

**Department of Health Behavior**  
**UNC Gillings School of Public Health**

# MPH

# Program

# Handbook

For students entering the HB MPH Program in Fall 2018



**UNC**  
GILLINGS SCHOOL OF  
GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

# Introduction

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

This handbook is designed to help you successfully complete the Master's of Public Health (MPH) degree from HB. This document outlines program guidelines, opportunities, and student responsibilities. Additional resources (including archives of handbooks from previous academic years) are available on the MPH Program Sakai site (<https://sakai.unc.edu>). All enrolled MPH students have access to this site.

Three other documents contain important information and regulations: (1) *The Graduate School Handbook* (<http://handbook.unc.edu/>), which describes policies and procedures of The Graduate School, including academic requirements and regulations, which apply to all graduate students; (2) *The Record of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill* (<http://www.unc.edu/gradrecord/>), which includes admissions standards and requirements, tuition and fees, financial aid information, academic and research resources, and program and course descriptions. Other useful information is available on The Graduate School webpage (<http://gradschool.unc.edu/>); and (3) *The Department of Health Behavior Policies and Procedures Manual*, which is available on the MPH Program Sakai site and details how the department works to advance its mission and how decisions are made. Students should be aware of and comply with the requirements in these documents.

If you need additional clarification on any of the topics covered in these documents, or other aspects of the MPH program, please talk with your academic adviser, the student services manager, the MPH program manager, or the MPH program director.

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# Program Overview

The HB MPH degree prepares students for leadership positions in public health practice. Students learn to use social and behavioral science to develop, adapt, implement, and evaluate programs and policies that promote health, prevent disease and injury, foster social justice, and reduce health inequities at all levels of the social ecological framework. Through coursework and a year-long, community-led, group-based, mentored service-learning project, Health Behavior concentration students develop skills in:

- Qualitative Research Methods
- Quantitative Research Methods
- Program Planning and Evaluation
- Intervention Design, Adaptation, and Implementation
- Community Engagement
- Project Management

The MPH program is administered by the MPH program director and MPH program manager. The Master's Program Advisory Committee (MAC), which is made up of the MPH program director, program manager, HB faculty members, and student representatives, provides guidance on the MPH curriculum.

## Program Requirements

### Required Coursework

Students complete 54 credit hours of coursework, including: 27 hours of required coursework within HB; 12 hours of Gillings core requirements; and a minimum of 15 hours of elective credits. The sequencing of coursework provides flexibility for students to tailor their degrees by taking electives, completing certificate programs, and/or pursuing independent studies.

### HB Required Coursework

*HBEH 700 - Foundations of Health Behavior:* This course offers an introduction to public health and the field of health behavior, a history of public health and public health education, and an overview of population health/social determinants of health. (3 credits, Fall Year 1)

*HBEH 730 - Theoretical Foundations of Social and Behavioral Science:* This course covers selected social and behavioral science theories and concepts that apply to the development and analysis of health-related behaviors and interventions. (3 credits, Fall Year 1)

*HBEH 750 - Applied Research Methods:* This overview of quantitative behavioral research methods is designed to help practitioners and scientists be savvy consumers of scientific research on health behavior. The course also addresses how to formulate research questions and testable hypotheses that apply to behavior change interventions and program evaluation,

and how to select a research design appropriate for examining a particular research question or program goal. (3 credits, Fall Year 1)

*HBEH 753 - Qualitative Research Methods:* This course is an introduction to qualitative research methodology. The course is intended to develop students' skills in designing qualitative research studies, developing qualitative research questions, collecting, managing and analyzing qualitative data, and presenting findings from a qualitative study. Students will collect their own qualitative data that they will analyze in teams. (3 credits, Spring Year 1)

*HBEH 772 - Planning Health Promotion Programs in Community, Worksite, School, and Medical Settings:* In this course, students use a comprehensive planning model to develop a data-driven program plan that addresses a public health issue for a defined population. (3 credits, Spring Year 1)

*HBEH 703, 704 - Professional Development Series I & II:* The course is designed to offer students a timely, structured opportunity for enhancing professional competencies that they will use in their MPH field work and in their careers as public health practitioners. (1 credit, Spring Year 1 and 1 credit, Fall Year 2)

