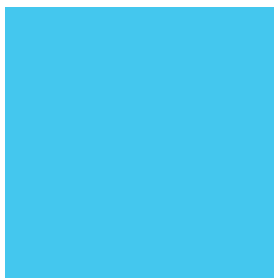


2026-2027 Student Handbook

Department of Occupational Therapy & Department of Physical Therapy

PhD in Rehabilitation Science



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

UAB SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY
DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
PHD IN REHABILITATION SCIENCE
2026-2027 ACADEMIC HANDBOOK



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08/24/2026

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08/24/2026

Date



Mark Merrick, PhD, AT, ATC, FNATA, FNAP, FASAHP
Dean
School of Health Professions

08/24/2026

Date

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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 Profession, 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

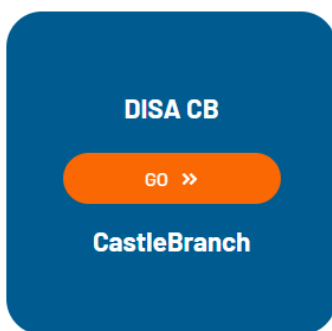
[Disa Healthcare Technology](#) is a secure platform that allows you to order your background check & drug test online. Once you have placed your order, you may use your login to access additional features, including document storage, portfolio builders and reference tools. Disa Healthcare Technology 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 Rehabilitation Science Program Overview

The program will prepare individuals who will advance the field of rehabilitation science through research, teaching, and translation of discoveries into practice. Rehabilitation science is the systematic study of the improvement, restoration and maintenance of function that enables individuals, groups, and communities who have had an illness, injury or who may be at risk for disabling health conditions to achieve the best possible health and health-related outcomes thereby improving their life and wellbeing. Encapsulating science from the level of the cell and body structure to the person, family, group, community and society level, rehabilitation science serves as a foundation and the body of knowledge by which individuals, working with interdisciplinary teams, may develop and evaluate current and emerging approaches to enhancing enablement and minimizing disability. Rehabilitation science extends beyond the boundaries of traditional academic departments and demands interdisciplinary and collaborative partnerships.

The program is designed to prepare graduates to:

- Design and implement research studies that will contribute to the knowledge base of rehabilitation science.
- Contribute to national and international organizations committed to the advancement of rehabilitation practice through translation of innovative research into practice.
- Design and deliver educational courses related to rehabilitation science research
- Graduates will be qualified to work as:
 - Faculty/scholars, scientists and researchers in industry, educational, health care and government institutions
 - Consultants to individuals, communities, governments and global partners
 - Advocates for societal change

Faculty and Staff

The Department of Physical Therapy and Occupation Therapy 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 Department of Physical Therapy website to see their faculty and staff](#) and [Visit the Department of Occupational Therapy website to see their faculty and staff](#).

Program Administration:

[William R. Reed, DC, PhD](#): Program Director (Office: SHPB 379).

[Elisa Lewis](#): Program Administrator (Office: SHPB 381)

Program Requirements

Summary of Steps toward the Doctoral Degree

[All forms are available on the UAB Graduate School website.](#)

Carefully read and take note of all dates/time requirements for departmental and Graduate School forms.

- Admission to doctoral degree program.
- Assignment of faculty advisor (several factors are taken into consideration such as research interests, funding, etc.)
- Maintenance of good academic standing: This is defined by a grade point average of at least a 3.0 and overall satisfactory performance on pass/not pass courses.
- Passing of qualifier exam.
- Appointment of doctoral study committee: A completed Graduate School form is required.
- IRB and or IACUC approval obtained and HIPAA Training.
- Dissertation proposal successfully presented.
- Admission to Candidacy: This must occur no later than two terms before expected graduation. A typed Graduate School form is required. Documentation of a student's IRB/IACUC approval must accompany this form when he/she submits it to the graduate school. Student's name must be on the official IRB/IACUC approval.
- Application for Degree: You must submit your application to the Graduate School no later than three weeks into the expected term of graduation. [Graduate School deadlines are located here.](#)
- Production of dissertation to be submitted for defense.
- Request for dissertation approval forms. This must be done online at least 10 days before the defense date.
- Final defense: The final defense must take place no later than 30 days before the Expected date of graduation. [See this website for defense guidance.](#)
- A single PDF of the defended, committee-approved dissertation must be submitted to the UAB/ProQuest website no later than 2 weeks (10 business days) following the public defense. See this [See this website for dissertation guidance.](#)
- *Conferring of degree will occur if there are not any financial holds.* If there are then the **Diploma and Transcript cannot be released to the student.**

