is used to check completion of requirements,

order the diploma, and enter the student in the commencement program, [the online form must be completed by the published deadline](#).

When in doubt, refer to the UAB webpages on [Completion of a Degree](#) and [Your Thesis and Dissertation](#) for current deadlines, committee resources, defense information, templates, and checklists. This is your only official source for those requirements. The information in this handbook is intended to provide guidance, but the UAB webpages contain the up-to-date requirements and deadlines that must be followed and met to graduate.

CURRICULUM AND PLAN OF STUDY

A personalized plan of study is created for each student to ensure career goals and scheduling requirements are met. The doctoral curriculum builds on the core health physics coursework of the MS and emphasizes advanced study, research methods, and dissertation research.

Students moving toward candidacy register for pre-dissertation research (MHP 798) and, upon admission to candidacy, for dissertation research (MHP 799). The minimum number of credits required for the doctoral degree is 75.

DOCTORAL MILESTONES: QUALIFYING, PRELIMINARY, AND DISSERTATION EXAMINATIONS

Progress toward the PhD is marked by three examinations: the qualifying examination, the preliminary (comprehensive) examination, and the dissertation defense. The timing of these milestones depends on the student's entry pathway. Below is a summary of the sequence; the sections that follow give the full requirements for each pathway.

Qualifying Examination

- Pathway A – Direct entry without MS in Health Physics:
 - End of spring / early summer, Year 1
- Pathway B – Entry with MS in Health Physics:
 - First semester

Preliminary (Comprehensive) Examination

- Pathway A – Direct entry without MS in Health Physics:
 - End of spring / early summer, Year 2
- Pathway B – Entry with MS in Health Physics:
 - End of first academic year

Dissertation Defense

- Pathway A – Direct entry without MS in Health Physics:
 - Year 3 or 4, pace dependent
- Pathway B – Entry with MS in Health Physics:
 - End of Year 2 or 3, pace dependent

PATHWAY A — DIRECT ENTRY (NO MS IN HEALTH PHYSICS)

YEAR 1 — QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

The qualifying examination is taken at the end of the spring semester or in early summer of Year 1.

Outcomes (committee vote)

- **Pass** — the student continues with dissertation research.
- **Conditional pass** — the student completes an oral examination with a minimum of two PhD-holding faculty.
- **Fail** — the student may be considered for the MS in Health Physics at the discretion of the Program Director.

YEAR 2 — PRELIMINARY (COMPREHENSIVE) EXAMINATION

The preliminary examination, also called the comprehensive examination, is administered over three consecutive weeks and is built around the student's dissertation proposal. The dissertation proposal is a focused literature search establishing the basis and methods for the proposed research. The timeline of the preliminary exam is generally as follows:

- **Week 1, Proposal submitted to committee:** the committee reviews the proposal and prepares questions. Each committee member provides questions to the committee chair. Questions are long-form, require independent research, and call for a written response with proper citations.
- **Week 2, Written examination by each committee member:** one day is allotted per committee member, Monday through Friday. The student has 8 hours to research each set of questions and return the written response to the chair.
 - **Note for Remote students: you are expected to be fully available throughout this week.**
 - This portion tests the student's ability to research and does not necessarily require a complete response. If a student runs out of time, an answer may conclude with a statement such as "I'm out of time, but here is where I would go from here," demonstrating the ability to think critically.
 - Questions are unique to each student's proposal.
 - Completion of the written preliminary examination is required before applying for admission to candidacy through the Graduate School and moving from MHP 798 to MHP 799.
- **Week 3, Proposal defense and oral examination:** the student presents the proposal and defends it before the committee. This is a 2-hr exam, wherein the first hour is open to the public and the second hour is solely for the committee.

Outcomes (committee vote)

- **Pass** — a majority of the committee votes to advance the student to candidacy.
- If more than one committee member dissents, the dissenting members must provide written feedback to the student. The student then has one week to prepare a response, followed by a second oral examination before the entire committee.

- **Fail** — if more than one dissent is not resolved, the student may be considered for the MS in Health Physics at the discretion of the Program Director.

YEAR 3 — DISSERTATION DEFENSE

- The dissertation document is submitted to the committee no later than three weeks before the defense.
- The dissertation comprises a minimum of three papers:
 - one published;
 - one accepted;
 - one submitted.
- The student is expected to be first author on each paper unless extenuating circumstances apply (subject to Chair approval).
- **Oral presentation (2 hours):** one-hour public presentation and one hour of closed-door examination with the committee.