*HBEH 742 – MPH Practicum:* The practicum is an individual field training opportunity that serves as a bridge between a student's academic training and applied public health practice. (1 credit, Fall Year 2)

*HBEH 746, 992 - Capstone I & II:* Capstone is a group-based, mentored, service-learning course whose products serve as the master's thesis substitute. Class sessions are opportunities for students to prepare for, reflect upon, receive feedback about, and present their Capstone project experiences. (3 credits, Fall Year 2 and 3 credits, Spring Year 2)

*HBEH 752 - Public Health Interventions & Evaluation:* This course is a critical examination and application of the concepts and methods necessary for effectively selecting, adapting, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based public health interventions. (3 credits, Fall Year 2)

### **Gillings Required Coursework**

*SPHG 711 - Data Analysis for Public Health:* This introductory course is part of the MPH core curriculum and focuses on the biostatistics and analysis methods commonly found in public health. Students will learn to produce, interpret, and use straightforward data analyses. (2 credits, Fall Year 1)

*SPHG 712 - Methods and Measures:* This course is part of the MPH core curriculum, and introduces epidemiologic concepts and how to describe population patterns of health, inequities, and their determinants. (2 credits, Fall Year 1)

*SPHG 713 - Understanding Public Health Issues:* This course is part of the MPH core curriculum and provides students with the skills to identify and describe public health issues in specific contexts. (2 credits, Fall Year 1)

*SPHG 721 - Conceptualizing Public Health Solutions:* This course explores how public health practitioners establish priorities for action, with context and community as crucial factors. We examine strategies for addressing public health problems at each level of the social-ecological framework. Builds on first semester MPH core courses. (2 credits, Spring Year 1)

*SPHG 722 - Developing, Implementing & Evaluating Public Health Solutions:* Students will identify, analyze and prioritize potential public health solutions. In addition, students will learn to adapt evidence-based solutions, engage with stakeholders, and disseminate solutions. Builds on first semester MPH core courses. (4 credits, Spring Year 1)

**Health B MPH Program Sequencing**

	Fall	Spring	Summer
<b>Year 1</b>	<p><b>HBEH Required:</b>            HBEH 700: Foundations of Health Behavior (3)            HBEH 730: Theoretical Foundations of Social &amp; Behavioral Science (3)            HBEH 750: Applied Research Methods (3)</p> <p><b>Gillings Required:</b>            SPHG 711: Data Analysis for Public Health (2)            SPHG 712: Methods and Measures (2)            SPHG 713: Understanding Public Health Issues (2)</p> <p><b>Choose (0-1 credits) from:</b>            Electives</p>	<p><b>HBEH Required:</b>            HBEH 753: Qualitative Research Methods (3)            HBEH 772: Planning Health Programs (3)            HBEH 703: Professional Development Series (1)</p> <p><b>Gillings Required:</b>            SPHG 721: Conceptualizing Public Health Solutions (2)            SPHG 722: Developing, Implementing &amp; Evaluating Public Health Solutions (4)</p> <p><b>Choose (0-3 credits) from:</b>            Electives</p>	<p>Comprehensive Exam (no credit)</p>
<b>Year 2</b>	<p><b>HBEH Required:</b>            HBEH 704: Professional Development Series (1)            HBEH 742: MPH Practicum (1)            HBEH 752: Interventions and Evaluation (3)            HBEH 746: Capstone (3)</p> <p><b>Choose (1-8 credits) from:</b>            Electives</p>	<p><b>HBEH Required:</b>            HBEH 992: Capstone (3)</p> <p><b>Choose (6-13 credits) from:</b>            Electives</p>	

## **Required Fieldwork**

The [Council on Education for Public Health](#) (CEPH) requires all “MPH students [to] demonstrate competency attainment through applied practice experiences.” The HB MPH curriculum features two applied practice experiences: 1) the practicum (HBEH 742) and 2) Capstone (HBEH 746/992).

### **Practicum**

The HB MPH practicum is an individualized, mentored, experiential learning opportunity that serves as a bridge between a student’s academic training and applied public health practice. Students must complete a minimum of 240 practicum hours (equivalent to six weeks of full-time work) over the summer between the first and second years of the HB MPH program. Practicums can occur anywhere, including both domestic and international settings, and can be paid or unpaid. During the practicum, an appointed on-site preceptor directly supervises the student. The MPH program team and the student’s academic adviser contribute additional support and expertise to the experience. Students receive credit for their practicum work in the fall when they register for HBEH 742. Refer to the HBEH 742 syllabus for additional information.

