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I. INTRODUCTION

The John D. Bower School of Population Health (SOPH) Student Handbook provides information about student-related policies and procedures. However, the Student Handbook should not be considered a complete reference. In addition to the Student Handbook, students should become familiar with the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) Bulletin, which contains information applicable to all UMMC students and information about John D. Bower School of Population Health academic programs. Policies, procedures, and guidelines related to specific academic programs may be obtained from the Program Director of each program. Also, students should become familiar with the SOPH website, which includes information about the SOPH, departments, and programs. Collectively, these publications, policies, and procedures outline the steps required to apply, gain admission, and successfully earn a degree in the SOPH. The Student Handbook presents information, which at the time of publication, accurately describes student-related policies and procedures. The Student Handbook is updated annually. The Student Handbook is neither a contract nor an offer to contract. All statements in this publication are statements of present policies only and are subject to change at any time by proper authority to be effective whenever determined by the SOPH. Changing any provision, offering, or requirement may occur within a student’s period of study.

a. History

The John D. Bower School of Population Health at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson was established in 2016 by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

b. Mission

The mission of the John D. Bower School of Population Health is to educate and train leaders prepared to transform health care delivery and the health of Mississipians through the development of an innovative academic infrastructure uniquely designed to educate future population health scientists and clinical professionals to conduct pioneering population-based research and provide high quality, value-driven patient-centered care delivered in an increasingly complex health care delivery system.

c. Vision

The John D. Bower School of Population Health is protecting populations by addressing the multiple determinants of health.

d. Programs

The John D. Bower School of Population Health offers programs leading to Executive Master of Science (MS), Master of Science (MS), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees. A listing of graduate degree programs offered at the Medical Center follows.

   i. Executive Master of Science Degree Program
      Executive Master of Science in Population Health Management

   ii. Master of Science Degree Programs
      Master of Science in Biostatistics and Data Science
      Master of Science in Population Health Science

   iii. Doctor of Philosophy Degree Programs
      Doctor of Philosophy in Biostatistics and Data Science
      Doctor of Philosophy in Population Health Science
II. ADMISSIONS

a. Admissions Policy and Procedure
   Admission to UMMC is administered under policies established by state law, the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, and the Medical Center’s faculty. Admission requirements are subject to change. More information regarding SOPH admissions policies and procedures may be found in the SOPH Admission Policy.

b. Orientation
   SOPH students must complete UMMC general orientation and the SOPH specific orientation prior to their first semester course registration.

c. Enrollment
   Once students are accepted into a program, they must be continuously enrolled in classes until the degree is completed or they have been granted a leave of absence as outlined in the SOPH Enrollment Policy.

d. Registration
   Registration for classes is not permitted unless an applicant has received official notification of acceptance into a specific SOPH academic program. Registration for courses must be approved by the program director and academic advisor. No credit is given for any course for which a student is not officially registered. Students and academic advisors must complete the required Registration Approval Form. More information about the registration fee may be found in the SOPH Registration Fee Policy.

e. Course Load and Fees
   Current tuition and fees can be found on the Estimated Cost of Attendance and Tuition webpage. Tuition is subject to change pending information from the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL). A full-time course load in the SOPH is outlined in the SOPH Course Load Policy.

f. Required Laptops
   Students are required to have a laptop computer that meets the minimum requirements for both PC and Mac computers. Students should purchase a laptop meeting or exceeding these requirements from regular retail channels. Students are personally responsible for maintenance/repair of their laptop. All students are required to maintain up-to-date virus and spyware detection software to allow access to the UMMC public wireless network. Students should acquire their laptops prior to orientation. Specific departments or academic degree programs may have additional requirements for computers and/or software.

III. DEGREE PROGRAMS AND EXPECTATIONS
   It is the responsibility of the student to ascertain the requirements for the degree program in which they are enrolled. Students can obtain this information from the UMMC Bulletin, website, program director, their advisor, or the Office of the Dean, SOPH.
a. Degree Programs and Degree Requirements

The following is a synopsis of the basic requirements for the degrees of Master of Science (MS) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Specific questions pertaining to these requirements can be answered by the program director in which the student is enrolled and the Office of the Dean of the SOPH.

i. Master of Science (MS) Degree

The SOPH offers Master of Science degrees in Biostatistics and Data Science, Population Health Science, and an Executive Master of Science degree in Population Health Management.

