



Department of Health Behavior

MPH Program Guidelines

For students entering in Fall 2014

[Health Behavior homepage](#)

*The Department of necessity reserves the right to change without notice any
programs, policies, requirements, or regulations in this handbook.*

Welcome

Welcome to the Department of Health Behavior (HB) in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health (SPH)!

This guidebook is designed to help you navigate your way toward the successful completion of a Master's of Public Health (MPH) degree from the HB Department. This document outlines program guidelines, opportunities, and student responsibilities. If you need additional clarification on any of the topics covered in this document, please talk with your academic adviser, the student services manager, the MPH program manager, or the MPH program director.

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HB MPH Program Information

Program Overview

The goal of the Masters of Public Health (MPH) degree is to prepare individuals for leadership positions in public health practice. HB MPH students are trained to use social and behavioral science to study, develop, and evaluate interventions to promote health, prevent disease and injury, and reduce health disparities at all levels of the social ecological model. The MPH curriculum integrates theory, research, and practice through our core courses, community-based fieldwork, and professional development and career support. A HB faculty member serves as an academic adviser for each student to provide mentoring and academic support, as needed.

Program Requirements

Required Coursework

Students complete 54 credit hours of coursework, including: 26 hours of required coursework within the HB Department; 12 hours of SPH core requirements; and a minimum of 16 hours of elective credits. The sequencing of coursework provides flexibility for students to take a variety of non-HB required courses, complete certificate programs, and/or pursue independent study options.

SPH Required Core Courses and Alternatives for HB Students

Core Areas	Basic Course Requirement(s)	Approved Alternative(s)
Biostatistics	HBEH 601	BIOS (any 3 or 4 credit BIOS course above 540)
Environmental Health	ENVR 600	ENVR 430
Epidemiology	EPID 600	EPID 710, 711
Health Policy & Management	HPM 600	HPM 660 or 564 MHCH 701 and 702 (both)
Social and Behavioral science	Waived for HB students	

Elective Courses

The HB MPH curriculum enables students to tailor their degree to their unique needs and interests. Students may take elective courses in any of the departments within the SPH, within other schools in UNC, and at other area institutions (e.g., Duke University, NC Central University, NC State University, etc.). Any undergrad course above 400 level can be taken for elective credit if graded on the H/P/L/F scale. Students must receive Graduate School permission to take any undergrad course or non-required course Pass/Fail. Electives may also be used to pursue one of the many

certificate programs offered across the University.

Required Fieldwork

All departments within the School require some form of fieldwork in order to meet the Council on Education for Public Health's (CEPH) requirements for accreditation. During the summer between the first and second years of the MPH program, students complete a 240-hour individual practicum that gives them the opportunity to apply their academic training in a public health setting/population/topic of their choice. During the second year of the MPH program, students complete a year-long Capstone project (HBEH746/992), which is a group-based, mentored, evaluated, service-learning opportunity. The products produced for Capstone are an approved substitute for the UNC graduate school's Master's thesis requirement.

Field Fees

MPH students pay a \$600 field fee to cover a portion of the expenses associated with the field work in the MPH program over and above those covered by state dollars paid through tuition. For administrative purposes, these fees are tagged onto HBEH 746.

Comprehensive Exam

Purpose and Content

The purpose of the exam is to assess student knowledge and critical thinking skills in public health education, theory, practice, and applied research methods (both qualitative and quantitative). This exam is divided into two multi-part questions:

- 1) Theory & Practice, which covers course content from Theoretical Foundations of Social & Behavioral Science (HBEH 730), Planning Health Promotion (HBEH 772); and Foundations of Health Behavior (HBEH 700); and
- 2) Research Methods, which covers Principles of Statistical Inference (HBEH 601), Applied Research Methods (HBEH 750) and Qualitative Research Methods (HB 753).

Examination Date

HB MPH students take a written comprehensive examination during the week before classes begin for the Fall semester of their second year. Examination retakes will be held on the first Thursday of December, before the end of the Fall semester.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the comprehensive examination, a student must be in good academic standing according to Graduate School policies (see Graduate School Handbook). A student is ineligible to

sit for the comprehensive examination if they have no grade, an absent grade, or an incomplete grade in the courses that are covered on the exam.

