



The University of Georgia

College of Public Health

MPH Student Handbook

2008-2009

www.uga.edu/publichealth

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MPH Program at UGA	2
Mission	2
MPH Faculty & Staff.....	2
Graduate Coordinator.....	2
Program Coordinator/MPH Internship Coordinator	2
Registration Clearance	3
Professional Degrees Committee	3
MPH COURSEWORK	4
General Description	4
Coursework	4
MPH Competencies and Curriculum.....	4
Change of Concentration Area.....	7
Internship in Public Health (PBHL 7560)	7
Culminating Exam in Public Health.....	8
Appendix A: MPH Competencies.....	9
MPH Core Competencies.....	9
Biostatistics Core Competencies.....	9
Environmental Health Core Competencies	10
Epidemiology Core Competencies.....	11
Health Policy and Management Core Competencies	11
Health Promotion and Behavior Core Competencies	12
Appendix B: Checklist for Graduation.....	13

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MPH Program at UGA

Mission

The mission of the MPH program is to address the critical need for highly trained public health professionals by providing an academic and practice environment in which students of public health are trained through coursework and field learning experiences. The 2-year program is designed for health professionals who wish to expand their skills, knowledge and expertise, and for students who wish to build a career in public health. The Master of Public Health (MPH) degree is administered through the Dean's Office, not individual departments.

MPH Faculty & Staff

Graduate Coordinator

Claire Robb, Ph.D. Dr. Robb is the Graduate Coordinator for the MPH program. The Graduate Coordinator is an appointed faculty member responsible for admissions, academic development, and general oversight of the program. Most forms will require the Graduate Coordinator's signature or approval. Gerontology Building, 255 East Hancock Avenue. Email: crobb@uga.edu

Program Coordinator/MPH Internship Coordinator

Ashley Wells, MPH. Ms. Wells is the MPH Program Coordinator, a supporting role to the Graduate Coordinator. She performs daily functions of administering the program including maintaining student files and clearing students for registration. She is also responsible for recruitment and retention. Any inquiries about admissions, the program in general, schedule of classes, etc. can be directed to her. As internship coordinator, she is responsible for assisting the student in finding an appropriate internship site. She will use field contacts to help place students in internship sites that interest them. Paul D. Coverdell Center, Room N 122A. Email: acwells@uga.edu

Program Assistant

Laura Patrick. Ms Patrick is the support staff to the MPH Program. She is responsible for coordinating admissions to the program, assisting with student questions and general maintenance of student files. Ms. Patrick can clear all students for registration. Paul D. Coverdell Center, Room 122. Email: lpatrick@ua.edu.

Registration Clearance

Renay Armit is responsible for clearing students in BIO and EPI to register, and clearing students for BIOS/EPID POD (Permission of Department) and POM (Permission of Major) classes. Paul D. Coverdell Center, Room N 132. Email: rarmit@uga.edu

Betty Blum is responsible for clearing students in HPB to register and in HPRB POD (Permission of Department) and POM (Permission of Major) classes. Ramsey Student Center, Room 308. Email: bettyb@uga.edu

Heather McEachern serves as the information resource for students, faculty, and staff in the College of Public Health. She serves as the Assistant to the Director of the Interdisciplinary Program in Toxicology. Ms. McEachern can clear MPH students to register. Coverdell Building, Room 124. Email: hivey@uga.edu.

Trey Nihoul is responsible for clearing students in HPAM for registration, and in POD and POM classes for the HPAM department. Coverdell Building, Room 132. Email: trey@uga.edu

Tammy Ray is responsible for clearing students in the EHS department to register and in EHS POD (Permission of Department) and POM (Permission of Major) classes. Environmental Health Science Building, Room 206 B. Email: tdixon@uga.edu

Professional Degrees Committee

The Professional Degrees Committee for MPH and DrPH degrees is composed of representatives of the CPH community. Although the committee is open to anyone, regular representatives are: a faculty member from each department, the Graduate Coordinator, the MPH/DrPH Program Coordinator, and student representatives. Meetings are scheduled as needed. The committee formulates guidelines related to course offerings, program length, admissions requirements, etc.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

MPH COURSEWORK

General Description

Students are admitted for the fall semester each year, and classes are offered at the UGA campus in Athens. Students choose a concentration area when they initially apply to the program. The concentration areas and programs of study are (http://www.publichealth.uga.edu/academics/cph_mph.html):

- ❖ Biostatistics
- ❖ Environmental Health Science
- ❖ Epidemiology
- ❖ Health Policy and Management
- ❖ Health Promotion and Behavior

Coursework

The MPH degree requires completion of a minimum of 45 credit hours, plus the exam and poster presentation, as detailed below:

- Five core courses (15 credit hours): biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health science, health services administration, and social/behavioral sciences.
- Concentration area courses (12 to 15 credit hours)
- Internship (6 credits) (PBHL 7560)
- Seminar in Public Health(1 credit) (PBHL 8200)
- Electives to complete at least the minimum 45 credit hours
- Poster presentation of their internship or research
- Culminating exam

****Grade Point Average.** To be eligible for graduation, the student must maintain a 3.0 (B) average on the graduate transcript and a 3.0 (B) average on the program of study. No grade below C will be accepted. (NOTE: Students must receive a grade of 'B-' or higher in the five core MPH courses and departments will not accept grades below 'C' for classes taken as undergraduate deficiencies.)

MPH Competencies and Curriculum

The curriculum for the MPH program is competency based. Competencies are knowledge, skills, and abilities that prepare students for work in a certain area. Students will master the 'core competencies' by taking the five core MPH courses (BIOS 7010, EHSC 7060, EPID 7010, HPAM 7600, and HPRB 7050) and 'area of concentration competencies' by completing their concentration area coursework (as shown in Box 1) and Internship. The competencies are derived from professional organizations that guide the field of public health. Examples of these organizations are: Association of Schools of Public Health, National Center for Health Education

Credentialing, National Environmental Health Association, and Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine.

[Appendix A](#) details these competencies.

The five MPH Core courses are:

- BIOS 7010 Introductory Biostatistics I
- EHSC 7060 Fundamentals of Environmental Health
- EPID 7010 Introduction to Epidemiology I
- HPAM 7600 Introduction to Health Policy and Management
- HPRB 7050 Social and Behavioral Foundations of Public Health

Box 1. Required Concentration Courses

Biostatistics (BIOS)

BIOS 7020	Introductory Biostatistics II
EPID 7020	Introduction to Epidemiology II
STAT 6510	Mathematical Statistics I
BIOS 6380	Survival Analysis
BIOS 8220	Clinical Trials

Epidemiology (EPID)

BIOS 7020	Introductory Biostatistics II
EPID 7020	Introduction to Epidemiology II
EPID 8400	Chronic Disease Epidemiology
EPID 8500	Infectious Disease Epidemiology

Environmental Health Sciences (EHSC). Choose one class from 4 of 5 areas

Air Quality

EHSC 6080	Environmental Air Quality
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Water Quality

EHSC 6610	Water Pollution
EHSC 8610	Aquatic Toxicology

Toxicology

EHSC 6940	Environmental Toxicology
EHSC 8930	Chemical Toxicology

Risk Assessment

EHSC 8510/L	Environmental Risk Assessment and Communication
EHSC 8110	Fundamentals of Chemical & Microbial Risk Assessment

Environmental/Microbiology

EHSC 6310/L	Environmental Microbiology
EHSC 8310	Advanced Topics in Aquatic Microbiology, Health and Environment

Health Policy and Management (HPAM)

HPAM 8600	Health Economics
HPAM 8800	Leadership in Public Health
HPAM 8810	Health Policy Planning and Evaluation
HPAM 8400	Policy and Economic Analysis in Public Health

Health Promotion and Behavior (HPRB)

HPRB 7270	Resource Development and Implementation
HPRB 7370	Social Marketing and Health
HPRB 7470	Program Evaluation in Health Promotion
HPRB 7500	Community Health
HPRB 7920	Health Behavior

Note that changes in the program of studies may occur.

When selecting courses, the following guidelines apply:

- Only up to 6 credit hours of independent studies (XXXX-6000, XXXX-7000) can count as elective courses for completing the required 45 credits; the student's advisor must approve this course. Most importantly, independent studies should only be used when regular courses are not available.
- Only 6 credits of Internship can count toward the 45 credits of the MPH Program of Study.
- All electives and the internship site must be approved by the Advisor.

Carefully review [Appendix B](#), which contains a checklist for graduation requirements. For specific questions about courses, contact the MPH Program Coordinator at mph@uga.edu.

Change of Concentration Area

Students can apply to change their concentration area once they have been accepted into the program and have completed at least one semester of coursework. Students should:

- 1) Complete the Change of MPH Concentration Area form, located on WebCT [CPH-GRAD].
- 2) Submit this form to the Graduate Faculty of the concentration area to which the student would like to apply.
- 3) If the Graduate faculty accepts the student into their concentration, submit the signed form to the Graduate Coordinator.