Comprehensive Qualifier Examination

A four-part, written and oral comprehensive examination is required of all candidates for the Ph.D. degree. Part I examines the broad content areas introduced in the five core courses (RHB 780, 785, 782, 783, 784). Part II is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate Advanced Teaching/Learning Abilities. Part III is a written research proposal, followed by Part IV, a presentation and oral examination of the contents of the proposal.

The comprehensive exam is offered at the end of the Summer Semester. The exam typically occurs in the student's 1st year, after completing all of the core course requirements, however students who complete the curriculum on a part-time basis or otherwise do not have all course

requirements met by the summer of the 1st year will work with the program director to know when they are eligible to take the exam.

Students will be eligible to take the exam after having completed core course hours. Students who complete the curriculum on a part-time basis or otherwise do not have all core course requirements met will work with the program director to schedule their qualifier exams.

Although the sections of the Part I exam correspond to the five core course topics, examination questions are not limited to content presented in class or assigned during the course. Students should be prepared to demonstrate knowledge that goes beyond coursework and integrates information across the five courses.

The content of the Advanced Teaching/Learning Abilities exam (Part II) is negotiated between students and Rehabilitation Science program faculty members at the direction of the Program Director. Students will decide on a topic relevant to Rehabilitation Science to focus on during a 20-minute Teaching/Learning Session attended by select faculty.

Part III and Part IV consist of both a written element (Part III) and an oral element (Part IV) related to the intended dissertation topic. The written element (Part III) will be a research proposal that will reflect the student's current ideas about his/her dissertation proposal. While this document's ideas should be negotiated in concert with the dissertation advisor, the written portion must be entirely reflective of the student's efforts. The oral element (Part IV) will be a 20 - 30-minute presentation where students explain and defend the key elements of the proposed research (Problem and Background, Theoretical Underpinnings, Specific Aims and Hypotheses, Methods, and Significance).

Overall, the result of the four-part exam will be Unconditional Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail.

All parts must be passed unconditionally before the student can present the dissertation proposal and advance to candidacy. With Conditional Pass, students will be asked to remediate the sections that were below competency level before the exam result can be changed to Unconditional Pass. With a Fail result, students will be asked to retake the entire exam at a later date, not to exceed 6 months from the original date. If, after the first Fail result, the second exam result is also a Fail, the student will be dismissed from the program.

The Dissertation Process

The doctoral dissertation is the capstone of the PhD training. It demonstrates a student's capacity to conceptualize, design, implement and report on data related to a feasible, important, and testable research question. The dissertation should constitute an original contribution to the literature. The dissertation requires the completion of a minimum of 12 hours of dissertation credit. According to UAB Graduate School regulations, students may begin taking dissertation research credit hours after successfully completing required coursework, passing the comprehensive examination, and being admitted to candidacy.

Students must also select a doctoral study committee and chair, receive IRB/IACUC approval for the project, and develop and have approved a dissertation proposal prior to taking dissertation

research credit hours. Part of the IRB/IACUC approval is a departmental review and an annual continuing IRB/IACUC review.

IRB/IACUC approval

If the research involves human or animal subjects, approval from the IRB or IACUC must be documented **before admission to candidacy** can be approved and IRB/IACUC approvals must be kept current until the research is completed.

The Dissertation Committee

The committee should include a minimum of five faculty members:

The committee chair must be from either the Department of Physical Therapy or the Department of Occupational Therapy. If the primary research mentor is not a faculty member of these two departments, an unofficial “co-chair” who is a faculty member of Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy must be named. This person is responsible for ensuring all program requirements are fulfilled throughout the student’s PhD training.

At least one member of the committee must be from outside the Departments of Physical and Occupational Therapy.