Defense outcomes are determined by committee vote. See UAB's [doctoral degree requirements](#) for the governing procedures.

PATHWAY B — ENTRY WITH AN MS IN HEALTH PHYSICS

Students entering with an MS in Health Physics follow the same preliminary examination and dissertation defense process as Pathway A, with the timing and qualifying-examination format described below.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (FIRST SEMESTER)

- The qualifying examination is administered in the first semester in the style of the ABHP CHP Part 1 examination and is drawn from a question bank posted in Canvas.
- The entire question bank is assigned at the start of the semester, and the exam is scheduled for the midpoint of the first semester.
- **Waivers and timeout:** the qualifying examination is waived for students who have passed CHP Part 1, and for students holding active CHP certification. For students who have not passed CHP Part 2, the same seven-year timeout that applies to CHP Part 1 applies here.

Outcomes

- **Pass** — greater than 63% (consistent with ABHP).
- **Fail** — the student researches the missed topics and presents to a minimum of two HP faculty. The two faculty vote on the student's continuation in the PhD; unanimous approval is required to continue.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

The preliminary examination follows the same process described for Pathway A. It is completed at the end of the first academic year, depending on the student's pace.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The dissertation defense follows the same process described for Pathway A, including the three-paper dissertation standard and the first-author expectation. It is completed at the end of the second or third year, depending on the student's pace.

DISSERTATION RESEARCH

The dissertation is the central scholarly product of the doctoral degree. This section describes the process and standards for selecting a topic, forming a committee, conducting research, and producing the dissertation document. Each student completes a personalized timeline early in the program to ensure timely progress toward the milestones described above. The timeline is a living document and should be consulted and updated regularly by the student in collaboration with the advisor and Program Director.

SELECTING A RESEARCH TOPIC

All dissertation topics must be approved by the Program Director or the student's Committee Chair. Students are encouraged to select topics of significant personal and professional interest with the potential to generate original, publishable contributions to the field. All projects that require human data collection or patient participation must be approved by the IRB (see below); for animal work, see the [IACUC website](#).

Students identify an area of interest early in the program. Faculty meet with students to discuss sources of inspiration, which may include the student's own experience, questions arising from a literature review, faculty-proposed ideas, or areas relevant to future career pursuits. Opportunities outside UAB, such as Department of Energy laboratory programs, may also be available; students interested in outside research should notify the Program Director or their Committee Chair.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Each student must conduct a preliminary literature search to determine whether sufficient and current information is available to complete the type of study under consideration. The information must be current and of sufficient quality and quantity to support work of doctoral scientific rigor. The literature review is a required part of the dissertation and, for the preliminary examination, forms the basis of the dissertation proposal.

The goals of the literature review are to enable students to explain the history of the issue, compare and describe relevant publications and existing perspectives, and describe the evolution of and need for their project and its potential to contribute to the field. A strong literature review typically has a minimum of 50 references, with additional references used throughout the dissertation. The literature review process continues throughout the project. Tip: When you find a particularly relevant paper, review its reference list to find more work on the topic and to identify key authors in your area.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Orientation and training on library resources is provided during the program, including electronic and paper journal resources at UAB, university databases such as PubMed, and the [Inter-Library Loan \(ILL\)](#) program for obtaining papers free of charge.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The [UAB Academic Integrity Code](#) will be reviewed with students periodically throughout the program. Any act of dishonesty in academic work constitutes academic misconduct and will be reported to the School for appropriate disciplinary action.

The use of AI in research is complex and should be approached with caution. You are responsible for the entirety of your research, your dissertation document, and any results you generate. Appropriate uses of AI will be discussed in program courses. See the [UAB AI Policies and Expectations](#) website for more information.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND ROLES

Doctoral students are required to form a dissertation committee that meets UAB Graduate School requirements for doctoral committees; see [Completion of a Degree](#) for the current composition rules. At least three committee members must be MHP program faculty. Outside faculty are welcome but must be approved by the Graduate School. The student is responsible for forming the committee and for routinely communicating with its members regarding the status of the dissertation. Students should notify the Program Director and their Committee Chair of proposed committee members and provide documentation of their commitment; this can be done via email.

The student schedules committee meetings and is responsible for creating and distributing an agenda in advance and for producing minutes documenting the items discussed using their assigned SharePoint folder. Meetings may be in person or hybrid. It is expected that each committee will meet at least once each semester.

