



2024-2025

Student Handbook for the
Master of Public Health Degree

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Welcome to the UNC-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health and your Master of Public Health (MPH) Degree Handbook! We look forward to working together with you to make your journey to a master's degree as productive and enriching as possible. This student handbook is designed to serve as a guide for students as you navigate your way toward your MPH. In this handbook, we outline both opportunities and obligations of students to contribute to your successful education here at UNC. This guide is intended to complement the information contained in the Graduate School Handbook. <https://handbook.unc.edu/> In instances of discrepancy between these guidelines and the Graduate School Handbook, the latter takes precedence. The Graduate School Handbook provides/gives the basic university guidelines, but individual schools and individual departments are allowed to be more restrictive.

The MPH degree is a competency-based, practice-oriented degree program designed to provide you with a breadth and depth of knowledge and skills in public health principles and practice through didactic preparation and applied learning experiences.

You will obtain foundational knowledge and skills in MPH core courses and build on that training via concentration-specific courses. Your MPH practicum is an opportunity to apply your training in a professional public health setting. Your concentration-specific culminating experience will allow you to demonstrate synthesis of your training via a high-quality written product.

Upon successful completion of the MPH program, you will be able to demonstrate to current or future employers a valuable set of public health competencies that will enhance your ability to achieve your professional goals while contributing to the organization. You are encouraged to note competencies on your resume and describe your applied learning experiences during interviews as evidence of your marketable skills and knowledge.

The Gillings School is fully accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). CEPH is an independent agency, recognized by the US Department of Education to accredit schools and programs of public health.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, masters, educational specialist, and doctorate degrees. Degree-granting institutions also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).

The Gillings School Master of Public Health Degree

Gillings faculty have thoughtfully designed the Gillings MPH integrated core curriculum, infusing their collective passion, expertise, and experience into the courses. You will develop the foundational public health knowledge—comprised of **12** public health foundational learning objectives and 22 MPH foundational competencies—defined by [Council on Education for Public Health](#) (CEPH), the specialized accrediting agency for public health education. While all students in CEPH-accredited MPH programs will learn this same foundational public health knowledge, only Gillings MPH students will receive this innovative and exceptional core training from Gillings faculty.

Foundational Competencies

Foundational Learning Objectives Profession & Science of Public Health

- FLO01. Explain public health history, philosophy and values.
- FLO02. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services.
- FLO03. Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health.
- FLO04. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other communities relevant to the school or program.
- FLO05. Discuss the science of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.
- FLO06. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge.

Factors Related to Human Health

- FLO07. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population's health.
- FLO08. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population's health.
- FLO09. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health.
- FLO10. Explain the social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities.
- FLO11. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease.
- FLO12. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health and ecosystem health (e.g., One Health).

MPH Foundational Competencies

- MPH01. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice.
- MPH02. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context.
- MPH03. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate.
- MPH04. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice.
- MPH05. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings.
- MPH06. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities, and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community, and societal levels.
- MPH07. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health.
- MPH08. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs.
- MPH09. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention.
- MPH10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management.
- MPH11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs.
- MPH12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence.

- MPH13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes.
- MPH14. Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations.
- MPH15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity.
- MPH16. Apply principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making.
- MPH17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges.
- MPH18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.
- MPH19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.
- MPH20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content.
- MPH21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams.
- MPH22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue.

COMPASS

COMPASS is the Core Online Modules to Promote and Accelerate Student Success. COMPASS was developed for students to help ensure you have the skills and background needed to hit the ground running on your first day of the MPH Degree program. Ethics and Justice is a cornerstone of our MPH degree program. This module is the first introduction you will have to these topics. Additionally, Leadership & Teamwork is a key competency for MPH graduates. You will build on the topics in this module in your first MPH courses.