All committee members must have a Graduate School Faculty appointment. If they do not, please contact the Program Director for guidance with acquiring ad hoc or adjunct approval.

After selecting a committee, you must submit a Graduate Study Committee Letter form to the Graduate School. **This form must be submitted and approved prior to the proposal meeting.** The [Graduate Study Committee Letter form can be found here](#).

The dissertation committee is best viewed as a group of individuals who have the following characteristics and should be selected on this basis. They should have some expertise in some aspects of the proposed research. They should have a commitment to working with the student to successfully complete the proposed research. This includes being actively involved in discussing the project and providing any suggestions that will improve its design and being available to the student at mutually convenient times to discuss the project and provide assistance. Students should feel free to consult with their committee members at any time during preparation of the proposal, the collecting and analyzing of data, and the preparation of the dissertation. Viewing the dissertation committee as allies who share a commitment to the dissertation project will improve the quality of the experience and avoid unnecessary anxiety about the dissertation process. Individuals with whom the student has a personal relationship or other relationship that may be deemed as a professional conflict of interest should not be part of the committee. If the student is concerned that his or her committee is not functioning as described above, or that an individual on the committee needs to be replaced, then the program director should be informed, and the situation will be investigated.

Proposal, Proposal Defense and Admission to Candidacy

Proposal

After successful completion of the comprehensive examinations, the student must prepare a formal document outlining the proposed dissertation topic. It is recommended that students begin the process by providing potential committee members with a pre-proposal or concept paper of 10-15 pages in length that outlines hypotheses, background and significance (briefly), methods, timeline and concerns and questions. Sometimes a pre-proposal meeting of committee members is held.

The student should consult with his/her mentor about the scope of research in their area that would constitute a dissertation project. In general, the dissertation research should answer one or more substantive questions. In the dissertation, the student demonstrates his or her status as an expert in their field. Thus, in addition to reporting the results of experiments conducted, the general introduction and general discussion are important aspects of the dissertation. The research should be novel, innovative, and substantively add to the existing body of knowledge. While the student is expected to work closely with the mentor and committee to develop the dissertation ideas, the work should be the student's. If a student is funded on a mentor's grant, students are permitted to extend the funded research in a novel way that they can demonstrate expertise and ownership above and beyond the research outlined in the funded proposal. Alternately, students can develop their own line of research questions in advisement with the research mentor.

All dissertation proposals and defenses are considered professional presentations, and presenting students should dress accordingly. This includes appropriate business attire, inclusive of clothing, jewelry, and shoes.

The Rehabilitation Science program adheres to a 3-paper dissertation model. The formal dissertation proposal document will typically include an introduction that includes the specific aims, hypotheses, literature review and significance, and ties each of the three proposed papers together in a cohesive body. Following the introduction section, a detailed plan should be presented for each paper including study design, power analysis, analytical methods, strengths and limitations. Each planned paper must be developed so that they can be publishable as stand-alone papers. **Papers must be based on work initiated after admission to the program.**

This document is submitted to the doctoral dissertation committee **at least 14 business days prior** to the scheduled proposal presentation. The proposal should not be given to other committee members until the committee chair has given approval for the distribution.

The student is responsible for scheduling the oral proposal presentation meeting and notifying committee members. The oral proposal presentation should be attended by all members of the doctoral study committee. After the proposal, members of the doctoral committee decide in a closed session whether or not the student has presented an acceptable proposal and should be advanced to candidacy at that time.

- If the student is advanced to candidacy, the committee will complete the *Application for Admission to Candidacy* form. This form is submitted by the student to the Graduate School along with documentation of IRB/IACUC approval for the proposed research.
- The committee may request revisions before allowing the student to advance to candidacy. This will be negotiated between the committee chair and members of the committee. Revisions of the written proposal and/or an additional oral defense may be required. The Application for Admission to Candidacy form will not be completed/submitted until all committee members have agreed on revisions.

Admission to candidacy must take place before the last two regular terms in which you wish to complete the doctoral program. For example, if you wish to graduate at the end of spring semester, you must be admitted to candidacy before the previous fall semester begins. You must be admitted to candidacy before you can register for dissertation research hours (RHB 799). You must be in good academic standing to be admitted to candidacy.