The Committee Chair spearheads efforts with the student, with particular attention to time management and process supervision. Committee members should commit to being involved through to the student's graduation. The Committee Chair also approves any exception to the first-author expectation for the dissertation papers.

STATISTICS

The [Center for Clinical and Translational Science \(CCTS\)](#) at UAB provides statistical support for students whose projects require data collection and analysis. To request help, send a paragraph describing your study to the Program Director, or attend the CCTS drop-in clinic. A statistician may serve as a committee member, including rights to authorship as applicable.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) / INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)

Once the project is defined, [determine whether it requires IRB approval by reviewing the UAB IRB website](#). Students are encouraged to meet with an IRB representative with any questions about their application or plans. The IRB website lists meeting dates and submission deadlines. Students conducting animal work may require [IACUC](#) approval. Students will complete [initial IRB training \(CITI\)](#) as part of their coursework, with further training completed as required for each project.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

The dissertation proposal is the document reviewed at the start of the preliminary examination (see the Doctoral Milestones section). At a minimum, the proposal contains:

- Title of the proposed research;
- Research question(s) and specific aims;
- A literature review with references establishing the basis and anticipated methods for the research;
- A list of committee members;
- A timeline for project completion.

DATA STORAGE

Students will use cloud storage for all project-related materials, including IRB materials, committee meeting agendas and minutes, raw data, and data analysis. Program faculty will create protected folders on UAB's SharePoint and share them with each student. UAB students, faculty, and staff can access cloud storage through their UAB account.

DISSERTATION FORMAT AND MANUSCRIPTS

The dissertation [must follow the UAB Graduate School's dissertation guidelines available on the their website](#). Consistent with the three-paper standard described above, the dissertation is organized around manuscripts prepared for peer-reviewed publication (one published, one accepted, and one submitted at the time of defense), with the student as first author unless the Committee Chair or Program Director approves an exception.

For each manuscript, the student identifies a target journal and follows that journal's guide for authors. General manuscript components include a title page, abstract, background, methods, results, discussion, and references, together with any front matter and appendices required by the Graduate School's dissertation template. According to research standards, students are expected to retain their data for five years after the date of publication, unless the work is grant-funded, in which case the sponsor's requirements supersede this.

WRITING SKILLS

Doctoral work places heavy emphasis on professional writing and organization. Students who wish to strengthen their writing are encouraged to use the UAB University Writing Center. Feedback on writing is provided throughout the program, but the dissertation is not intended to provide basic instruction in grammar and sentence structure.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching and the communication of technical information are important components of doctoral training. All PhD students are expected to gain supervised teaching experience during the program. Each student must prepare and deliver lectures on health physics topics within courses for which the student has previously earned credit or has otherwise demonstrated appropriate subject-matter expertise. Students should expect to lecture on at least three occasions during the doctoral program.

Teaching assignments will be coordinated with the Program Director and the course instructor and may be completed in an in-person, hybrid, or synchronous online course. The course instructor will approve the topic and instructional materials in advance, observe or review the student's teaching, and provide feedback. These experiences are intended to develop the student's ability to organize technical material, explain complex concepts, respond to questions, and communicate effectively with learners.

SUBMITTING THE FINAL PRODUCT

Refer to the [Completion of a Degree](#) and [Your Thesis and Dissertation](#) webpages for details on doctoral submission requirements, forms, and deadlines. Report the time, date, and location of the defense to the Graduate School via the required online forms and submit them by the published deadline. The public portion of the defense must be appropriately announced on campus and open to all interested parties. Upon completion of all requirements and any revisions, and assuming the student is otherwise in good academic standing, the candidate is recommended for the doctoral degree to the Dean of the Graduate School.

ADVISING AND MENTORING

The Program Director and faculty members are available to discuss the needs and concerns of doctoral students. Students will meet with the Program Director at a minimum of one time per semester. An official exit interview at the completion of the program is required.

ADVISOR/MENTOR ASSIGNMENT

Students explore the various sectors of health physics early in the program, meeting faculty and learning their areas of expertise and research interests. Students are matched with a primary faculty advisor who will serve as Committee Chair; this may change depending on student and faculty research interests and faculty workload.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE ADVISOR

- Meet with your students on a regular basis (scheduling is the student's responsibility).
- Listen to their concerns, particularly regarding program issues, coursework, and dissertation research.
- Maintain a professional relationship with your students and treat all students equitably.
- Meet with students regularly and work with students conducting laboratory-based research to arrange at least two in-person advising meetings during each academic year of active dissertation research.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENT

- Schedule and meet with your advisor on a regular basis, typically biweekly unless otherwise agreed in writing.
- Keep your advisor informed of your academic performance and any potential problems.
- Keep your advisor informed of your dissertation research progress.