COMPASS includes the following topical modules that equate to approximately 7-10 hours of content

- **Public Health Ethics** – Increase awareness of ethical issues & potential injustices in PH policy and practice
- **Research & Writing** – Introduction to using the Health Sciences Library (HSL) & how to find information, avoid plagiarism, & prepare for conducting quantitative research.
- **Strategies for Student Success** - Prepare for success as an MPH student. You will become aware of how you approach communication with individuals and teams. It will also introduce you to skills that contribute to successful interpersonal and group interactions. As an MPH student, you will work with others in your courses and, as a public health professional, you will be frequently involved in teamwork.
- **Resources for Student Success** - List of resources available to help students meet needs.

Master's of Public Health Core Courses

The Gillings MPH Core is the centerpiece of the Master of Public Health program at Gillings. This integrated, 6 courses for 14-credit curriculum spans our 13 concentrations. Created by students, faculty, and staff from across the Gillings School, the MPH Core gives students the opportunity to start solving big public health problems right away. Throughout the core course work, students develop core competencies that they can apply in global and local contexts, including the importance of humility and cultural competency in addressing health disparities. Taught by an interdisciplinary team of instructors, the Gillings MPH Core curriculum draws on essential public health principles, methods and evidence, spanning disciplines to teach students how to identify, understand and solve public health problems.

During the first three courses, SPHG 711, 712, and 713, students focus on describing and prioritizing public health issues. In the next three courses, SPHG 701, 721 and 722, students work on developing, implementing, and leading public health solutions. In both semesters, students take part in interdisciplinary team projects, including a final paper and presentation in the fall and a proposing a solution to a public health problem in the spring.

MPH Core Courses

SPHG 701 – Leading from the Inside-Out:

This course prepares students for public health practice by introducing fundamental leadership skills necessary to advance equity, collaborate in interprofessional practice, and recognize and address bias in organizational settings. **Requisites:** Pre- or corequisites, [SPHG 711](#), [SPHG 712](#), [SPHG 713](#), [SPHG 721](#), and [SPHG 722](#). (2 credits, Spring Year 1 for Residential Students)

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 straight- forward data analyses. (2 credits, Fall Year 1 for Residential Students)

SPHG 712 - Methods and Measures for Public Health Practice:

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. **Requisites:** Corequisite, [SPHG 713](#). (2 credits, Fall Year 1 for Residential Students)

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. **Requisites:** Corequisite, [SPHG 712](#). (2 credits, Fall Year 1 for Residential Students)

SPHG 721 - Public Health Solutions: Systems, Policy and Advocacy:

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. Building on first semester MPH core courses. **Requisites:** Prerequisites, [SPHG 711](#), [712](#) and [713](#). (2 credits, Spring Year 1 for Residential Students)

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. Building on first semester MPH core courses. **Requisites:** Prerequisites, [SPHG 711](#), [712](#), [713](#); Pre- or corequisite, [SPHG 721](#). (4 credits, Spring Year 1 for Residential Students)

MPH Practicum Courses

SPHG 703 – MPH Pre-Practicum Assignments:

This course awards credit to required pre-practicum assignments. **Requisites:** Pre- or corequisite, [SPHG 701](#), [SPHG 711](#), [SPHG 712](#), [SPHG 713](#), [SPHG 721](#), [SPHG 722](#). (0.5 credits, Spring Year 1 for Residential Students)

MPH Practicum Hours:

This 200 (minimum) hour planned, mentored and evaluated applied practice experience gives students an opportunity to use their Gillings MPH training in a professional public health setting. **Requisites:** Prerequisite, [SPHG 703](#). (Summer between Year 1 and Year 2 for Residential Students)

SPHG 707 – MPH Post-Practicum Assignments:

This course awards credit to required post-practicum assignments. **Requisites:** Prerequisite, [SPHG 703](#). (0.5 credits, Fall Year 2 for Residential Students)

MPH Practicum

This 200 hour (minimum) planned, mentored, and evaluated applied practice experience (paid or unpaid) gives students an opportunity to use their Gillings MPH training in a professional public health setting.