Final Dissertation and Final Defense

Our program requires a 3-paper model for the dissertation. The final dissertation document should include a 1st Chapter which encapsulates the Background and Significance of the dissertation topic, a number of middle chapters that reproduce the publishable, stand-alone manuscripts, and a final chapter which summarizes and synthesizes the major issues that were presented in the manuscripts. **All three papers must be based on work initiated after admission to the program. One paper must be accepted for publication, and the second and third must have been submitted for publication by the time of the dissertation defense.** *

The full final dissertation document should follow the format and guidelines detailed in The Graduate School's *Format Manual for Theses & Dissertations* (available on the Graduate School Website).

Following completion of the proposed research, the full written document is distributed to the Dissertation Committee by the student **at least 2 weeks** prior to public defense. A dissertation committee meeting should be held at a minimum annually in addition to a meeting 1-3 months prior to planned public defense to update the committee on the progress and status of the dissertation project, the written dissertation document, and to solicit committee input in advance of a public defense.

The public defense meeting includes a presentation of the entire project followed by questioning by the committee.

Outcomes of the public defense meeting can include the following:

- **Unconditional Pass:** The committee finds that no revisions are required and unanimously approves the dissertation document and oral presentation. The dissertation defense document must be submitted to the Graduate School within 10 days of the public defense.

- **Pass with minor revisions required:** The committee will make suggestions for minor modifications of the dissertation document that should be implemented prior to the dissertation being submitted to the graduate school. The student must make these minor corrections and obtain approval of the revised document from all committee members within 7 days following the public defense in order to submit the finalized document to the graduate school within 10 days following the public defense.
- **Pass with substantial revisions required:** The committee will make suggestions for substantial modifications of the dissertation document and/or the oral presentation. The student must make these corrections and re-submit the revisions back to the committee members within 7 days after the public defense. If additional time is needed due to the extent of revisions required, the dissertation committee chair will discuss the time needed with program director. It should be recognized that required substantial changes may delay the anticipated graduation, and therefore the importance of having a dissertation committee meeting 1-3 months prior to the anticipated public defense can not be overstated.
- **Fail:** If, in the opinion of more than one member of the dissertation committee, a student failed the final written or oral defense, there is no consensus to pass. The chair of the committee will advise the student that the dissertation fails to meet the requirements of the Graduate School. The chair will notify the student in writing about the reason(s) for failure. If the student resubmits or submits a new dissertation for consideration to the Graduate School, at least two members of the new examining committee must be drawn from the original committee. If the modified or new dissertation fails to meet the requirements of the Graduate School, the student will be dismissed from the Graduate School.

At the public defense, the student will present a departmental seminar and respond to questions from the general audience. It is the student's responsibility to work with the program administrator to schedule the public defense and advertise it. Advertisement of the public defense should be distributed **at least 2 weeks** prior to the date of the defense, unless approved by the program director. Final approval for degree will not be signed until the public defense has been completed.

NOTE: In exceptional circumstances a student can present a case for defending their dissertation with three papers submitted, rather than 1 accepted and 2 submitted. The reasons why one was not accepted and a plan for continued submission attempts can be presented to the Program Director, who will make a decision on whether the student can defend the dissertation.

Credit Hours and Curriculum Outline

Major Credit Hours

Major courses: 33 credit hours that are as follows:

- RHB 780 Topics in Rehabilitation Science I: 3 credits
- RHB 785 Topics in Rehabilitation Science II: 3 credits
- RHB 782 Topics in Rehabilitation Science III: 3 credits
- RHB 783 Research Design and Measurement in Rehabilitation Science I: 3 credits
- RHB 784 Research Design and Measurement in Rehabilitation Science II: 3 credits
- RHB 789 Rehabilitation Science Seminar: 1 credit offered 6 separate terms for a total of 6 credits
- RHB 795 Rehabilitation Science Research Proposal: 3 credits
- GRD 717 Principles of Scientific Integrity: 3 credits
- EPR 609 Biostatistics or equivalent: 3 credits
- EPR 710 Biostatistics or equivalent: 3 credits

[Visit the UAB Catalog website for descriptions.](#)

Electives Credits

18 – 24 credit hours that are determined in conjunction with the graduate committee based on the student's academic background, courses taken in a focus area, and proposed dissertation question. Courses are specifically selected to develop the expertise needed to complete the dissertation requirements. See Appendix A for examples of elective courses for all areas.

