

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**  
**Department of Health and Human Development**

---

**HHD 2998: MS Directed Study**

**Faculty:** Benjamin DH Gordon, PhD  
**Office:** 32 Oak Hill Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15261. #212  
**Office Phone:** 412-624-5162  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Email:** [bgordon@pitt.edu](mailto:bgordon@pitt.edu)

---

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This 1-3 credit course offers HHD MS students the chance to apply the principles and techniques learned in the MS program by engaging in hands-on experiences in a physical activity/exercise research setting. Examples include experiences in exercise testing, assessment and prescription, and training, as well as observing, implementing, and practicing skills in clinical, health-fitness, or community-based research settings. Additionally, students may gain valuable experience in teaching and supervising exercise interventions. As a part of this course, students will actively participate in research gaining insight into the scientific method through their role as student researchers. This involvement will include responsibilities assigned as part of a University of Pittsburgh- or UPMC-sponsored research project, providing a comprehensive experience that bridges academic learning with practical application in the field.

**II. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

After completion of this course, the student should:

- A. Gain a foundational understanding of conducting research and the overall research process.
- B. Develop hands-on experience by assisting with a graduate student or faculty led research project. This may include tasks such as:
  - 1. Conducting a comprehensive literature review
  - 2. Assisting with participant screening and recruitment
  - 3. Preparation of laboratory spaces, data sheets, testing instruments
  - 4. Collecting data through direct interaction with study participants
  - 5. Entering and managing research data
- C. Obtain exposure to diverse research settings, including clinical environments, conducted clinical trials, university laboratories, communities, and performance centers

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. **Prior to starting**, students are required to complete a contract at the site location outlining the goals and responsibilities of the experience. They will also receive the contact information of their immediate supervisor or mentor. Students and supervisors will agree on student's schedule, weekly hours, and any required assignments or tasks.
- B. Students must complete the required minimum number of hours (1 credit = 25 hours; 3 credits = 75 hours) within the semester they are registered. Although these are the minimum required hours per term, individual faculty may have different hour requirements to participate at their site and will be agreed upon at the start of the term. Students must remain at the site the entire semester regardless of if hours are completed before this date.
- C. **Duties and Experiences**  
Each student will have required duties and tasks as outlined in the initial contract to be completed under the direction of the site supervisor and faculty supervisor. Additional optional assignments may be available based on the student's area of interest.
- D. **Prior to starting** Directed Study/Research Experience, students will need to complete the following trainings and provide the certificates of completion to the faculty:
1. **Obtain University of Pittsburgh CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) Research Training Module certifications (do not count toward research hours)**
    - a. **Research Training:**
      1. Go to [www.citi.pitt.edu](http://www.citi.pitt.edu)
      2. Hit Login at top of page
      3. Login as Pitt user: sign in using Pitt Passport
      4. Create an account (you can Login using Pitt Passport after you create account)
      5. Go to View Courses
      6. Choose University of Pittsburgh courses
      7. Near bottom, select "Add a course". You will navigate a menu and be sure to select and complete all courses below
      8. Complete the following modules:
        - a. CITI Responsible Conduct of Research
        - b. CITI Conflict of Interest (COI PHS Regulated Course)
        - c. CITI Human Subject Research (Biomedical)
        - d. CITI Good Clinical Practice (GCP Social & Behavioral Research)
        - e. Privacy & Information Security
    9. **Download Certificates of Completion**,  
Print off Certificates of Completion for each module to be handed in at the start of the term.
  - b. **First Aid/CPR Certification may be required.** Please talk with site supervisor.

## **RULES OF EXPLORING A PROFESSIONAL SITE/RESEARCH PROJECT**

1. **PROFESSIONALS ARE COUNTING ON YOU!** - This experience should be treated like a job as you are being counted on as a part of the staff. Therefore, you will be expected to be at every shift, unless otherwise arranged with your supervisor. Studying for exams, sleeping in, being behind on schoolwork, etc. are **NOT** excuses for missing your scheduled hours.
2. **BE ON TIME!** - In the case of being late, contact that shift supervisor to inform them of the situation. It is the student's responsibility to complete all hours for the semester.
3. **BE PROFESSIONAL AND MATURE- YOU ARE AMBASSADORS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND CLINICAL EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGY PROGRAM**
4. **DRESS CODE:** To be determined by the site supervisor.

### **F. EVALUATION & GRADING**

#### **1. Log Sheets:**

Student must log hours with log sheet provided. Must be filled out and signed by the supervisor to ensure contract is being met. To be turned in with final evaluation at the end of the semester.

#### **2. Mid-term evaluation:**

Students will be required to complete a mid-term self-evaluation of progress toward the directed study contract which is due to the Directed Study Faculty member under which you registered. Supervisors will be asked to also evaluate student progress toward the directed study plan at this time. A follow-up meeting with your supervisor and/or Directed Study Coordinator will occur as needed.

#### **3. Course Project:**

Students will work with their Directed Study Coordinator and the Site Supervisor to develop an appropriate and applicable course project. The project should reflect the content and experience of the site, and can include (but not limited to) the following:

1. Literature Review Paper
2. Data Analysis/Abstract
3. Creation of MOP or other valuable research documents
4. Typed Journal of experience

#### **4. Final evaluation:**

Students will be required to complete a final self-evaluation of execution of the directed study plan. Supervisors will be asked to also evaluate the student's execution of the directed study plan at this time. In conjunction with the Supervisor, the Directed Study Coordinator will administer the final grade.

### **Directed Study Grading (Honors, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory)**

1. Student will earn an Honors (**H**) grade when they:
  - ✓ Finish and complete all required hours
  - ✓ Demonstrate high quality and thorough documentation of experience
  - ✓ Complete all required logs, evaluations, and trainings modules.
  - ✓ Earn 'above average' or greater supervisor evaluation
2. Student will earn a Satisfactory (**S**) grade when they:
  - ✓ Finish and Complete all required hours
  - ✓ Demonstrate 'average' documentation of experience
  - ✓ Hand in all materials prior to the last week of classes
  - ✓ Earn 'average' supervisor evaluation
3. Student will earn an Unsatisfactory (**U**) grade when they indicate any of the following:
  - ✓ Demonstrate 'below average' documentation of Experience and self-reflection
  - ✓ Demonstrate tardiness or lack of responsibility towards experience
  - ✓ Hand in all materials after required due date
  - ✓ Receive 'below average' evaluation

### **Academic Integrity**

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity Guide](#) for an overview of the topic. For hands- on practice, complete the [Academic Integrity Modules](#).

### **Disability Services**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, [drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu), (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, visit the [Civil Rights & Title IX Compliance web page](#).

I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing [titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu). Reports can also be [filed online](#). You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the

University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

**Email Communication**

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

**Religious Observances**

The observance of religious holidays (activities observed by a religious group of which a student is a member) and cultural practices are an important reflection of diversity. As your instructor, I am committed to providing equivalent educational opportunities to students of all belief systems. At the beginning of the semester, you should review the course requirements to identify foreseeable conflicts with assignments, exams, or other required attendance. If at all possible, please contact me (your course coordinator/s) within the first two weeks of the first class meeting to allow time for us to discuss and make fair and reasonable adjustments to the schedule and/or tasks.