

CENTER FOR DEMOGRAPHY & POPULATION HEALTH

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

General Information

This handbook is intended to be a quick and helpful guide to the Center for Demography and Population Health (CDPH) at Florida State University. Descriptions are provided of the facilities, academic programs, resources, and administrative procedures. Where possible, links are provided to material posted on the official [CDPH website](#) or elsewhere at FSU to minimize duplication and provide access to the most up-to-date information. One important source of general information is the [FSU Graduate School](#) and, in particular, the [information for new students](#), which includes a campus-wide Graduate Handbook. Another key source is the [FSU Graduate Bulletin](#).

Location and Facilities

The Center for Demography and Population Health is housed in a suite of offices on the sixth floor of the Bellamy Building on the Florida State University campus in Tallahassee, Florida's capital city. The Bellamy Building also houses the home departments of the Center's core faculty, including Economics, Geography, Sociology, and Urban & Regional Planning. Home departments of most CDPH affiliates, including the Colleges of Medicine and Social Work and the Departments of Biostatistics and Psychology, as well as Strozier Library and Dirac Science Library are all within a few minutes' walk.

CDPH maintains the College's network license for STATA software. The Center also maintains both general-purpose (e.g., SAS, SPSS) and more specialized (e.g., aML, LIMDEP) statistical software packages, which are provided to Center Associates and graduate students upon request. The Center maintains a small research library. In addition, the university is a full participant in ICPSR.

CDPH features a Local Area Network file server dedicated to research use by Center-affiliated faculty and graduate students. The server provides both password-secured and public-access storage, both of which can be accessed from faculty offices, student carrels, and the Center's computer lab.

As an administrative unit of FSU, CDPH operates within the administrative context defined by the University and the College of Social Sciences. By-laws of CDPH are posted on the [website](#).

Master of Science in Demography

In addition to serving as an interdisciplinary support unit for research conducted by Center associates and affiliates, CDPH also operates as an academic instructional unit of the University and offers a Master of Science degree in Demography (MSD). This program is described in full on the [CDPH website](#). Some highlights are summarized below.

Admission

Applicants to the MSD program apply online through the FSU [Office of Admissions](#). Decisions on admissions and financial assistance such as tuition waivers are made by the CDPH Director with advice from faculty on the Graduate Admissions Committee. Questions concerning the application and admissions process should be sent to the Director at popctr@fsu.edu or by phone at 850-644-1762.

Admission requirements:

- A completed undergraduate degree at the time of entry into the program.
- B average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) for upper division undergraduate course work OR a GRE score of at least 1000 (combined verbal and quantitative).
- A writing sample (a term paper or equivalent).
- A short personal statement that describes your career aspirations and why you are interested in Demography.
- Two reference letters attesting to your potential to succeed in graduate school.

All applicants MUST take the GRE and have scores sent directly to the Florida State University prior to any final admission decision.

International applicants who have not earned at least one degree from an English-speaking University must also take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and provide an official test score of at least 550 on the paper-based test or 80 on the internet based test.

Degree Requirements (revised effective July 2008)

Candidates for the MSD degree are required to complete a minimum of 33 semester hours, including a 24 hour demographic core, one 3 hour graduate-level elective approved by the Director, and 6 hours for preparation of the Masters Research Paper (DEM 5972). The Masters Research Paper is often completed in combination with a summer internship. The most current list of courses is provided on the [CDPH website](#).

Master's Paper

The MSD program does not require a traditional master's thesis. Instead, students are expected to complete an article-length study under the direction of a two-person faculty committee chaired by a CDPH Faculty Associate with special interest in their topical area. This faculty member will serve as the student's major professor. MS papers are tailored to meet the interests, skills, and professional aspirations of individual students. Papers can range from professional papers or project reports to academic papers. Whatever the format, the paper is intended to be a "capstone" for MS training.

Professional Demographic Internship

MSD students have the option of pursuing a professional internship during the summer before they graduate. Internships are encouraged but not required. Students are ultimately responsible for seeking and making application for internships, but CDPH faculty will give maximum help and support in finding these positions. Advance approval of internships is required from the student's major professor and the CDPH Director to be eligible to receive academic credit (3 hours maximum). Evaluation of satisfactory/ unsatisfactory performance in an internship will be

made by the Director based on a short report from the student's internship supervisor. The course number for internships is: ISS 5945r (3 hours maximum).

Graduate Advisor

The Director serves as the general Graduate Advisor to all students admitted to the Demography program. MSD students should have at least one advising meeting each semester when they are enrolled at the University. Enrolled MSD students should take courses recommended by the Graduate Advisor, to insure timely completion of their degree requirements.