Internship in Public Health (PBHL 7560)

MPH students complete a 300-hour internship in an appropriate public health setting (6 credit hours of PBHL 7560 – Internship in Public Health). Graded S/U. Sites include, but are not limited to, hospitals, non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, and worksite/for-profit companies. The site is chosen based on student interest and competencies that students need to achieve. Each site must have a mentor who is credentialed in their area of interest (EHS, HPB, HPM, EPI, BIOS) or who has experience in these areas. The site must have a major project that addresses the educational needs of the student, and the amount of work available for the student must fill at least 300 contact hours.

Each site must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Georgia before any internship work is approved. After meeting with Internship Coordinator to discuss possible sites and availability of a MOU, students will submit the required paperwork for the internship site and identify learning objectives to be achieved during the 300 hours.

Evaluation of the Internship will be in the form of a written report in which students will detail how they accomplished each learning objective by the duties, experiences, and tasks they have performed at the site. For details, read the

Student Internship Handbook, which is available on WebCT > CPH-GRAD > MPH. If a conflict arises regarding the selection of internship site among the student, the advisor, and/or the internship coordinator, the parties in conflict should send a one-page letter to the Professional Degrees Committee explaining the situation. This committee will make the final decision.

Students must have at least 18 credits of MPH core and concentration courses and approval from the advisor to apply for the internship. All students will do a poster presentation of their internship or of their research at CPH Poster Day. Poster presentations are done once per semester during reading day.

Internship Coordinator: Ashley Wells, acwells@uga.edu.

Culminating Exam in Public Health

[Policy effective for all students admitted fall 2008 and thereafter] All students will take a final written comprehensive exam, as their “culminating experience.” The written exam is offered three times per year (fall, spring, and summer), at the same time for all students. The exam is graded pass/fail, with 70% acceptable for passing within each core area (BIOS, EHSC, EPID, HPAM, HPRB).

Exam Policies

1. Students must be cleared to take the exam by their academic advisor and the MPH Graduate Coordinator in their final semester of study.
2. The MPH Comprehensive Exam is offered three times per year in fall, spring, and summer, at the same time for all students. The exam is usually given on a Saturday morning.
3. The exam may include open-ended, short answer, and multiple-choice questions.
4. Questions will cover the five core areas of the MPH program, plus an in-depth evaluation of the student’s area of concentration.
5. Students who fail the exam are required to retake the exam the following semester. Students who fail for a second time will be required to take additional courses or retake courses, before retaking the exam. Students who fail for a third time will be dismissed from the program.
6. Students taking the exam must be enrolled for at least 3 credit hours the semester they take the exam.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Appendix A: MPH Competencies

MPH Core Competencies

Upon completion of the five core MPH courses, students should be able to:

1. Identify basic theories, concepts and models from a range of social, behavioral, and policy disciplines that are used in public health research and practice.
2. Describe the main components and issues of the history, organization, financing and delivery of public health.
3. Identify the basic mechanisms by which environmental and occupational hazards impact health (e.g., the linkage of pollutants' source, media, and receptor and health effects).
4. Describe a public health problem in terms of magnitude, person, time and place, including associated risk and protective factors.
5. Interpret results of statistical analyses in public health studies.
6. Promote public health strategies responsive to the diverse cultural values and traditions of the communities being served.
7. Apply scientific knowledge, law and ethics to critical evaluation and decision-making in public health.

Biostatistics Core Competencies

Upon completion of the Biostatistics core courses, students with a concentration in Biostatistics will be able to:

1. Use an understanding of public health research, practice and ethics to inform biostatistical practice.
2. Collaborate in the design of public health surveys and biomedical experiments.
3. Describe concepts of probability, random variation, and commonly used probability distributions.
4. Carry out and communicate exploratory data analyses including the production of tabular summaries, graphical displays and descriptive statistics.
5. Select the appropriate statistical procedure for statistical analysis based on study objectives, study design, and the types of variables involved.
6. Apply common statistical procedures including simple and multiple regression, analysis of variance, analysis of contingency tables,

nonparametric methods, logistic regression, and survival analysis using at least one statistical software package.

7. Demonstrate knowledge of assumptions underlying common statistical procedures, apply appropriate diagnostic methods, and understand the consequences of violations of model assumptions.
8. Communicate orally and in writing descriptions of common statistical procedures, results of statistical analyses, and conclusions from such analyses.