Prerequisites

Prior to beginning the practicum, Gillings MPH students must 1) have final grades in SPHG 701, SPHG 711, SPHG 712, SPHG 713, SPHG 721, SPHG 722 and SPHG 703, and 2) receive approval from the practicum team to begin their practicum hours. Some concentrations require additional prerequisites (see Concentration-Specific Requirements). *Failure to adhere to practicum prerequisites may result in a student needing to complete an additional practicum, a penalty to the student's SPHG 707 grade, and/or academic ineligibility.*

Requirements

To satisfy degree requirements, a Gillings MPH practicum must:

- Take place in partnership with a governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial, for-profit, or appropriate university-affiliated organization. University-affiliated (refers to units engaged in academic endeavors) organizations must be primarily focused on community engagement, typically with external partners. University health promotion or wellness centers may also be appropriate. Faculty-supervised lab settings are not appropriate for the practicum. Students can only do a practicum with their regular place of employment if their practicum work will differ substantially from their current role and they will have a preceptor who is not their regular supervisor.
- Include activities that allow the student to contribute to improvements in public health by informing, assessing, developing, implementing, evaluating, and/or leading policies, programs, and/or interventions at the population rather than individual level. Academic teaching, observation and/or treatment of patients, shadowing, and activities conducted solely under faculty supervision (e.g., case study or preparing a manuscript for publication) are not appropriate practicum activities.
- Yield at least two student-generated, non-proprietary, practical work products (e.g., project plans; grant proposals; training manuals or lesson plans; surveys; memos; videos; podcasts; presentations designed to educate community members, advance an organization's work, etc.; spreadsheets; websites; photos with accompanying explanatory text; or other digital artifacts of learning), produced for the practicum organization's use and benefit, that demonstrate attainment of five [CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies](#). Unacceptable products are presentations (poster or oral) about the student's practicum experience, IRB applications, reflection papers, contact hour logs, scholarly papers prepared to allow

faculty to assess the experience, academic poster presentations, and other documents required for academic purposes. Students working in group-based settings cannot submit the same two practicum products for all group members. Each student must submit two products demonstrating individual competency attainment.

- Be mentored by a supervisor (preceptor) with public health expertise and experience to guide the practicum work who can carry out the Gillings MPH practicum preceptor responsibilities. We understand that people come to public health from a range of backgrounds and expect a preceptor to have either:
 - At least five years of full-time, professional public health experience; OR
 - A graduate degree in public health or a related field and at least two years of full-time, professional public health experience.

For conflict-of-interest reasons and to expand mentorship opportunities, a student's regular supervisor cannot serve as their preceptor. To gain exposure to public health work outside of an academic setting and for accreditation reasons, students are generally discouraged from completing a practicum with a faculty member. However, faculty may serve as a preceptor if the practicum products are produced in direct partnership with, and benefit, a non-academic community or organization.

- Comprise a minimum of 200 hours (equivalent to five weeks of full-time work).
- Take place in a location approved for student travel ([UNC Travel Policy](#)), and the student must complete [UNC Gillings International Pre-Departure Travel Requirements](#) prior to travel if applicable.

Some concentrations have concentration-specific practicum requirements:

- **Applied Epidemiology:** Students must complete EPID 710, EPID 795 and EPID 716 prior to beginning their practicum hours.
- **Environment, Climate and Health:** None.
- **Health Behavior:** Students must complete HBEH 730, HBEH 750, HBEH 752, and HBEH 753 prior to beginning their practicum hours.
- **Health Equity and Social Justice:** None.
- **Health Policy:** Students must complete HPM 754 prior to beginning practicum hours.
- **Global Health:** Students must complete at least two required Global Health concentration classes prior to beginning the practicum.
- **Leadership in Practice:**
 - **Students admitted Fall 2024 and on:** Students must complete PUBH 791 and at least one other Leadership in Practice (PUBH) concentration course (PUBH 781 or PUBH 730) prior to beginning their practicum hours.
 - **Students admitted prior to Fall 2024:** Students must complete two Leadership in Practice concentration classes, one of which must be PUBH 791, prior to beginning their practicum hours
- **Maternal, Child and Family Health:** Students must either work directly with the MCFH population or their work must directly impact the MCFH population.
- **Nutrition:** Students must take at least one nutrition course (NUTR 705, NUTR 711 or NUTR 765) prior to beginning their practicum hours. The practicum must be nutrition focused.
- **Nutrition and Dietetics:** Students must take NUTR 711, 712, 715 and 714/400 prior to beginning their practicum hours. As part of an accredited program by ACEND, Nutrition and Dietetics students must complete a minimum of 400 practicum hours (equivalent to ten weeks of full-time work), that take place within a public health/health department and/or hospital/clinical setting and be mentored by an on-site registered dietitian/nutritionist.
- **Place-Based Health:** None.
- **Population Health for Clinicians:** PUBH 706, PUBH 746, PUBH 749 (Fall section), PUBH 750, PUBH 760, PUBH 890, BIOS 641.
- **Public Health Data Science:** Students must complete BIOS 512, BIOS 635, BIOS 645 and BIOS 650 prior to beginning their practicum hours and work on a practicum project that involves the application of data

science skills.

For more information, please visit the [MPH Practicum](#) webpage. Please direct practicum questions to mphpracticum@unc.edu.

MPH Comprehensive Exam

The [MPH Comprehensive Exam](#) is a required milestone for the MPH degree awarded by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Comprehensive Exam will evaluate mastery of the MPH core foundational knowledge and competencies. The MPH Comprehensive Exam is designed to evaluate students' ability to apply foundational public health knowledge and skills developed in the MPH Core courses (SPHG 711, 712, 713, 721, 722) to novel contexts, problems, and populations. It also is designed to further the development of students' integrative and critical thinking skills. The Comprehensive Exam (and the preparation for it) also provides students with the opportunity to practice and demonstrate skills communicating about public health issues and solutions with colleagues, other stakeholders, and the general public.

The MPH Comprehensive Exam is embedded into SPHG 722 MPH core course, students will complete the comprehensive exam at the end of the course via Canvas. The result of the exam has no impact on the grade a student receives in the SPHG 722 course. Students must have final grades in SPHG 711, 712, 713, and 721 in order to sit for exam.

Population Health for Clinician students must successfully complete and have final grades in the following courses prior to sitting for the MPH Comp Exam: PUBH 706, PUBH 746, PUBH 749, PUBH 890 and BIOS 641. The MPH Com Exam will be administered in PUBH 746.

The MPH Comprehensive Exam consists of the student answering two of six primary questions utilizing the health topic from their team project topic in SPHG 722. The two questions will be chosen at random for each student and have a 200-word limit per question.

Students who do not have a passing score on the comprehensive exam will have a remediation plan and retake the exam. An individual remediation plan for the student will be developed and communicated to the student by the respective MPH Program Coordinator. Per university policy, students must wait 90 days to retake the comprehensive exam. If a student fails the exam twice, they become immediately academically ineligible by the Graduate School. A student made academically ineligible under certain conditions may be reinstated upon petition initiated through the student's academic program. An appropriate academic plan must be developed. Please see the Graduate School's handbook for reinstatement policies: <https://handbook.unc.edu/masters.html>. **In the event a student is unresponsive or fails to submit their Comprehensive Exam by the announced deadline, it will result in a Failure of the exam.**

Culminating Experience

Each student completes a 3-credit culminating experience in the final term of their program of study. Once the Culminating Experience is completed, no additional course registration is allowed. This experience must yield a high-quality written product that demonstrates four competencies, two foundational and two concentration specific. This culminating experience ideally is delivered in a manner that is useful to external stakeholders, such as non-profit or governmental organizations, and could take the form of a course-based capstone project or master's paper but will be tailored to the concentration a student chooses.