### **Capstone**

Capstone (HBEH 746/992) is a year-long, group-based, mentored service-learning course that gives students an opportunity to apply the HB MPH skillset to real-world public health problems in partnership with local organizations. As the culminating experience of the HB MPH program, the products produced for this course serve as a substitute to The Graduate School’s master’s thesis requirement and fulfils CEPH’s Integrative Learning Experience requirement. We expect this critical learning experience to increase students’ and organizations’ capacity to address public health problems; result in new or improved public health programs, services, and resources; enhance student marketability; and strengthen campus-community partnerships. Overall, Capstone strives to improve public health practice. Refer to the HBEH 742/992 syllabus and Capstone [website](#) for additional information.

### **Field Fees**

MPH students pay a one-time \$600 field fee to cover a portion of the expenses associated with the MPH field work that are not covered by state dollars paid through tuition. For administrative purposes, these fees are attached to HBEH 746 (Capstone I).



## **MPH Comprehensive Exam**

### **Purpose and Content**

The purpose of the MPH comprehensive exam is to assess students' ability to apply the knowledge and skills in public health and health behavior-related theory, practice, and applied research methods (both qualitative and quantitative) covered in the core courses. 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 Dates**

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

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for to take 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 any of the courses that included on the exam.

### **Accommodations**

Students who need special accommodations for the comprehensive examination 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 (HBEH 730): 40 points
- Planning (HBEH 772): 40 points
- Foundations of Health Behavior: 20 points

#### Research Methods Question (100 points):

- Biostatistics (HBEH 601): 33 points
- Quantitative Methods (HBEH 750): 33 points
- Qualitative Methods (HBEH 753) 34 points

A passing grade for each question is 80% or greater. Students who do not receive an 80% (pass) on the theory/practice or research 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), and, in consultation with their academic adviser, create a remediation plan. If a student does not pass the re-take of the question(s), he/she becomes academically ineligible to continue in the program.

### **Notification of Examination Results**

All students are notified of the examination results no later than the second week of September for the August exam. An e-mail notification containing their exam results is sent out individually to each student, with his/her academic advisor, MPH program director, and student services manager copied. Students who retake examination questions in December are notified of their results no later than the day before the first day of classes of the Spring semester.

## **Advising**

### **Overview**

Health Behavior (HB) is committed to providing quality advising and mentoring for all students. To ensure that master's students get the guidance they need, HB has an advising and mentoring program with several components: 1) an **orientation** program that provides an overview of the types and sources of MPH advising; 2) **cohort advising** sessions to disseminate information that is relevant to the entire MPH student body; 3) **individual academic advising** that provides students with tailored support for their academic, professional, and personal development; and 4) an **individual development plan** assignment that helps students identify their academic and professional goals and serves as a communication tool for advising. This document outlines the components of, expectations for, and resources that supplement advising and mentoring within the HB MPH program.

### **Orientation**

During Orientation, the MPH program director and MPH program manager introduce students to the advising and mentoring resources available within the department, school, and university. HB sponsors Orientation Advising Week, which sets the expectation that all faculty should get to know their incoming advisees early in their first semester.

### **Cohort Advising**

The MPH program director, MPH program manager, MPH program assistant, and student services manager facilitate general MPH cohort advising once per semester. Cohort advising is an efficient mechanism for disseminating timely information (e.g., course registration, support services, professional development opportunities, graduation requirements, etc.) that is relevant to all students in the cohort.

<b>Standing Agenda Items for Cohort Advising*</b>			
<i>Fall Year 1</i>	<i>Spring Year 1</i>	<i>Fall Year 2</i>	<i>Spring Year 2</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximizing the Effectiveness of Academic Advising in HB</li> <li>• Student Funding</li> <li>• Practicum Search and Funding Process</li> <li>• Capstone Solicitation Process</li> <li>• Cohort Reps Nomination Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capstone Selection and Matching Process</li> <li>• Recruitment of Admitted Students</li> <li>• Comprehensive Exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduation Checklists</li> <li>• Practicum Day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of Admitted Students</li> <li>• Graduation Logistics</li> <li>• Networking Opportunities</li> </ul>

\*MPH program leadership also solicits agenda items from students via a survey administered by the cohort representatives prior to each cohort advising session.