There are four types of electives: concentration electives, academic teaching or writing electives, research methods, and statistical analysis. All electives should be directly relevant to the student's dissertation and/or field of expertise. The maximum number of elective credit hours is 24, thus students should be selective concerning their elective courses, and focus any additional credit hour effort toward completing their RHB 798 or RHB 799 requirements.

Examples of Electives

Concentration Electives: These are programmatic electives or content area electives of interest.

- HRP 705: Teaching in Health Professions (3 credits)
- RHB 795: Rehabilitation Science Research Proposal (3 credits)
- RHB 781: Principles of Rehabilitation Science Exercise Science (3 credits)

Research Methods Electives: These are electives in a specific research methodology or study design areas of interest.

- NRM 773 Qualitative Research Methods (4 credits)
- BME 512 Biomechanical Measurement (3 credits)
- HCO 787 Empirical Methods for Health Research (3 credits)
- HCO 692 Advanced Topics in Health Disparities Research (3 credits)

Academic Writing Electives: These are electives that focus on developing writing skills for scientific publications and/or grant preparation.

- GRD 727: Writing and Reviewing Research (3 credits)
- GRD 728: Professional Writing and Publishing (3 credits)

- GRD 729: Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks (3 credits)
- GRD 723: Writing Research for Academic Audiences (3 credits)

Statistical Methodology Electives: These are electives in a specific statistical or data analysis methodology.

- HCO 721 Clinical Decision Making and Cost Effectiveness Analysis (3 credits)
- EPI 710 The Analysis of Case Control Studies (3 credits)
- BST 623 General Linear Models (3 credits)
- BST 665 - Survival Analysis (3 credits)

Credit Hours for Dissertation

21-24 hours of credits in the following courses:

- RHB 798: Non-Thesis Research: 9 credits (minimum of 9 total credit hours over at least 2 semesters)
- RHB 799: Thesis Research: 12 credits (minimum of 12 total credit hours over at least 2 semesters)

Total program credit hours: 72

Curriculum Outline

[Visit the UAB Catalog website for course names and descriptions.](#)

Year 1. Semester 1 – Fall

- RHB 780, 3 credit hours.
- RHB 783, 3 credit hours.
- RHB 789, 1 credit hour.
- HRP 705, 3 credit hours.
- EPR 608 or 710, 3 credit hours.

Year 1. Semester 2 – Spring

- RHB 785, 3 credit hours.
- RHB 784, 3 credit hours.
- RHB 789, 1 credit hour.
- RHB 795, 3 credit hours.
- RHB 798, 3 credit hours.

Year 1. Semester 3 – Summer

- RHB 782, 3 credit hours.
- RHB 789, 1 credit hour.
- RHB 798, 3 credit hours.
- GRD 717, 3 credit hours.
- Qualifier Examination Parts I and II

Year 2. Semester 4 – Fall

- RHB 798, 3 credit hours.

- EPR 609 or 711, 3 credit hours.
- RHB 789, 1 credit hour.
- Electives, 3 credit hours

Year 2. Semester 5 – Spring

- RHB 789, 1 credit hour.
- Electives, 6 credit hours.
- RHB 798, 3 credit hours.

Year 2. Semester 6 – Summer

- RHB 799, 3 credit hours.
- RHB 746, 1 credit hour.
- RHB 789, 1 credit hour.
- Electives, 6 credit hours.

Year 3. Semester 7 – Fall

- RHB 799, 6-9 credit hours.

Year 3. Semester 8 – Spring

- RHB 799, 6-9 credit hours.

Year 3. Semester 9 – Summer

- RHB 799, 6-9 credit hours.

Year 4. Semester 10 – Fall

- RHB 799, 6-9 credit hours.