In-person research advising: Students conducting laboratory-based research, whether they are enrolled remotely or in person and whether the research is conducted at UAB or another approved location, are expected to meet face-to-face with their research advisor regularly throughout the research phase of the program. At a minimum, students must participate in two in-person meetings with their research advisor during each academic year in which they are actively conducting dissertation research. These meetings do not have to occur at UAB and may take place at an approved research site, professional meeting, or another mutually agreed-upon location. Students and advisors are responsible for planning these meetings in advance and documenting them in the student's research timeline or advising records. Virtual meetings do not replace this minimum in-person expectation.

Meeting with your committee members should not substitute for communication with the Program Director. If you have a concern about your Committee Chair or a committee member, please speak to the Program Director. A concern about the Program Director may be raised with the Chair of the Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences Department. Students should always feel free to voice concerns through the appropriate channels, escalating from course director to Program Director to Department Chair to the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs, and finally to the [UAB Student Complaint Policy](#) if unresolved.

POLICIES AND STANDARDS

PROGRAM POLICIES

- All students in the program are required to participate in their professional society, the [Health Physics Society \(HPS\)](#). Active participation through attendance at annual meetings, committee membership, and local chapter leadership is highly valuable for learning, networking, and community.
- All students are required to present at the HPS annual meeting (typically held in July) or a similar approved alternative conference, virtually or in person on a case-by-case basis. Limited student funding is available through the HPS.

- Distance students are required to have brief monthly video check-in meetings with each course instructor and their research advisor/Committee Chair.
- All students, online and in person, are required to obtain any background check and drug screening required by the program, no exceptions.
- Students must ask MHP faculty whether they are willing to write a letter of recommendation (LOR) before submitting the faculty member's name to the requesting body. The request must include how many letters are required, where they are going, and when they are due. This applies to all references (job, graduate school, award, etc.). Faculty members are not required to provide LORs.
- Upon matriculation, each student is provided an individual folder on the secure UAB SharePoint site for research notes, abstracts, presentations, the dissertation document, and selected coursework required for program records. Access is limited to the student, program faculty, and the program manager.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

The Health Physics Program follows the UAB Graduate School's policies on academic progress, available on its website. All dismissal decisions are final.

GRADES, ACADEMIC PROBATION, AND DISMISSAL

Refer to individual course syllabi for the relevant grading scale. A student who receives an “F” in any required course while admitted to the program will be dismissed unless there are significant mediating circumstances brought to the Program Director's attention in writing. In extreme circumstances, the student may be suspended rather than dismissed and must wait until the course is next offered to repeat it; re-entry is not guaranteed and is at the discretion of the Program Director. A student who fails a course a second time will be dismissed. The Program Director makes dismissal decisions in writing and follows the SHP Policy for Appeal and Dismissal.

PROFESSIONALISM EXPECTATIONS

All students are expected to read and abide by the HPS [Code of Conduct](#) and the American Academy of Health Physics (AAHP) [Standards of Professional Responsibility for CHPs](#). Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Professors are primarily your mentors, and communications should reflect that relationship. If you have not heard back from a professor within one business day, it is appropriate to email again. Address professors with their appropriate titles and ensure your question is not readily answered by reviewing course materials, talking with fellow students, or a simple search.

LAB AND FIELDWORK SAFETY

Safety requirements for lab work are discussed in the relevant radiation detection and measurement coursework. Students completing fieldwork will receive site-appropriate safety training.

TRAINING AND FACILITY ACCESS

Students conducting research in an MHP lab are required to complete all UAB Environmental Health & Safety and Radiation Safety trainings. These are assigned before the student obtains lab access.

FUNDING AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Admitted students may be eligible to apply for scholarships offered by the School of Health Professions as well as scholarships offered through the HPS. Links to each scholarship and grant are available on the HPS website. All students attending the HPS meeting are expected to apply for the HPS travel grant.

PROFESSIONAL AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in the national [Health Physics Society](#) and the local Alabama Chapter is a mandatory requirement of the program. These societies provide networking, continuing education, and camaraderie throughout your career. You get out of these organizations what you put into them.