Students must complete their practicum hours and submit all required practicum products to the SPHG 707 course site one week prior to the first day of classes of the term. If they are unable to submit their products by this date,

students will be dropped from their 992 course before the first day of class. If a student has a need to take SPHG 707 (MPH Post-Practicum Assignments) concurrent to a 992 course, they must first discuss their situation with their Academic Coordinator and receive approval from the respective MPH Program Coordinator prior to registering for the courses. Concurrent enrollment in the courses is not guaranteed. Note: MPH Culminating Experience (992) courses are not eligible for an Incomplete grade. If the student must retake the course, they will be awarded the grade they have earned up to that point.

Academic Advising

We are committed to providing the advice, assistance, and support that you need to be successful during every step of your educational journey at Gillings. As a graduate student, you can expect quality advising and mentoring experience from staff and faculty at Gillings. It is also important that you reach out to get what you need in terms of help and support. A successful system of academic advising and mentoring is highly dependent upon a shared commitment of students, staff, and faculty, as well as access to timely and accurate information. Your designated Academic Coordinator can be located here: <https://sph.unc.edu/students/osa/>.

Below is a brief description of the advising/mentoring roles that these individuals play so that you know who to contact:

Academic Coordinator (AC):

Academic Coordinators are Student Affairs professionals who have expert knowledge of the degree requirements within your program of study and a working knowledge of academic options and resources at Gillings and throughout the University. Academic Coordinators are expected to involve students in decision-making about their program plan, explain requirements and options, and encourage you to ask questions.

- This Gillings School Student Affairs professional is assigned by your concentration.
- Serves as your primary academic advisor.
- Serves as an expert in navigating academic policies, procedures, program requirements, and campus resources.
- Helps with necessary paperwork including, but not limited to, registration information and processes, policy exceptions, transfer requests, and continuous enrollment or leave of absences.
- Assists in tracking your progress toward degree completion.
- Is available via email or scheduled appointment.
- Assists with group/cohort academic advising sessions.

What can your Academic Coordinator help with?

- **Academic Success Strategies:** ACs can help you learn strategies for success at Gillings, including effective study habits, test-taking strategies, time management, and addressing test anxiety.
- **Academic Advising:** ACs can help navigate degree requirements, clarify progress towards degree completion, and review graduation timelines.
- **Campus Involvement:** ACs are knowledgeable about opportunities for making the most of your Gillings experience, getting involved with groups at Gillings or on campus, and in the community.
- **Identify Campus Resources:** AC's can connect you with helpful resources at Gillings or on campus to support your success.

Academic Coordinators understand your degree requirements. They are also familiar with the academic options and resources at Gillings and across the University that can support you throughout your program. ACs are expected to involve students in decision-making about their program requirements and options. ACs will encourage students to ask questions, gather information, and get

the resources needed to have a successful experience.

You Can Expect Your Advisor/Academic Coordinator to:

- Be available for advising appointments.
- Assist you in exploring course offerings by asking "big questions" about your worldviews, life goals and career interests, and by taking into account aptitudes, academic performance and the frequency of course offerings.
- Be familiar with core and concentration requirements.
- Understand the mechanics and deadlines of course registration, such as adding and dropping classes, using special enrollment forms and following procedures administered by the Office of the Registrar.
- Understand University grading policies, including grade review, probation and academic dismissal.
- Know where to refer students with special needs or interests.
- Empower you to take responsibility for your educational experience and to take advantage of opportunities in your major and intended career field (internships, volunteer and service-learning opportunities).
- Guide you in a continual reassessment of your course of study in light of changing interests and goals and overall academic performance.
- Understand the teaching/learning connection in academic advising and the significance of the advisor/advisee relationship in student engagement and retention.

Cohort Academic Advising

For the Residential MPH program, the Academic Coordinators facilitate concentration specific MPH cohort academic advising sessions for the first year of your MPH program. Cohort academic advising is an efficient mechanism for disseminating timely information (e.g., course registration, support services, elective and course guidance, graduation requirements, etc.) that is relevant to all students in the cohort. Cohort (concentration specific), advisement will typically be scheduled 2 weeks prior to the opening of registration for the coming semester.

