

PUBLIC HEALTH

Degree Requirements

Master of Public Health (M.P.H.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

M.P.H. students must complete a total of 42 credits of graduate level course work, the majority of which are 500 level courses, specifically:

- 24 credits in prescribed courses, including:
 - 18 credits of core classroom-based courses
 - 3 credit practicum experience
 - 3 credit capstone course
- 18 credits in elective courses

The Capstone Course (PHS 894) provides the students with the knowledge and skills to design, carry out, and present a scholarly public health project based upon competencies gained in previous courses. Topics include defining a scholarly project, selecting a topic and project type, describing the problem, reviewing the literature, identifying project methodology, presenting project results, ethics and scholarly work, writing and critiquing scholarly work, and creating and delivering a poster presentation.

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---|---|-----------|
| Required Courses | | |
| PHS 809 | Principles of Public Health | 3 |
| PHS 504 | Behavioral Health Intervention Strategies | 3 |
| or BBH 504 | Behavioral Health Intervention Strategies | |
| PHS 520 | Principles of Biostatistics | 3 |
| or STAT 500 | Applied Statistics | |
| PHS 539 | Qualitative Health Research Methods | 3 |
| Select 3 credits from the following: | | |
| PHS 550 | Principles of Epidemiology | |
| HPA 540 | Epidemiological Applications in Health Services Research | |
| STAT 507 | Epidemiologic Research Methods | |
| PHS 571 | Health Services Organization and Delivery | 3 |
| or HPA 520 | The U.S. Health Care Industry and Health Services Organizations | |
| PHS 895A | Master of Public Health Internship | 3 |
| Additional Courses | | |
| Select 18 credits from a list of approved courses that is maintained by the graduate program office. Multiple tracks of specialization are available. | | 18 |
| Culminating Experience | | |
| PHS 894 | Capstone Experience (Capstone Course) | 3 |
| Total Credits | | 42 |

Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

Dr.P.H. students must complete a minimum of 60 credits of graduate-level course work beyond a master's degree, the majority of which are 500-level and 800-level courses, specifically:

- 27 credits in prescribed, core classroom-based courses
- 18 credits in elective courses
 - 9 credits of track elective courses
 - 9 credits of general (cognate) elective courses
- 15 additional credits
 - 6 credits of Advanced Field Experience
 - 9 credits of Integrative Doctoral Research

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---|---|-----------|
| Required Courses | | |
| PHS 536 | Health Survey Research Methods | 3 |
| PHS 575 | Integrative Seminar in Public Health Leadership | 3 |
| PHS 576 | Integrative Seminar in Public Health Policy | 3 |
| PHS 577 | Integrative Seminar in Social & Behavioral Determinants of Health | 3 |
| PHS 554 | Statistical Methods in Public Health I | 3 |
| PHS 555 | Statistical Methods for Public Health II | 3 |
| ADTED 550 | Qualitative Research in Adult Education | 3 |
| PHS 806 | Public Health Ethics | 3 |
| PHS 892 | Directed Studies in Public Health | 3 |
| PHS 895B | Advanced Field Experience | 6 |
| Electives | | |
| Select 18 credits from a list of approved courses that is maintained by the graduate program office. Multiple tracks of specialization are available. | | 18 |
| Culminating Experience | | |
| PHS 896A | Integrative Doctoral Research I | 6 |
| PHS 896B | Integrative Doctoral Research II | 3 |
| Total Credits | | 60 |

Dr.P.H. students must meet Penn State doctoral degree requirements as outlined in GCAC-700 Professional Degree Requirements (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>), including qualifying examinations, English competencies, and professional doctoral committee composition. Dr.P.H. students must also meet the following additional Dr.P.H.-specific requirements.

The Dr.P.H. degree is conferred in recognition of advanced preparation of a high order for work in the profession of education as evidenced by:

1. Satisfactory completion of a prescribed period of study;
2. Ability to apply translational science and implementation research findings in evidence-based public health practice;
3. Successful performance of qualifying and comprehensive examinations, covering public health core areas of study and a field of specialization; and
4. The preparation and acceptance of integrative doctoral research.

Residency requirement

The Doctor of Public Health requires 24 core credits to be taken in residence as a registered student engaged in academic work at the Hershey and Harrisburg campuses.

Additional Course Requirements for Applicants without a Master of Public Health

Applicants must have a graduate (e.g. master's) or advanced professional (e.g., M.D.) degree. Applicants without a Master of Public Health or related degree are required to take core courses to ensure a firm foundation in discipline-specific M.P.H. competency domains. These foundation courses include:

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---------|---|---------|
| PHS 504 | Behavioral Health Intervention Strategies | 3 |
| PHS 520 | Principles of Biostatistics | 3 |
| PHS 550 | Principles of Epidemiology | 3 |
| PHS 571 | Health Services Organization and Delivery | 3 |
| PHS 809 | Principles of Public Health | 3 |

For applicants entering the program without a Master of Public Health, the minimum credits required for the Dr.P.H. degree will include these 15 credits of foundation courses, for a minimum total of 75. Some or all of the foundation courses may be waived based on previous graduate-level course work, in which case the total credits required for the degree may be reduced in an equivalent manner, down to the base minimum of 60 credits. Students must petition the head of the graduate program to obtain a waiver for the foundation courses, and students' transcripts will be reviewed to assess their eligibility for a waiver.

Comprehensive Examination

Upon completing all core and most cognate course work, Dr.P.H. students will take comprehensive exams to ensure they meet Dr.P.H. core and track program competencies. Comprehensive exams will be overseen and evaluated by students' professional doctoral committee.

Integrative Doctoral Research

Dr.P.H. students will be required to complete two major components for their Dr.P.H. integrative experience: two publishable-quality manuscripts and a doctoral portfolio.

With guidance from their doctoral adviser and professional doctoral committee, students will develop two manuscripts that comprehensively address, generate, and/or interpret and evaluate knowledge applicable to public health practice. Manuscripts are encouraged to be of an applied nature and must demonstrate students' abilities to conduct independent research on a contemporary public health issue. Students will demonstrate the application of advanced public health practice skills and knowledge in the design and execution of a scholarly project, the analysis and interpretation of the findings, and the application of the new knowledge to advance public health practice. This work should contribute to the evidence base of public health practice, be of publishable quality, and demonstrate critical thinking and rigorous analytic strategies.

Throughout their doctoral program, students will develop a doctoral portfolio that will document how Dr.P.H. courses, advanced field experience, other experiential learning, and self-knowledge has informed their leadership style and approach to integrating evidence-based research into public health practice. Components of the portfolio may include, but are not limited to, research (e.g., publications, conference presentations), teaching (academic and non-academic, community-based teaching), and field and other service learning experiences. Portfolios will require reflection on in-class and out-of-class experiences and demonstrate students' broad public health knowledge, specialized knowledge, translation of this knowledge into evidence-based public health practice, and leadership style. Integrative Doctoral Research will demonstrate the following competencies:

- data and analysis,
- communication, systems thinking,
- leadership,
- critical thinking, and
- problem solving.

Written and oral presentation of this work will be required.