Master of Science Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): A student who completes a master’s degree should:

- demonstrate mastery of a body of knowledge in the discipline; the level of the material and/or the extent of mastery must be above that for the baccalaureate degree,
- use and/or understand the basic methodologies of the discipline
- retrieve, evaluate, and utilize information relevant to the discipline
- communicate, both orally and in writing, in a manner and level of proficiency that is standard for the discipline
- conduct research or produce creative work (for thesis MS)
- function as a professional in the discipline (for non-thesis MS)

Course Work: All MS degrees require a minimum of 30 credit hours and a grade point average (GPA) of 2.8 or higher based on a four (4) point scale.

Time Limit: The time limit for completing all requirements for a MS degree is six (6) years from the date of first registration.

Thesis: Some programs may require a thesis as a requirement for graduation. The thesis should show evidence of original investigation and must be approved by the advisory committee and the SOPH Dean.

Thesis Advisory Committee: An examination and thesis defense are mandatory in programs requiring a thesis. The candidate’s advisory committee conducts the examination. The Nomination of Masters Advisory Committee Form should be submitted to the Office of the Dean for the Dean’s written approval. It is the responsibility of the student to prepare and deliver the completed forms to the appropriate office or individual.

ii. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree

The SOPH offers Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Biostatistics and Data Science and Population Health Science.

Doctor of Philosophy Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): A student who completes a doctoral degree should:

- demonstrate broad and advanced knowledge within the discipline
- successfully use a range of methodologies of the discipline
- independently perform original research
- communicate effectively
- function as a professional in the discipline
Residence Requirements: A minimum of one (1) academic year must be spent in continuous residence as a full-time student at UMMC to qualify for a PhD degree.

Course Work: All doctorate degrees require a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond a baccalaureate degree (or 30 credit hours beyond a master’s degree in the same UMMC SOPH degree program) and a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher based on a four (4) point scale.

Time Limits: Completion of a PhD degree generally requires five (5) to six (6) years, but must take no more than five (5) years following admission to candidacy. University standards mandate that PhD students complete all course requirements and examinations within a period of five (5) years after passing the qualifying exam.

Dissertation Advisory Committee: A written dissertation and oral defense are mandatory in all PhD programs. The dissertation is prepared under the direction of the student’s advisor and must be approved by the candidate’s advisory committee and the Dean of the SOPH. The Nomination of Doctoral Advisory Committee Form should be submitted to the Office of the Dean for approval. It is the responsibility of the student to prepare and deliver the completed forms to the appropriate office or individual.

Qualifying Examination and Admission to Candidacy: An examination to qualify students for admission to candidacy for the PhD degree is administered by each program within the SOPH. The qualifying examination is given to graduate students in good academic standing upon completion of coursework. The composition of the examination (oral, written, comprehensive, or research based) varies from program to program. Information on the specific format used within a program may be obtained from the relevant program director or from the program’s policy manual. Following completion of the qualifying exam with a passing score, the Doctoral Qualifying Exam Form must be submitted to the Office of the Dean. Two (2) weeks after satisfactory completion of the qualifying examination and any additional prerequisites, the student must submit an application for Admission into Doctoral Candidacy Form to the Office of the Dean.

Dissertation Defense: The dissertation defense is conducted by the candidate’s advisory committee and consists of a public presentation and defense of the dissertation in accordance with the SOPH Notice of Public Defense Policy. In private deliberation, the advisory committee determines the acceptability of the defense and dissertation. Further questioning of the candidate may be included in the committee’s deliberations. The dissertation must be submitted to the advisory committee at least 10 days before the examination. Five (5) members of the advisory committee must be present at the final oral examination at which time they sign the Dissertation Defense Form.

b. Academic Expectations
It is the responsibility of each student and his/her advisor to be fully aware of all regulations governing each step of the progression through the MS and PhD programs as outlined below. Each PhD student's academic progress must be evaluated at least semi-annually by the program director, once at the end of the fall semester and again at the end of the spring semester as outlined in the SOPH Student Progression Annual Review Policy.
i. **Good Academic Standing**
   The SOPH Good Academic Standing Policy defines a student in good academic standing as one who is making acceptable progress toward a graduate degree and who is eligible to register for and pursue academic coursework at UMMC for the current semester. Students are expected to remain in good academic standing throughout the entire course of their study.

ii. **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Criteria for Federal Financial Aid and Institutional Scholarship Eligibility**
   All students must remain in good academic standing for purposes of continued financial support, i.e. Dean’s scholarship and federal and state loans per the SOPH Financial Aid Good Academic Standing Policy.