Individual Academic Advising

Additional interactions between students and Academic Coordinators are encouraged when individual issues arise and within reasonable demands on staff time. To ensure a mutually beneficial relationship:

The advisee/student is expected to:

- Cultivate honest and professional relationships/be present and dedicated; listen to and respond to feedback and emails from your Academic Coordinator in a timely manner.
- Be knowledgeable about program requirements, processes, coursework, and deadlines.
- Initiate scheduling of meetings and come prepared with an agenda of topics that need to be discussed at each meeting.
- Keep their AC and Faculty Mentor updated on academic and professional goals.
- Keep track of and ensure that graduation requirements are being met.
- Inform the Academic Coordinator of their progress and if applicable their struggles/challenges.
- Respond to communications from the Academic Coordinator in a timely manner.
- Include Program format and Concentration when communicating with the Academic Coordinator
- Understand that you are ultimately responsible for your own educational experience.

Mentoring/Your Faculty Mentor (FM):

Faculty Mentors help students develop professionally by suggesting opportunities based on their own expertise and experience in the field, connecting students to professional networks relevant to their interests, and providing guidance on career interests. Faculty Mentors stay current with trends in the field, conferences and professional development opportunities, and other valuable discipline-specific resources.

- Your Gillings School FM is assigned by your concentration.
- Serves as an expert in a specific field of study within your concentration.
- Provides feedback regarding course selection to meet your overall academic goals and career interests.
- Suggests professional development and job or award opportunities.
- Is available by appointment, typically not drop-in. Contact your FM by email and request a meeting within the first few weeks of the semester to introduce yourself. Do not hesitate to email again if the first message does not get a reply within 2 business days. It is recommended that students should meet with their faculty mentor at least once per semester.
- Assists students in identifying professional and career goals; may provide advice and support for career decision-making.
- Assist in preparation for those students remediating MPH Comprehensive Exam.

Developing a Successful Relationship with Your Faculty Mentor (FM):

While each student is assigned an individual FM, you are also encouraged to reach out to other faculty members during your time at Gillings. You will get to know faculty from the classes you take, if you hold a research position or job, and at other meetings or activities at Gillings. Faculty members can serve as future references for you, connect you with future employers, and/or help you with networking and career planning in your area of study. The value of building relationships with the phenomenal faculty members at Gillings is worth your time and effort during your degree journey and long after.

Faculty Mentors help students develop professionally by suggesting opportunities based on their own expertise and experience in the field, connecting students to professional networks relevant to their interests, and providing guidance on career interests. Faculty Mentors stay current with trends in the field, conferences and professional development opportunities, and other valuable discipline-specific resources. FMs often write letters of reference and support students who are seeking funding, awards or job opportunities.

Students are responsible for scheduling, preparing for, and keeping appointments with Faculty Mentor. Students should seek out faculty contact information. Students should familiarize themselves with program requirements before they meet with a Faculty mentor in order to use your time together efficiently. Be clear in letting the FM know what you need – you can send agenda items in advance of your meeting. Respond to emails from your Faculty Mentor in a timely manner. In graduate school, students are responsible for making their own decisions based on the best information and advice available.

In addition to your assigned Academic Coordinator and Faculty Mentor, as an MPH student, you also have access to the MPH Program Team listed below.

- Director of MPH Program – Karla Townley-Tilson, kttilson@unc.edu,
- Program Coordinators: Residential MPH Program Coordinator - Cassie Nakamoto, cnaka@unc.edu, MPH@UNC Program Coordinator- John Sugg, Jr., johnsugg@unc.edu or
- MPH Academic Program Support Coordinator (APSC) - Jacey Dullum, jaceyhd@unc.edu.

The Master of Public Health (MPH) Degree Requirements

All candidates for the MPH in the Gillings School of Global Public Health are required to successfully complete:

1. 14 MPH Core credits: SPHG 701, SPHG 711, SPHG 712, SPHG 713, SPHG 721, and SPHG 722.
2. 1 MPH practicum credit: SPHG 703, Practicum Hours, SPHG 707.
3. 15 Concentration credits: A concentration in one of the departments or curricula of the School, by satisfying whatever requirements that department or curriculum may set.
4. 9 elective credits (see policy and guidelines for choosing electives below).
5. 3 culminating experience course credits (course prefix and number varies by concentration).
6. A minimum of 42 credit hours must be met to satisfy CEPH requirements.
7. A minimum of 200 hours of supervised practicum field experience.
8. The MPH Comprehensive Exam (embedded into SPHG 722 or PUBH 746 for PHC students)
9. All degree requirements and milestones are set forth by the Gillings School and the UNC Graduate School.