Accommodations

Students who need special accommodations for the comprehensive examinations must have documentation on file with the Accessibility Resources & Service (ARS) Office by the end of the spring semester of their first year. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to a student in consultation with ARS.

Grading

The exam responses are graded using a blinded format. The point distribution for the comprehensive questions is:

Theory/Practice Question (100 points):

- Theory (40%)
- Planning (40%)
- Intro to Public Health (20%)

Bios/Methods Question (100 points):

- Biostatistics (33%)
- Quantitative Methods (33%)
- Qualitative Methods (34%)

A passing grade for each question is 80% or greater. Students who do not receive an 80% (pass) on the theory/practice or bios/methods question must retake that question in December of that year. Prior to re-taking the failed exam question, the student must meet with the question writer(s), in consultation with their academic adviser, to discuss a remediation plan. If a student does not pass the re-take of the exam, he/she becomes academically ineligible to continue in the program.

Notification of Examination Results

All students will be notified of the examination results no later than the second week of September for the August exam. An e-mail notification will be sent out individually to all students with the exam results. A notification of exam results will be sent to the student's academic advisor, the MPH program director, and the student services manager. Students who retake the examination in December will be notified of their results no later than the day before the first day of classes for the Spring semester.

MPH Competencies

The HB Department is committed to ensuring that its MPH program meets all UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) MPH specified competencies. The HB MPH curriculum described in previous pages also addresses National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHEC) competencies and Galway Consensus Conference Core Competencies. See Appendix A for detailed descriptions of each of these sets of competencies. See Appendix B for information about competency-based professional certification exams. The tables on the following pages show how the HB MPH curriculum addresses professional competencies.

How the HB MPH Curriculum Addresses Professional Competencies

	Courses								
ASPH Cross-Cutting Competencies	HBEH 700: Foundations of Health Behavior	HBEH 703, 704: Professional Development Series	HBEH 730: Theoretical Foundations of Social & Behavioral Science	HBEH 742, 743: Practicum*	HBEH 750: Applied Research Methods	HBEH 752: PH Interventions & Evaluation	HBEH 753: Qualitative Research Methods	HBEH 772: Planning Health Promotion in Community, Worksite, School, and Medical Settings	HBEH 746, 992: Capstone I & II
Communication & Informatics	√	√		√	√	√			√
Diversity & Cultural Competency	√		√	√		√	√	√	√
Leadership		√		√		√		√	√
Professionalism & Ethics	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Program Planning	√			√	√	√	√	√	√
Systems Thinking				√		√	√	√	√

* Depends on practicum experience

	Courses								
	HBEH 700: Foundations of Health Behavior	HBEH 703, 704: Professional Development Series	HBEH 730: Theoretical Foundations of Social & Behavioral Science	HBEH 742, 743: Practicum*	HBEH 750: Applied Research Methods	HBEH 752: PH Interventions & Evaluation	HBEH 753: Qualitative Research Methods	HBEH 772: Planning Health Promotion in Community, Worksite, School, and Medical Settings	HBEH 746, 992: Capstone I & II
ASPH Discipline-Specific Competencies									
1. Identify basic theories, concepts, and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines that are used in public health research and practice.	√		√	√		√		√	√
2. Identify the causes of social and behavioral factors that affect health of individuals and populations.	√		√	√		√	√	√	√
3. Identify individual, organizational and community concerns, assets, resources and deficits for social and behavioral science interventions.	√		√	√		√	√	√	√
4. Identify critical stakeholders for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies, and interventions.	√			√		√		√	√
5. Describe steps and procedures for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies, and interventions.				√		√	√	√	√

* Depends on practicum experience

	Courses								
	HBEH 700: Foundations of Health Behavior	HBEH 703, 704: Professional Development Series	HBEH 730: Theoretical Foundations of Social & Behavioral Science	HBEH 742, 743: Practicum*	HBEH 750: Applied Research Methods	HBEH 752: PH Interventions & Evaluation	HBEH 753: Qualitative Research Methods	HBEH 772: Planning Health Promotion in Community, Worksite, School, and Medical Settings	HBEH 746, 992: Capstone I & II
ASPH Discipline-Specific Competencies									
6. Describe the role of social and community factors in both the onset and solution of public health problems.	√		√	√		√	√	√	√
7. Describe the merits of social and behavioral science interventions and policies.	√		√	√		√	√	√	√
8. Apply evidence-based approaches in the development and evaluation of social and behavioral science interventions.				√		√	√	√	√
9. Apply ethical principles to public health program planning, implementation and evaluation.						√	√	√	√
10. Specify multiple targets and levels of intervention for social and behavioral science programs and/or policies.	√		√	√		√		√	√