IV. **ACADEMIC POLICIES**
   a. **Transfer of Graduate Credit**
      With the approval of the program director and the Dean of the SOPH, a limited amount of graduate credit earned at another recognized institution may be accepted toward degree requirements at UMMC per the SOPH Transfer of Credit Policy. The Transfer of Course Credit Approval Form can be found on the SOPH website.

   b. **Compliance Training**
      All students and student/employees must receive institutional compliance training in accordance with the institutional compliance training policy and procedure per the SOPH Student Compliance Training Policy.

   c. **Human Research Subjects**
      Individuals working with human subjects must undergo training to ensure confidentiality of human subjects and appropriate treatment of human subjects.

   d. **Mandatory Immunizations**
      All students, including distance education students, regardless of physical presence on the UMMC campus, are required to comply with the Immunization Requirements for UMMC Students Policy.

   e. **Dress Code**
      Students are expected to dress in good taste and to present themselves in a manner appropriate to their profession per the SOPH Dress Code Policy.

   f. **Distance Education**
      Students receiving instruction through distance education shall be provided comparable access to student support services per the SOPH Distance Education Policy. Policies that apply to traditional face-to-face courses also apply to distance education courses.

   g. **International Travel for Non-Citizen Alien Students**
      Non-citizen alien students receiving a stipend will be allowed a maximum of three (3) weeks leave time for international travel per the SOPH International Travel for Non-Citizen Alien Students Policy. The International Student Travel and Leave Request Form must be submitted.

   h. **Grading**
      Grades for academic credit are awarded based on a four (4) point grading scale per the SOPH Grading Policy.
i. **Grade Forgiveness**
   Enrolled students who earn a grade of C or below in a course in the SOPH may retake the course once, according to the [SOPH Grade Forgiveness Policy](#).

j. **Adding or Dropping a Course**
   Classes may be added or dropped until the day specified by the academic calendar and in accordance with the [SOPH Add/Drop Course Policy](#). The [Add/Drop Form](#) must be submitted.

k. **Academic Probation**
   The SOPH monitors student progression and if at any time during an academic year a student is not in good academic standing, the student will be placed on academic probation per the [SOPH Academic Probation Policy](#).

l. **Withdrawal**
   Registration in an academic program makes the student responsible for completion of the course of study unless the student withdraws from the curriculum per the [SOPH Program Withdrawal Policy](#). The [Withdrawal Request Form](#) must be submitted. Any student who fails to remain continuously enrolled in their degree program and does not request an official leave of absence by the last day to register for the semester will be administratively withdrawn from the SOPH per the [UMMC Administrative Withdrawal Policy](#).

m. **Leave of Absence**
   Leave of absence from school for students currently booked may be granted by the Dean or designee per the [SOPH Leave of Absence Policy](#).

n. **Dismissal**
   Students may be dismissed from the SOPH for cause. This may include unsatisfactory academic performance, failure to pass qualifying examinations, poor research performance, breaches of scientific integrity, i.e., plagiarism, falsification of data, etc. or behavioral issues, i.e., harassment per the [SOPH Student Dismissal Policy](#). The [Leave of Absence Request Form](#) must be submitted.

o. **Appeal of Dismissal**
   Students have the right to appeal a dismissal from the SOPH per the [SOPH Appeal of Dismissal Policy](#).

p. **Honor Code**
   Integrity is the foundation of scientific endeavors. Students must be honest and trustworthy in all academic environments, i.e., while participating in courses, while performing research, and while participating in clinical duties according to the [SOPH Honor Code Policy](#).

q. **Exit Survey**
   All students must complete an anonymous online exit survey prior to graduation. The collated results are used to assess program effectiveness.

r. **Graduation and Commencement**
   Degrees earned in a graduate program are awarded at the end of each semester. Formal commencement ceremonies are held once a year at the end of the academic year (May). All graduates are encouraged to participate in commencement exercises. To be eligible for graduation and commencement, a student must complete all degree requirements
and complete an Application for Diploma Form through the MyU portal at the beginning of the semester in which the student expects to graduate per the SOPH Degrees and Commencement Policy.

s. Non-Degree Seeking Students
Before registering for classes, individuals who wish to take graduate course work but are not students in a UMMC academic degree program may apply as non-degree seeking students per the SOPH Non-Degree Seeking Student Policy. The Non-Degree Seeking Enrollment Request Form must be submitted.

V. INFORMATION POLICIES
a. Information Policy
All employees, students, contractors, and other credentialed individuals must comply with the UMMC Information Asset Management Policy to reduce risk by protecting and supporting confidentiality, availability, and integrity of information assets.

b. Social Media
The SOPH utilizes social media. All students in UMMC schools and programs must comply with the UMMC Student Use of Social Media Policy and UMMC Policy and Guidelines for Personal Use of Social Media.

c. Email
Email, electronic mail, services are provided to the UMMC community in support of the missions and administrative functions of the university. Users of the email system are expected to comply with the UMMC Email Policy and UMMC Information Security Management Program Policy. The email system may not be used for illegal or unlawful activities. Email users are expected to use the services in a professional and respectful manner. Email is the official mode of communications, and students receive information from the SOPH via their UMMC email accounts. Therefore, students are expected to check their UMMC e-mail accounts regularly.