Environmental Health Core Competencies

Upon completion of the Environmental Health core courses, students with a concentration in Environmental Health will be able to:

1. Understand the basic mechanism by which environmental and occupational pollutants impact health (i.e., the linkage of pollutants' source, media, and receptor and health effects).
2. Understand the basic sciences deemed most relevant for the study of environmental and occupational health.
3. Be able to collect, analyze and interpret environmental and occupational data.
4. Demonstrate the ability to implement an occupational or environmental health investigation or project and clearly report on the result.
5. Specify approaches for assessing, preventing and controlling environmental hazards that pose risks to human health and safety.
6. Describe the direct and indirect human, ecological and safety effects of major environmental and occupational agents.
7. Specify current environmental risk assessment methods.
8. Describe relevant factors that affect susceptibility to adverse health outcomes following exposure to environmental hazards.
9. Discuss various risk management and risk communication approaches in relation to issues of environmental justice and equity.
10. Explain the general mechanisms of toxicity in eliciting a toxic response to various environmental exposures.
11. Describe federal and state regulatory programs, guidelines and authorities that control environmental health issues.

Epidemiology Core Competencies

Upon completion of the Epidemiology core courses, students with a concentration in Epidemiology will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a working knowledge of current and emerging major public health issues related to communicable and non-communicable disease.
2. Apply the basic terminology and definitions of epidemiology in oral presentations and written reports.
3. Critically review and summarize epidemiologic literature.
4. Access and utilize epidemiologic data available at the state, national and international level.
5. Demonstrate the understanding of basic epidemiologic study designs.
6. Identify and be able to apply surveillance methods used in both infectious and chronic diseases.
7. Be able to draw appropriate inference from epidemiologic data.
8. Be sensitive to social, cultural and ethnic differences that may influence the conduct and execution of epidemiologic studies.
9. Possess knowledge of the development of epidemiology and the historical contributions of the discipline to public health.

Health Policy and Management Core Competencies

Upon completion of the Health Policy and Management core courses, students with a concentration in Health Policy and Management will be able to:

1. Apply the core functions of assessment, policy development, and assurance in the analysis of public health problems and their solutions.
2. Demonstrate leadership and communication skills for building partnerships.
3. Analyze the effects of political, social and economic policies on public health systems at the local, state, national and international levels.
4. Apply principles of strategic planning, quality, and performance improvement concepts to address organizational and systems performance.
5. Assess evidence-based principles and the scientific knowledge base to critical evaluation and decision-making in public health.

Health Promotion and Behavior Core Competencies

Upon completion of the Health Promotion and Behavior core courses, students with a concentration in Health Promotion and Behavior will be able to:

Competency Area: Theory

1. Use theory of behavior and social change to inform the planning and evaluation of health interventions

Competency Area: Health Behavior Promotion Programs

2. Apply evidence-based approaches to identify effective individual, community, and policy level health promotion programs
3. Design and implement effective individual, community, and policy level health promotion programs

Competency Area: Methodological and Analytic Skills

4. Assess the health needs of a community
5. Utilize appropriate research design, data collection strategies, quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate health promotion programs

Competency Area: Cultural Competency

6. Describe the cultural, social, and behavioral determinants of health and health disparities
7. Develop and adapt approaches to health promotion issues that take into account cultural differences

Competency Area: Leadership

8. Identify strategies for developing partnerships, community organizing, and coalition building to address health promotion issues
9. Integrate ethical considerations and values in all aspects of public health practice.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[BACK TO TEXT](#)

Appendix B: Checklist for Graduation

Task	Year 1	Year 2
First Week of Class: Provide your name, address, UGA email address and phone number to Ashley Wells upon entering the program in order to be updated in the directory.		
Check WebCT- CPH Grad-MPH for any forms, announcements, etc.		
Check the Graduate School website for any important dates, deadlines, forms, etc. Familiarize yourself with their procedures for graduation.		
Meet with an advisor to discuss future courses, internships, job contacts, etc.		
Begin thinking about internship placement.		
Start interviewing for internships, complete appropriate forms, review the competencies for the MPH program and your area of interest.		
File a Program of Study Form (for Non-Doctoral Professional Degree) with the Graduate School through their website no later than the Friday of the second full week of classes during the semester in which you plan to graduate. Your major, as identified with the Grad School, is PUBLIC HEALTH regardless of your concentration area.***Be sure to attach the MPH course checklist of your area of concentration to this form when obtaining signatures (on WebCT).		
Apply for graduation through the online form at the Graduate School website the semester before you graduate.		
If transfer credits are included in your program of study, the transcript and Request for Transfer Credit form should reach the Graduate School no later than the midpoint of the semester in which you plan to graduate. A maximum of 6 hours (2 classes) of graduate credit may be transferred from an accredited institution.		
Prepare to take the MPH Culminating Exam; sign up with Ashley Wells the semester before you plan to take the exam.		
Be sure the Registrar's Office has the correct mailing address to ensure receipt of your diploma.		

** Every semester: please check with the Registrar for registration dates. Be sure to meet with an advisor and get cleared for registration in advance. You will need clearance for summer semester as well.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[BACK TO TEXT](#)