* Depends on practicum experience

	Courses								
	HBEH 700: Foundations of Health Behavior	HBEH 703, 704: Professional Development Series	HBEH 730: Theoretical Foundations of Social & Behavioral Science	HBEH 742, 743: Practicum*	HBEH 750: Applied Research Methods	HBEH 752: PH Interventions & Evaluation	HBEH 753: Qualitative Research Methods	HBEH 772: Planning Health Promotion in Community, Worksite, School, and Medical Settings	HBEH 746, 992: Capstone I & II
1. Assess Individual and Community Needs for Health Education				√			√	√	√
2. Plan Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs				√		√	√	√	√
3. Implement Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs				√		√		√	√
4. Conduct Evaluation and Research Related to Health Education				√	√	√		√	√
5. Administer Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs		√		√		√			√
6. Serve as a Health Education Resource Person	√		√	√	√			√	√
7. Communicate and Advocate for Health and Health Education	√		√	√	√	√		√	√

* Depends on practicum experience

	Courses								
Galway Consensus Conference Core Competencies for Health Promotion and Health Education	HBEH 700: Foundations of Health Behavior	HBEH 703, 704: Professional Development Series	HBEH 730: Theoretical Foundations of Social & Behavioral Science	HBEH 742, 743: Practicum*	HBEH 750: Applied Research Methods	HBEH 752: PH Interventions & Evaluation	HBEH 753: Qualitative Research Methods	HBEH 772: Planning Health Promotion in Community, Worksite, School, and Medical Settings	HBEH 746, 992: Capstone I & II
1. Catalyzing change	√			√		√	√	√	√
2. Leadership	√	√	√	√		√		√	√
3. Assessment			√	√			√	√	√
4. Planning			√	√		√	√	√	√
5. Implementation				√		√		√	√
6. Evaluation				√	√	√	√	√	√
7. Advocacy	√			√					√
8. Partnerships	√			√		√		√	√

* Depends on practicum experience

SPH Certificate Programs

To encourage continued education and professional development for both public health students and practitioners, the School offers a number of certificate programs that can be completed either through traditional, residential coursework or via the internet through distance learning. Most certificate programs range from 11 to 15 credits. The School offers the following residential certificate programs.

Global Health Certificate: prepares students to work in changing global environments and with diverse populations, and to respond competently to the challenges presented by permeable geographic and cultural boundaries. The certificate complements departmental requirements by offering courses, seminars, and fieldwork or internships that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of global health conditions, needs, and solutions that cross borders in both developing and industrialized countries and regions.

<http://www.sph.unc.edu/globalhealth/certificate/>

Interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Disparities: Despite significant progress, there are continuing disparities in morbidity and mortality experienced by African-Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, compared to the U.S. population as a whole. This 10-credit hour program trains health professionals to support a long-term and sustained public health effort toward addressing, and ultimately eliminating disparities.

<http://www.echo.unc.edu/education/certificate-program>

Certificate in Public Health Ethics aims to provide public health graduate students with the basic skills needed to think and act ethically in their work. Because public health is a diverse field, students can customize their certificate courses to suit their particular areas of interest. They may choose, for example, to focus on research ethics, political processes, or genomics. All students will share in common the course Foundations in Public Health Ethics (EPID 880) and on-line training in research ethics.

http://www.sph.unc.edu/general/certificate_in_public_health_ethics_4019_7189.html

Certificate in Interdisciplinary Health Communication prepares SPH graduate students to use theory-informed health communication strategies in applied practice, academic and research settings. Students select one of two specialized tracks, complete three graduate level courses (three credits each), participate in a year-long colloquia series on emerging issues in health communication, and receive guidance on conducting health communication research for their theses or dissertations.

<http://ihc.unc.edu/>

In addition, there are several certificate programs in other University schools and departments. For a complete list of certificate programs, please see: <http://gradschool.unc.edu/policies/certificates.html>.