### **Individual Academic Advising**

MPH students are expected to meet with their academic advisers in person at least once a semester (in addition to Orientation Advising Week). Additional interactions between students and academic advisers are encouraged within reasonable demands on faculty time. To ensure a mutually beneficial relationship, the **advisee** is expected to:

- Be knowledgeable about program requirements, processes, coursework, and deadlines
- Meet with their faculty adviser at least once per semester
- Initiate scheduling of meetings and come prepared with an agenda of topics that need to be discussed at each meeting
- Keep their adviser updated on academic and professional goals
- Keep track of and ensure that graduation requirements are being met
- Inform the adviser of their progress and if applicable, struggles

The **academic adviser** is expected to:

- Be knowledgeable about program requirements, processes, coursework, and deadlines
- Meet with their advisee at least once per semester (in addition to Orientation Advising Week)
- Sign registration paperwork (e.g., add form, drop form, independent study learning agreement, etc.)
- Review advisees' individual development plans (once developed in the spring of the first year) and help identify opportunities that reflect advisees' personal and professional goals
- Ensure that their advisee's practicum is appropriate, feasible, and meets department and program requirements by providing feedback on and approving the practicum learning agreement

- Recommend appropriate resources to answer questions or solve problems related to academic, fieldwork, career, and personal matters
- Serve as a contact for students experiencing unanticipated personal situations, disabilities or health concerns, or other issues affecting their academic experience

<b>Individual Academic Advising Sessions</b>		
<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Topics to Cover</i>	<i>Session Objectives</i>
<b>Orientation Advising Week</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Student interests/professional goals</li> <li>• Faculty interests</li> <li>• Communication preferences</li> <li>• Faculty availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adviser and advisee know about one another's interests</li> <li>• Adviser and advisee know preferred mode and frequency of communications</li> <li>• Advisee knows when their adviser is most available</li> </ul>
<b>Fall Year 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustment to graduate school</li> <li>• Coursework in consideration of training goals</li> <li>• Practicum goals</li> <li>• Opportunities and resources to support advisee's professional goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisee has identified spring courses that will enhance their training goals</li> <li>• Adviser is aware of advisee's desired practicum location, topic, skills, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Spring Year 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Individual Development Plan (IDP), particularly as related to practicum and Capstone</li> <li>• Practicum goals and search strategies</li> <li>• Opportunities and resources to support advisee's professional goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advisee articulated the knowledge and skills they would like to gain from the practicum and their practicum search priority (e.g., topic, skills, location, funding)</li> <li>• The faculty adviser understands the relationship between the advisee's practicum goals and their professional development</li> </ul>
<b>Fall Year 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduation Checklist</li> <li>• Individual Development Plan (IDP), particularly as related to career planning</li> <li>• Opportunities and resources to support advisee's professional goals</li> <li>• Comprehensive Exams (if applicable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advisee has identified what final requirements are needed for graduation</li> <li>• The faculty adviser understands the student's job preferences and will be able to send relevant networking or employment opportunities</li> <li>• If applicable, the advisee has a plan for comprehensive exam remediation</li> </ul>
<b>Spring Year 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career planning and strategies for job searches</li> <li>• Opportunities and resources to support advisee's professional goals</li> <li>• Letters of recommendation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advisee has received tailored advice for the job search</li> <li>• The advisee has a clear sense of the adviser's capacity to provide a strong letter of recommendation</li> </ul>

## **Individual Development Plan**

As part of their coursework for Professional Development (HBEH 703/704), students create individual development plans to help them identify and strategize about their academic and professional goals. The individual development plan assignment helps students:

- Assess their current skills, interests, values, and strengths
- Make a plan for developing skills to meet their academic and professional goals
- Communicate with their academic advisers, mentors, and supervisors about their evolving goals and related skills

## **Student Concerns**

### *Personal*

When dealing with a personal issue (e.g., family emergency, illness) that will impact their academic work, students are encouraged to notify and seek support from a trusted faculty or staff member (e.g., instructor, academic adviser, MPH program leadership, student services manager) who can offer support and help them troubleshoot.