Year 4. Semester 11 – Spring

- RHB 799, 6-9 credit hours.
- Dissertation Defense

Mentoring

PhD training in the UAB Rehabilitation Science Program relies heavily on a mentoring relationship between the PhD student and one or more members of the faculty who share a research interest. Both the mentor and PhD student will have expectations of each other, and it is important to try to assure that there is a shared understanding of those expectations. The Mentoring Agreement (see below) lays out some common commitments that we expect faculty mentors and PhD students to make to each other. It is a fluid document; that is, we expect some changes as students progress through the program. Students and mentors should review and update this agreement annually, and it should form the basis of the annual student evaluation.

Mentor/Mentee Agreement

The following agreement will be signed and dated by the Mentor and Mentee on a separate form:

PhD training in the UAB Rehabilitation Science Program relies heavily on a mentoring relationship between the PhD student and one or more members of the faculty who share a research interest. Both the mentor and PhD student will have expectations of each other, and it is important to try to assure that there is a shared understanding of those expectations. This document lays out some common commitments that we expect faculty mentors and PhD students to make to each other. It is a fluid document; that is, we expect some changes as students progress through the program. Students and mentors should review and update this agreement annually, and it should form the basis of the annual student evaluation. Please see below for an example:

Commitment of the PhD student

- I recognize that it is my responsibility to identify a focus for my research. My mentors will provide guidance and help me get clarity; but I recognize that if I am to have a satisfying research career, I must choose a focus driven by my own passions and interests.
- I will be an engaged and active participant in a research group throughout my doctoral training.
- I recognize that I have the primary responsibility for the development of my own career and commitment to “lifelong learning.” I will stay abreast of the latest developments in my area of research through reading the literature, regular attendance at relevant seminars, and attendance at scientific meetings. I will actively seek out opportunities outside of the classroom (e.g., professional development seminars and workshops in scientific writing, preparation of grant proposals, oral communication skills, teaching, etc....) to help meet my learning goals.
- I will develop a timeline to achieve my educational and research goals (including benchmarks noted in the PhD Program Requirements Checklist) and will review it with my mentors at least annually.
- I will be honest and respect all ethical standards when I conduct my research and engage in scholarly activity. This includes compliance with all institutional and federal regulations for human subjects’ research as well as (responsibility for copyright, permissions, plagiarism).
- I will strive to be increasingly independent in my training activities including writing for publication, designing and conducting research, mentoring undergraduate and less experienced doctoral students, etc.
- I will seek regular feedback on my performance, including any challenges that I am facing, through open and timely discussions with my mentors.
- I will be responsive to advice and constructive criticism. I acknowledge that the feedback I get is intended to improve my scientific work.
- I will be knowledgeable of the policies, deadlines, and requirements of the PhD program, the graduate school and the university.

Commitment of Mentors

- I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to facilitate the training and professional development of the PhD student. I will work with the PhD student and co-mentors to develop a program plan that best prepares the student to achieve his / her training and career goals.
- I will use personal abilities as well as the assistance of other faculty and department resources to assure that the PhD student has sufficient opportunity to become an expert in the agreed upon area of research.
- I will encourage PhD student interaction with fellow scientists and encourage his / her attendance at professional meetings to network and present research findings.
- I will maintain a relationship with the PhD student that is based on trust and mutual respect. I acknowledge that open communication and periodic formal performance reviews will help ensure that the expectations of both parties are met.
- I will encourage a progressive level of independence and increased responsibility as the PhD student progresses, to facilitate the student's transition to an independent researcher.
- I will promote all ethical standards for conducting research and engaging in scholarly activity. This includes compliance with all institutional and federal regulations for human subjects' research as well as (responsibility for copyright, permissions, plagiarism). I will clearly define expectations for conduct of research within my team and make myself available to discuss ethical concerns as they arise.
- I will commit to being a supportive colleague as the PhD graduate transitions to the next stage in his/her career and, to the extent possible, throughout their professional life. I recognize that the role of a mentor continues after formal training ends.

Complete the following questions/items to develop your mentoring plan for the coming year.

Review the key aspects of the PhD Program Requirements Checklist, including course requirements and progress toward dissertation milestones. List goals for the year here. Goals should include, but are not limited to, course completion, dissertation preparation, publications and presentations. (Add additional lines as needed). Goals should be specific and measurable.