For Population Health for Clinicians Degree Requirements, please refer to the PHC concentration information on page 35 and/or webpage: <https://sph.unc.edu/resource-pages/master-of-public-health/population-health-for-clinicians-concentration/>

MPH Electives Policy and Guidelines

Students in the MPH Program are required to take 9 credits of electives. Students are expected to use their electives in a thoughtful way to strengthen their public health knowledge/skills and are encouraged to consult with their Academic Coordinator early on prior to the registration period for this purpose. In addition to those courses offered in the Gillings School there are many appropriate electives elsewhere in the university.

Please note the following course elective guidelines:

1. While not all courses in the Gillings School are available to be taken as an elective, Gillings School prefixed courses numbered **400+ may be taken as an elective space** permitting or by instructor consent. Please visit the UNC Catalog for all Gillings School course prefix descriptions (BIOS, ENVR, EPID, HBEH, HPM, MHCH, NUTR, PUBH, and SPHG)
2. Any non-Gillings course at UNC numbered 500+ may be taken as a potential elective, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. the student's ability to meet the course prerequisites;
 - b. Pass/fail courses including Graduate Level Courses (700+) do **not** count towards MPH degree credit;
 - c. discuss your choices with your Academic Coordinator and/or Faculty Mentor prior to course registration.
3. If a student has previously completed a Gillings School graduate certificate, then the following guidelines apply by certificate area (with minimum grades of P or higher in each course):
 - **Public Health Core Concepts Certificate (12 credits):** 9 credits that count toward the integrated MPH core and the remaining 3 credits (e.g., BIOS 600 or EPID 600) count toward an elective. NOTE: This is ONLY for those students who completed the Public Health Core Concepts Certificate within the past five years prior to Fall 2019.
 - **Public Health Leadership Certificate (11 credits prior to Summer 2019/9 credits for students who begin Summer 2019 and forward):** 11 or 9 credits as electives and if the concentration is Leadership in Practice, PUBH 791 is counted as a required concentration course of 3 credits and then 6 credits are counted as electives.
 - **Field Epidemiology Certificate (12 credits):** 12 credits are counted toward electives and if the concentration is Applied Epidemiology then EPID 750 & EPID 759 are counted as required concentration courses of 6 credits and then 6 credits are counted towards electives.
 - **Global Health Certificate (9 credits):** 9 credits are counted as electives and if the

concentration is Global Health, then PUBH 711 is counted as a required concentration course of 3 credits and then 6 credits are counted toward electives.

4. Courses used according to the [Graduate School's transfer policy](#) toward electives must also adhere to the above guidelines with minimum grades of P or higher. Pass/fail courses are not eligible to count towards elective credit.
5. Courses used under the [Interinstitutional Programs policy](#) toward electives must also adhere to the above guidelines.

MPH@UNC students are restricted to elective courses that have 973x section numbers in Connect Carolina and are unable to attain a certificate.

Electing a Minor

For Residential MPH students only: With the approval of the major and minor academic programs, a student may elect to declare a formal minor in any program that offers a graduate degree. The student should submit an approved [Minor Declaration](#) to The Graduate School. MPH@UNC students are unable to declare a minor.

The minor must comprise at least nine credit hours beyond the major. All credits must be for courses listed (or cross-listed) in programs other than that of the major and cannot also be counted toward the major. A minor may consist of a set of related courses, some of which are listed by one program and some of which are listed by another. In most cases, the minor would not include courses from more than two programs. Only one program name will be listed as granting the minor, and the director of graduate studies in the minor program must agree to accept any courses from outside the minor program offerings.

