

## University of Florida—Doctoral Training Positions in Health Education & Behavior

The University of Florida Department of Health Education and Behavior (HEB) is seeking PhD students to begin study in the fall of 2026. The HEB PhD program offers a concentration in health behavior and prepares scientists to research, develop, implement, and evaluate innovative strategies to improve health outcomes. Faculty in the department offer opportunities for prevention and behavioral science specialization in the areas of addiction and substance abuse, nutrition, physical activity, obesity, mHealth and digital health applications, HIV/AIDS and sexual risk behaviors. More information about admissions and faculty research interests can be found on the HEB website: <http://hbp.ufl.edu/admissions/heb-phd/>.

Interested students should demonstrate an interest in a research-involved career and evidence of research experience or potential. Fully funded assistantships and fellowships (with tuition waivers), and conference travel funds are available. For priority consideration, please apply by **December 1, 2025**.

Please see below for information on our faculty's areas of specialization. Asterisks indicate specific faculty members actively looking for students:

**\*\*Dr. Meredith Berry's** research program focuses on developing novel pharmacological and behavioral interventions for substance use disorders, mental health conditions, and pain. She also studies the intersection of human and environmental health, environmental conservation, as well as potential benefits of nature exposure for mental health, substance use, and pain related outcomes. <https://hbp.ufl.edu/directory/meredith-berry/>

**\*\*Dr. JeeWon Cheong** is a quantitative social psychologist with expertise in statistical methods applied to health outcomes. Her methodological research focuses on methods for testing mediation in longitudinal studies and on applying state-of-the-art quantitative methods to research on health behaviors. Her substantive research investigates substance use and other risky health behaviors among adolescents and young adults, focusing on identifying risk and protective factors that can be modified in prevention and intervention settings and elucidating the mechanisms underlying the developmental course of such behaviors. Currently, Dr. Cheong is involved in several NIH-funded projects, including a digital behavioral economic intervention for risky drinking among young adults, a longitudinal study examining the interplay of socioeconomic disadvantage, genetics, and delay discounting in adolescent substance use, and a feasibility trial of a computer-based working memory intervention for adolescents in low-income communities. <https://hbp.ufl.edu/directory/jeewon-cheong/>

**Dr. Liana Hone** is director of the RIISC (Reducing Intoxicant Involved Sexual Consequences) Lab and co-director of the SHARC (Southern HIV and Alcohol Research Consortium) Professional Development Program. Her research interests include identifying novel individual- and environmental-level targets for sexual aggression prevention. Dr. Hone is also interested in improving the generalizability of alcohol administration studies and in the application of evolutionary theory to examining sex differences in binge drinking, alcohol-related cognitive deficits, and alcohol-related regretted sex. Her other research interests span predictors of sexual morality and stigma, and mHealth interventions for substance use and sexual consequences. <https://hbp.ufl.edu/directory/liana-hone/>

**Dr. Mildred Maldonado-Molina's** research program focuses on reducing health disparities in child and adolescent health, alcohol use, and alcohol-related consequences in particular, with a focus on

vulnerable populations. Her work centers on applying innovative statistical methods in prevention-oriented studies of youth, with expertise in cultural processes associated with substance use in Latinx youth. A current study examines migration and cultural stressors, alcohol misuse, and mental health problems in Puerto Rican families who migrated after Hurricane Maria; and examine prospective relationships to test cultural stress theory across distinct resettlement contexts.

[http://hhp.ufl.edu/about/faculty-staff/maldonado-molina\\_mildred/](http://hhp.ufl.edu/about/faculty-staff/maldonado-molina_mildred/)

**Dr. Nichole Scaglione's** research aims to reduce substance abuse and sexual assault risk in adolescents and young adults. She uses mobile technologies capture in-the-moment decision-making processes that impact risk during specific substance use events; Dr. Scaglione's team also develops and tests prevention strategies to reduce high-risk drinking and sexual violence in high school, college, and military settings. Current DoD- and CDC-funded projects offer scientific and professional development opportunities for doctoral trainees. <https://hhp.ufl.edu/directory/nichole-scaglione/>

**Dr. Jalie Tucker** conducts applied behavioral economic research on behaviors that involve choices between sooner smaller rewards (e.g., substance use, risky sex) and delayed larger rewards (e.g., benefits of a healthy/sober lifestyle, safer sex practices). She investigates addictive and related behavior patterns within the natural environment using measurement and sampling methodologies for community-based research with hard-to-reach risk populations. Current work focuses on natural recovery from Alcohol Use Disorder and behavioral economic risk factors for harmful drinking among emerging adults. Dr. Tucker directs the University of Florida Center for Behavioral Economic Health Research, which supports research, applications, and education aimed at understanding human choice behavior and decision-making with emphasis on health and health behavior change.

[http://hhp.ufl.edu/about/faculty-staff/tucker\\_jalie/](http://hhp.ufl.edu/about/faculty-staff/tucker_jalie/)