### *Individual Academic*

If a student has an individual academic concern (e.g., missed deadlines, course complaint), the student should first speak to their course instructor. Students should make their academic adviser and/or MPH program leadership aware of the concern if it proves difficult to resolve the concern with the course instructor and/or if the concern impacts multiple courses.

### *Group Academic*

If an academic concern is shared by multiple students, students should bring the issue to their cohort representatives who will then assess the scope of the issue. The cohort reps will then problem-solve with appropriate departmental personnel.

Any issue that is unsatisfactorily resolved at the instructor, adviser, or program level may be directed to the department chair or the Office of Student Affairs (when applicable).

## Additional Resources

Resource	Areas of Advising Support
Health Behavior Student Services Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration (adding and dropping courses; independent studies; course overload)</li> <li>• Residency</li> <li>• Graduation Requirements</li> <li>• Financial Aid</li> <li>• Support Services</li> </ul>
MPH Program Sakai Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The complete MPH program handbook can be found under <b>Policies and Procedures</b></li> <li>• Student compiled information and reviews for elective coursework can be found under <b>Electives</b></li> <li>• Requirements and timelines for various graduate certificates can be found under <b>Certificates</b></li> <li>• Graduation checklist &amp; degree requirements can be found under <b>Graduation</b></li> <li>• Professional development services at Gillings and on campus can be found under <b>Career Services</b></li> </ul>
<a href="#">Gillings Office of Student Affairs Website</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility resources and services, the Writing Center, and various academic resources can be found under <b>Academic Support</b></li> <li>• Student award and emergency funding information can be found under <b>Funding</b></li> <li>• The complete Gillings student handbook can be found under <b>Student Handbook</b></li> <li>• Gillings and UNC-Chapel Hill Diversity and Inclusion resources can be found under <b>Diversity Resources</b></li> <li>• Health Insurance, Campus Health resources, Student-Parent resources, Disability Information &amp; more can be found under <b>Health and Safety</b></li> <li>• Students experiencing concerns regarding sexual misconduct, harassment and intimidation, discrimination, and more can find available resources under <b>Concerns</b></li> </ul>
<a href="#">The UNC Graduate School Website</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Student policies</a> (e.g., eligibility, course credit, registration, grading, tuition, graduation, medical or personal issues, etc.)</li> <li>• Professional development events, courses, resources, etc.</li> <li>• Funding information</li> <li>• Diversity affinity groups, centers/organizations, events, initiatives, etc.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Accessibility Resources &amp; Service</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student accommodations</li> </ul>

# Registration & Course Credit

## Registration

Students must maintain full-time status throughout the duration of the MPH program. During the fall and spring terms, students must enroll for a minimum of 9 graduate credits (this does not include pass/fail courses). Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 1 credit over the summer.

## Elective Courses

The HB MPH curriculum's elective allocation enables students to tailor their degree to their unique needs and interests. Electives may also be used to pursue one of the many [certificate programs](#) offered across the University. Students may take elective courses in any of the departments within Gillings, within other schools in UNC, and at other area institutions (e.g., Duke University, NC Central University, NC State University, etc.). The [Graduate Record](#) lists all graduate level courses that count towards elective credits. Please consult the Graduate Record before enrolling in a course to ensure it counts for elective credit. Courses approved for undergraduate credit only (at UNC-Chapel Hill, those numbered below 400), including required prerequisite courses, will not be counted toward academic program requirements, do not count toward full-time enrollment status, do not carry either course or residence credit, and will not be entered into the student's Graduate School academic eligibility calculation.

## Certificate Programs

UNC offers several [certificate programs](#) that are intended for students who desire specialization in a specific field. Most certificate programs range from 11 to 15 credits. Students may be working toward a certificate and degree concurrently; however, the total number of academic credits transferred shall not exceed 40 percent of the total required for a certificate. Total credits allowed to transfer may be fewer as determined by the certificate program. Students are encouraged to discuss their plans with their certificate program director(s) and their academic adviser as early as possible to ensure all requirements for their degree and certificate(s) can be met. For additional information on graduate certificate programs, please see [The Graduate School Handbook](#).

## Pass/Fail Courses

All required graduate courses, including those taken on this campus or elsewhere must be taken on a graded (H/P/L/F) basis. Students who wish to take a non-graduate level course pass/fail should contact the student services manager.