Policy & Procedures on Exemption

Students who have previously taken and passed graduate level courses required by the MSD program with a grade of B- or better, or equivalent courses, are allowed to substitute other courses to meet program requirements. It is the intent of this provision to enable students to acquire more advanced training than would ordinarily be required as part of the MSD degree. Permission must be given by the Graduate Advisor, subject to the advice of faculty on the Graduate Admissions Committee.

Disciplinary Issues

All students associated with CDPH in any capacity are expected to demonstrate the highest professional standards in terms of personal behavior and ethics. Investigation and resolution of alleged violations of the FSU Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor Code are coordinated through the [FSU Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Appeals Process

CDPH values collegial governance based on best professional practices. All actions or decisions of the Director may be appealed to the CDPH Executive Committee and, following this, to the Dean of the College of Social Sciences. Specific University procedures exist for [grade appeals](#) and other academic grievances, including [Academic Honor Code violations](#).

Resources for Students

Financial Awards and Prizes

Through the generosity of alumni, friends and faculty, CDPH students benefit from the following awards and prizes.

The William J. Serow Scholarship

Dr. William J. Serow was a former director of CDPH and a Professor of Economics. Contributions by family, friends, and colleagues have been used to create an endowed scholarship in his memory. This scholarship, awarded to the best new student in the MSD program at the end of each fall semester, helps defray costs of completing the degree. All MSD students in good standing are automatically considered for this prize.

Walt Terrie Award

Dr. E. Walter Terrie was a faculty member and applied demographer in CDPH for many years. Contributions by friends and colleagues throughout the profession of applied demography have

been used to endow a special memorial fund. The fund is used to present an award of \$400 for the best paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Demographic Association and dealing with applied demographic research and/or local area demography. Winners are selected by a committee appointed by the President of SDA, including at least one FSU faculty member. FSU graduate students are encouraged to submit their work in this competition, including MS papers in the year following their completion.

Conference Travel

Demography graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend annual meetings of the professional organizations in the field, including the Southern Demographic Association and the Population Association of America. Through the generous support of CDPH alumni and friends, some funds are available to help reimburse approved travel expenses for students in the MSD program. Travel by PhD students is supported by their home academic departments, who receive a regular budget allocation from the College of Social Sciences for this purpose. Funds are also available to all graduate students from the Congress of Graduate Students (COGS) for attending as well as for presenting at a professional meeting.

Funds from CDPH are distributed at the discretion of the Director. The amount of money awarded will depend on the availability of funds, the number of students requesting travel assistance, the cost of the meeting (e.g., travel distance, hotel costs, registration fees), and the nature of each student's participation in the meeting. Funds available through COGS are available on a first come-first serve basis and are limited to one (1) \$100.00 conference support grant and one (1) conference presentation grant (which varies according to the travel distance to the grant up to \$500.00). Since COGS funds are limited, students who want to travel to a professional meeting should begin the process of securing financial support as soon as possible.

Graduate students traveling to professional meetings need to complete a Travel Authorization Request at least two weeks in advance of the departure (forms are available on CDPH website). Students should make their own travel plans as desired and upon return present their receipts for transportation, lodging and other expenses to the Office Assistant in Bellamy 601. Receipts for meals are not needed as all travel expenses for meals are covered by a fixed per diem rate covered by the University.

CDPH Graduate Student Association

Graduate Students in Demography and Population Health (GSDPH)

Students associated with CDPH have a student union group at their disposal. The group is meant to help integrate new graduate students into the Center and student social network, and to provide a source of information and informal guidance regarding the Center and its functions.

The demography graduate student union is called "Graduate Students in Demography and Population Health" (GSDPH) and is recognized by the university as an official student organization. As such, GSDPH can receive funds from COGS for events, etc. All demography graduate students are considered members of GSDPH. Students who have ideas on events that they would like to see produced by the GSDPH they should contact the Association's President (on [CDPH website](#)) or the CDPH Director.

Office Space, Computer, and Library

CDPH provides individual desks and computers for study and work space to graduate students working with Center associates and affiliates. Rooms 602, 606a and 651 are dedicated to student use, and occasionally advanced students may be housed temporarily in unused faculty offices. Ordinarily, students will have 24/7 access to their desk and computer. Office space is meant to provide students with some of the resources that they need to successfully complete their degrees. The CDPH director assigns office spaces to graduate students on the basis of:

- a. employment as a research assistant on a CDPH-based research grant;
- b. enrollment in the MSD program in the center; or
- c. graduate enrollment in CDPH-relevant specialties in academic departments represented by CDPH Faculty Associates.

Brown Bag presentations

During the semester, the CDPH hosts a weekly colloquium that highlights the research being done by CDPH associates, students and faculty. These colloquia generally are informal presentations of research during lunch hour on Friday afternoons. For the presentation schedule please follow [this link](#). Students who have been awarded desk space in CDPH are expected to attend.