VI. FINANCIAL SUPPORT
a. Student Stipends
Students may receive stipends to cover living expenses per the SOPH Stipend Policy.

b. Institutional Scholarships
Students receiving stipends from either the SOPH or an outside source receive tuition scholarships. Dean’s Scholarship: The Dean’s Scholarship is a full-tuition recruitment scholarship, which is awarded to students for outstanding academic achievement. All students on stipends or extramural support are eligible for the Dean’s Scholarship.

c. Loans
Students may also apply for additional funding through various loan mechanisms. Students should contact the Office of Student Financial Aid to determine their eligibility.

VII. STUDENT RESOURCES
a. Associated Student Body (ASB)
The ASB of UMMC serves as the governing body of all students. The SOPH is represented in the ASB by SOPH students chosen annually.

b. Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs
The University of Mississippi Medical Center offers a comprehensive program of student support services through the Division of Academic Affairs, the Office of the Chief Student
Affairs Officer, the individual schools, the Office of Academic Support, Office of Student Financial Aid, the Office of Student Accounting, the Office of Student Records and Registrar, the Student and Employee Health Service and the University Police. The Medical Center believes these services are an important adjunct to the total educational program and essential to the continuing fulfillment of the institution’s purpose.

c. **Office of Academic Support**
The **Office of Academic Support** provides the following support services:

- **Academic Consulting Services.** Academic consultants meet individually with learners and provide assistance with developing the skills and behaviors that are essential to academic success and professional development (e.g., time management, study skills, and testing strategies).

- **The Academic Success Kiosk (ASK).** ASK is an online, self-paced resource. ASK addresses time management, study skills, and professionalism.

- **University Tutoring Services.** University Tutoring Services is a peer tutoring program available to students experiencing academic difficulty. Supportive instruction is provided by peers with similar educational backgrounds.

- **Writing Support Services.** Writing coaches are available to assist students with assigned coursework and papers. The goal is to add value to the educational experience through writing critique and support.

- **Academic Accommodations.** UMMC policy provides for reasonable academic accommodations to be made for students with verified disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis as specified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Students in the School of Pharmacy should apply for academic accommodations through the University of Mississippi, Oxford Campus.

d. **Division of Information Systems**
The **DIS - Help Desk** provides a group of analysts who work to help UMMC users with on-campus computer issues, password resets, Canvas and UMMC Webmail support, and more. Phone: 1 (877) 347-5041 (toll-free); Email: servicedesk@umc.edu

e. **Student and Employee Health**
The **Student Employee Health Department** is responsible for student health and on-the-job employee injuries. Services include nursing care, first aid, and over-the-counter medications. Standard sick call hours are staffed by a nurse practitioner and/or physician. The department manages TB screening, flu vaccinations, and other vaccinations. A Quick Care Clinic is also available to UMMC students and employees.

f. **Student Assistance (LifeSynch)**
UMMC coordinates opportunities for students to receive confidential counseling services for school-related, personal, and family matters through **LifeSynch.** Dependents
and household members may also receive services. Professionals are available to speak with you 24/7 to help address your issues and guide you to appropriate resources.

g. **Student Counseling and Wellness Center**
The Student Counseling and Wellness Center helps UMMC students manage the stresses and difficulties of daily life, life inside and outside the classroom.

h. **Campus Police and Security**
UMMC Campus Police and Security can be reached at 601-815-3072 for emergencies and at 601-815-7777 for non-emergencies.

i. **SOPH Student Orientation (Canvas Course)**
Students will remain enrolled in the course throughout their tenure as SOPH students. The course serves as a resource for information, policies, instructions, resources, and contact information. Additional student resources are described in the course.

VIII. **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

a. **Student Complaint Policy**
Students have the right to complain, whether verbally or in writing, regarding any area of academic or student life without fear of coercion, harassment, intimidation, or reprisal from the institution or its employees; Student Comment and Complaints webpage is a resource. More information is available in the SOPH Student Complaints Policy.

b. **Mistreatment/Title IX Reporting and Policies**
All mistreatment is of serious concern to this institution and is strictly prohibited. Title IX Coordinator: (601) 815-5150

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. More information is available in the UMMC Notification of Rights under FERPA Policy and Notification of Directory Information Under FERPA.

d. **Professional Conduct Policy for Students and Their Mentors**
The following guidelines for students and their mentors are provided by the AAMC Group on Graduate Research, Education, and Training (GREAT) and can be accessed in full at www.aamc.org/gradcompact.