Dual-Degree Program (MPH/MCRP)

HB and the Department of City and Regional Planning (DCRP) offer a dual degree in public health and planning. The HB master's program trains students to use social and behavioral science to study, develop, and evaluate interventions to promote health, prevent disease and injury, and reduce health disparities at all levels of the social ecological model. The master's program in DCRP combines theory and methods with substantive knowledge about planning, spatial development, and public policy to prepare students for positions of leadership in the planning profession. The combination of skills acquired through the two programs prepares graduates for careers that promote public health, safety, and livability in communities. Graduates of the dual-degree program earn a MPH and a Master of City and Regional Planning (MCRP), in three years.

To enter these programs, students must apply separately to DCRP and HB and must be accepted independently by both. Dual-degree students typically spend their first year enrolled either in HB or DCRP. The second year is spent full-time in the other program. In the third year, students take both public health and planning courses. Students must take 38 credits of HB/SPH coursework, including Capstone (HBEH 746/992); 33 credits of DCRP core and specialization coursework; and 18 elective credits, 6-9 (depending on specialization) of which must be in DCRP. Students are also expected to produce Master's Project for DCRP and at the end of the program that demonstrate mastery of the two fields and an understanding of the interconnections between the fields.

Appendix A: Professional Competencies

ASPH Cross-Cutting Competencies*

Upon completion of their program of study, a student should be able to demonstrate competencies (listed below) in each of following six domains (Communication, Diversity & Cultural Competency, Leadership, Professionalism & Ethics, Planning, and Systems Thinking). Coursework, prior experiences, relationships with mentors, committees, conferences, paper &/or poster presentations are all examples of ways students can document progress toward achieving the competencies. The ASPH cross-cutting competencies, as well as the ASPH discipline-specific competencies, serve as the basis of the Certification in Public Health (CPH) exam. For more information on the CPH exam, please see **Appendix B**.

Communication and Informatics

The ability to collect, manage and organize data to produce information and meaning that is exchanged by use of signs and symbols; to gather, process, and present information to different audiences in-person, through information technologies, or through media channels; and to strategically design the information and knowledge exchange process to achieve specific objectives.

Diversity & Cultural Competency

The ability to interact with both diverse individuals and communities to produce or have an impact on an intended public health outcome.

Leadership

The ability to create and communicate a shared vision for a changing future; champion solutions to organizational and community challenges; and energize commitment to goals.

Professionalism & Ethics

The ability to demonstrate ethical choices, values and professional practices implicit in public health decisions; consider the effect of choices on community stewardship, equity, social justice and accountability; and to commit to personal and institutional development.

* Association of Schools of Public Health Cross-Cutting Competencies. Available online: <http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=929>

Program Planning

The ability to plan for the design, development, implementation and evaluation of strategies to improve individual and community health.

Systems Thinking

The ability to recognize system level properties that result from dynamic interactions among human and social systems and how they affect the relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and environments.

ASPH Discipline-Specific Competencies[†]

The social and behavioral sciences in public health address the behavioral, social, and cultural factors related to individual and population health and health disparities over the life course. Research and practice in this area contributes to the development, administration, and evaluation of programs and policies in public health and health services to promote and sustain healthy environments and healthy lives for individuals and populations.

Upon graduation, a student with an MPH should be able to:

1. Identify basic theories, concepts and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines that are used in public health research and practice.
2. Identify the causes of social and behavioral factors that affect health of individuals and populations.
3. Identify individual, organizational and community concerns, assets, resources and deficits for social and behavioral science interventions.
4. Identify critical stakeholders for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.
5. Describe steps and procedures for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.
6. Describe the role of social and community factors in both the onset and solution of public health problems.
7. Describe the merits of social and behavioral science interventions and policies.

[†] Available online: <http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=851>

8. Apply evidence-based approaches in the development and evaluation of social and behavioral science interventions.
9. Apply ethical principles to public health program planning, implementation and evaluation.
10. Specify multiple targets and levels of intervention for social and behavioral science programs and/or policies.

National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHEC) Competencies[‡]

The Seven Areas of Responsibility are a comprehensive set of Competencies and Sub-competencies defining the role of a health educator. These Responsibilities serve as the basis of the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) exam. For more information on the CHES exam, please see **Appendix B**.