List Coursework/Curriculum Goals below:

List Research/Dissertation Goals below:

List Goals for Program Milestones (Qualifier Exams, Proposal, Defense) below:

List anticipated Dissertation Defense in Semester/Year format below:

Indicate the frequency of meetings you plan for this year. For students early in their program, meeting less often may be appropriate. As the student moves toward independent research, more frequent meetings are important.

- Weekly
- B-monthly
- Monthly
- Other (describe):

List the person responsible for scheduling meetings in the following space:

List the method for meetings (e.g. – 1:1, phone, zoom, etc.) in the following space:

To make effective use of time, plan your meetings. The mentee should provide the following prior to each meeting. Agree on what will best serve the two of you.

- Agenda for meeting
- Narrative of each topic to be discussed (as needed)
- Updated Resume/CV (with highlight of new additions)
- Draft of dissertation, thesis, capstone, manuscript (chapter, proposal, etc) provided at least 2 weeks prior to meeting. Conference abstracts may be on a more compressed timeline.
- Other (explain):

Please review and discuss the expectations for this mentoring relationship in the space below. Include the responsibilities of the mentor and the responsibilities of the mentee. Note any additional expectations or key areas of focus for the coming year below.

Your signature serves as your acknowledgement of program expectations of mentors and mentees, and your agreement to the terms decided on for this mentor/mentee agreement.

Professionalism Expectations and Other Requirements for Advanced Level PhD Students

Annual Student Review

Students must complete a progress report in the summer of each year that encompasses all aspects of their training and research for the previous year. These reports will include project progress, data presentations, conference attendance, manuscript publication, and class performance. The student will review the progress report with his/her mentor during the early summer each year. Once the student and mentor have agreed on progress and established goals for the coming year, the report and mentoring agreement for the upcoming year will be given to the program director (PD). The program director will arrange a meeting with the student and mentor before the end of the summer semester to review progress from the previous year as well as key milestones for the upcoming year. Each meeting will also include the report(s) and milestones from all previous years in the program, as well as the Program Requirements Checklist, to determine cumulative progress in the program.

All students will undergo a formal review at least annually, unless a more frequent review is required by the student's funding source or program leadership.

Annual Student Review Process:

- Student completes PhD student Annual Progress Report and his/her portion of mentoring agreement for upcoming year (all forms found in Appendix B).
- Student schedules meeting with mentor (if committee includes a co-chair, both must be present at the review). This should happen in early summer.
- During student/mentor meeting, agree on progress updates, complete mentoring agreement for upcoming year, and make sure Program Requirement Checklist is up to date.
- Student schedules meeting with PD to review progress report and mentoring agreement. This should happen before the end of the summer semester (mentor may be asked to participate in progress report meeting). Once signed, student submits the original with signatures to program administrator and sends electronic copies with signatures to PD and mentor(s).

Required Attendance at Rehabilitation Science Seminar Speaker Series

As a PhD student at UAB, you will have many opportunities to attend scientific presentations that will enhance your learning experience. One such experience is the Rehabilitation Science Seminar Series. **During your tenure as a doctoral student in the program, you are required to attend any, and all, scheduled Rehabilitation Science Seminar Speaker events.** We announce these events in advance and you will receive an Outlook invitation to attend. Failure to attend events without prior notification to the program director may result in a non-academic misconduct violation.

Required Attendance at all Public Rehabilitation Science PhD Dissertation Presentations

Attendance is required at all public defenses associated with the PhD in Rehabilitation Science Program. The public dissertation defense is the culmination of the doctoral student's experience at UAB. This major event is an important opportunity for all students to demonstrate solidarity and community with each other, as well as a valuable learning experience for students to prepare for their own future presentations.

Required Notification of International Travel

All students in the PhD Rehabilitation Science Program must notify the Program Director of any planned international travel providing anticipated departure and return dates (including trips back home to visit family, if one is an international student). Students must also communicate with their Course Directors if any classes are missed and successfully complete any missed assignments.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

All RHB students must inform themselves of UAB graduate school policy on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in writing their dissertation proposal or dissertation document.

[UAB graduate school AI guidelines can be found on their Resources & Links webpage.](#)