## Independent Studies

A student who is in good academic standing can pursue a specialized, individual study with a faculty member for 1, 2, or 3 academic credits, depending on the agreed upon scope of work. At least three hours of independent work and one hour of contact time with the faculty adviser per week is expected for each unit of credit. The student's scope of work, timeline, and type

and frequency of contact with the faculty adviser must be described in a learning agreement, and a final written paper, report, or other agreed-upon deliverable is required. Students may not enroll in more than 6 credits of independent study during their time in the MPH program. A student must follow these steps to enroll in an independent study course:

1. Discuss the possibility of an independent study course with the faculty member who is the potential independent study advisor.
2. If the faculty member agrees, download, complete and print the Independent Study Learning Agreement (available on MPH Program Sakai site).
3. Once the learning contract is signed, submit a copy to the Student Services Office.
4. The Student Services Manager will then register you for the independent study, using the supervising faculty member's designated course section.

For more information, visit the [Office of the University Registrar](#).

### **Credit for Previous Coursework**

MPH students are permitted to transfer in up to 20% of the 54 course credit hours required for the degree. Transfer credits must represent courses relevant to the field of health behavior and the student's program of study, with course content and level of instruction resulting in student competencies at least the equivalent to those of currently enrolled MPH students. Courses for which credits are given must be equivalent to those offered by HB, and a grade of P (or B) or higher must have been received from an accredited graduate institution. Students who wish to submit a credit transfer request should first review the guidelines set forth in the Graduate School Handbook. Credit transfer request forms (<http://gradschool.unc.edu/forms/>) and supporting materials are typically submitted to the student services office in the student's second semester. The student services manager then screens the student's application materials and certifies the request. Once a credit transfer application has been certified by the student services manager, the student may submit the request to the MPH program director who has final department-level approval. The request is then reviewed by the Graduate School, which makes a final decision on the matter. If approved, the credits will appear on a student's course history and transcript as transfer credit. In addition to the 20% rule, courses transferred in must not include those which counted toward the completion of an undergraduate degree. Courses taken as part of a post-baccalaureate, certificate, continuing studies, or other graduate/professional degree program are eligible.

### **Course Exemptions**

To receive an exemption/substitution from a required course, a student must demonstrate an understanding of the competencies addressed in the course. This understanding is typically demonstrated through completion of a comparable course within five years of enrollment in the current degree program in which the student received at least a "B". The previous course(s) and/or experience must be certified by the relevant core course instructor as being at least as rigorous as the required course. Students who wish to be exempted from a core course(s) must download and complete the [core course exemption application](#).



### **Course Overload Request** (more than 16 credits)

Generally, students should register for no more than 16 hours in any semester. A student enrolled in the summer may not register for, and will not receive graduate credit for, more than 8 hours a session. Overload requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Students should contact the Student Services Office for a Course Overload form. The overload request form must include a valid reason for taking more than 16 credit hours, and must be signed by the student's academic advisor and the student services manager. Once signed, the overload request form will be forwarded to the Graduate School and Registrar's Office for approval.

## **Graduation**

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have met all degree requirements and are eligible to graduate. The graduation checklist in **Appendix A** is designed to help students track their requirements. Students must notify the Graduate School of their plan to graduate by submitting an Application for Graduation no later than the deadline shown in the University Registrar's calendar for the semester in which they expect to graduate. Applications should only be submitted when the student realistically expects to graduate that semester and are valid for one semester only. If a student does not graduate in the semester expected, s/he must submit another application for graduation in a future semester. To apply for graduation:

- 1) Complete the Graduation check-out page in ConnectCarolina's Self Service area (log in to MYUNC -> Connect Carolina -> In your Student Center, under the "Academic" tab, choose "Apply for Graduation" in the drop-down box, and then click the double arrows)
- 2) Complete the online Graduate School Application to Graduate form at eGraduation Central ([https://cfx.research.unc.edu/grad\\_appOnline/](https://cfx.research.unc.edu/grad_appOnline/))

## **MPH Competencies**

HB is committed to ensuring that its MPH program meets all UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and Council on Education for Public Health MPH Foundational Competencies (Appendix B). See Appendix C for information about competency-based professional certification exams.