Seven Areas of Responsibility of a Health Education Specialist include:

1. Assessing individual and community needs for health education
2. Planning effective health education strategies, interventions, and programs
3. Implementing health education strategies, interventions, and programs
4. Conducting evaluation and research related to health education
5. Administering health education strategies, interventions, and programs
6. Serving as a health education resource person
7. Communicating and advocating for health and health education

[‡] Available online: <http://www.nchec.org/credentialing/responsibilities/>

Galway Consensus Conference Core Competencies for Health Promotion and Health Education[§]

1. *Catalyzing change*: enabling change and empowering individuals and communities to improve their health.
2. *Leadership*: providing strategic direction and opportunities for participation in developing healthy public policy, mobilizing and managing resources for health promotion, and building capacity.
3. *Assessment*: conducting assessment of needs and assets in communities and systems that leads to the identification and analysis of the behavioral, cultural, social, environmental and organizational determinants that promote or compromise health.
4. *Planning*: developing measurable goals and objectives in response to assessment of needs and assets, and identifying strategies that are based on knowledge derived from theory, evidence and practice.
5. *Implementation*: carrying out effective and efficient, culturally sensitive and ethical strategies to ensure the greatest possible improvements in health, including management of human and material resources.
6. *Evaluation*: determining the reach, effectiveness and impact of health promotion programs and policies. This includes utilizing appropriate evaluation and research methods to support program improvements, sustainability and dissemination.
7. *Advocacy*: advocating with and on behalf of individuals and communities to improve their health and wellbeing and building their capacity for undertaking actions that can both improve health and strengthen community assets.
8. *Partnerships*: working collaboratively across disciplines, sectors and partners to enhance the impact and sustainability of health promotion program and policies.

[§] Barry MM, Allegrante JP, Lamarre MC, Auld ME, Taub A. The Galway Consensus Conference: international collaboration on the development of core competencies for health promotion and health education. *Glob.Health.Promot.* 2009 Jun;16(2):5-11.

Appendix B: Competency-Based Professional Certification Exams

Certification in Public Health Exam

The National Board of Public Health Examiner's (NBPHE) Certification in Public Health (CPH) exam is administered to graduates of CEPH-accredited schools and programs of public health. The exam is rooted in the five basic core competencies of public health to reflect the nature of the field and the way one area of knowledge blends into another.

Becoming a Certified Public Health Professional Has Multiple Benefits:

- Sets a standard of knowledge and skills in public health
- Encourages life-long learning
- Adds credibility to public health profession
- Increasing public health awareness
- Fosters environment of a professional community

More details about the Board and the examination can be found at www.nbphe.org. Study materials for the examination are available and information on how to obtain them can also be found at www.nbphe.org.

Health Education Specialist (CHES) Exam

The Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) exam is a competency-based test that measures the possession, application, and interpretation of knowledge related to the Seven Areas of Responsibilities, which are a comprehensive set of Competencies and Sub-competencies defining the role of an entry-level health educator.

Students are encouraged to take the national CHES exam for three reasons:

1. Some health education job announcements now state that CHES certification is preferred or, in some cases, required of job applicants.
2. Holding a professional certification can foster positive perceptions about your skill and ability in the work place, particularly when your coworkers hold certifications or licensers in other fields.
3. To maintain your CHES certification on an annual basis, you will be required to obtain continuing education credits from a wide range of qualified providers.

The HB MPH program prepares students to be thoroughly familiar with the Seven Areas of Responsibility of a Health Education Specialist. Students graduating from the HB MPH Program have an extremely high pass rate. In fact, a HB alum earned the highest score of all those who took the 2008 CHES exam. The CHES exam is offered in April and October. For information about cost, exam schedules, and study guides, please visit: <http://www.nchec.org/>.

Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES)

Exam

The Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES) exam will be based on the scientific approach to measure the existing health education advanced-level Sub-competencies related to the Seven Areas of Responsibilities. The first MCHES exam is anticipated for October 2011.

A Master Certified Health Education Specialist, MCHES, is an individual that has met academic eligibility in health education and is practicing at the advanced-level in the field, passed a written examination administered by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc., and has an ongoing commitment to continuing education. More information about this exam can be found at: <http://www.nchec.org/exam/chesfaq/mches/>.