The minor must be approved in advance by the director of graduate studies in both the major and minor programs. When a satisfactory minor has been planned and approved by both programs, a copy of the proposed minor course of study should be signed by the director of graduate studies in the major and minor programs and sent to The Graduate School to become a permanent part of the student's record.

Time Required for Degree Completion:

All MPH Students:

A master's student has five calendar years from the date of first registration in the master's program to complete the master's degree (e.g., if the date of first registration is September 2020, the five-year time limit expires September 2025). Students may request an extension in time to complete the degree. Reapplication is required to continue pursuit of the degree if the five-year limit expires. Reapplications are not automatically accepted.

Students have the flexibility to complete the program as quickly (within outlined curriculum requirements) or slowly as fits their needs if completion is within the 5-year limit.

If no course is taken during either the Spring or Fall term the student is considered inactive and will have to apply for readmission. Students who lapse enrollment lose official student status and recognized University affiliation. Relinquishing formal student status can disadvantage students by eliminating their eligibility for financial aid. Further registration is contingent on a final readmission decision by the Graduate School. The student must initiate the readmission process in the following timetable. Additional details and forms are provided in The Graduate School Handbook (<https://handbook.unc.edu/admission.html>). Students should reach out to their respective Academic Coordinator to begin process.

Upon readmission to the MPH program, students will continue with their original admit term MPH degree Study Plan if they have been absent from the program for less than 2 academic years. Readmittance for students that

originally begun their MPH degree more than 2 academic years prior may be subject to complete the latest version of their concentration's MPH degree study plan. This decision is left up to the MPH program after consultation with both the respective Concentration Lead(s) and Academic Coordinator.

Readmission deadlines are:

- Fall term: July 1
- Spring term: December 1
- Summer term: April 1

MPH@UNC Students Only:

The MPH degree in the MPH@UNC online format can be completed as either a part-time or full-time student. By Graduate School definition, full-time graduate enrollment is a minimum of 9 credit hours per term in the Fall and Spring terms. Students may never register for more than 16 credits in any Fall or Spring term. Students are not required to register for the Summer term to be considered continually enrolled in the university. Students registering for the Summer may register for no more than 8 credits without an overload exception. The MPH@UNC frequently makes overload requests for students registering for the summer. Overload requests are not automatically accepted. The Program Coordinator will consider previous grades and performance when deciding to approve or deny an overload request.

Visit the MPH@UNC Portal for example scheduling sequences: <https://carolinamph.web.unc.edu/plans-of-study/>

MPH Course Exemptions and Substitutes

Students may apply for exemption from SPHG 711 and/or SPHG 712. These two courses are the **only** courses that students can request an exemption from in the MPH curriculum. To do so, students must demonstrate in the application that they have achieved the learning objectives and competencies covered in the required core course through other coursework completed in the past five years. Examples may include coursework completed at another university, through a different degree program, or not on the list of approved substitutes. In rare circumstances, coursework completed more than 5 years ago may be considered in combination with demonstration of competencies through professional work experience. Application for [SPHG 711](#) and/or [SPHG 712 exemption](#).

It is important to note that an exemption does not reduce the number of credit hours required for your degree. Students must make up the credit hours that were approved via the exemption process. Receiving an exemption generally provides a student with more flexibility to take electives. Students may explore the possibility of transferring credits to their degree by talking with their Academic Coordinator.

Please note that the MPH core and curriculum is an intentional series of interconnected courses where all students are trained and work collaboratively at solving public health problems at the intersection of multiple disciplines. For more information and to discover “**Options for fulfilling the core public health curriculum requirements for MPH/MSPH students entering Fall 2018 and later**” or “**Approved Core Course Substitutes**,” please visit: <https://sph.unc.edu/students/academic-and-policies/>.

All other MPH Core courses (SPHG 701, 713, 721, and 722) and Required Concentration Courses are not eligible for exemption, course substitution or transfer credit.

MPH Program Policy on Incomplete Grades in Core and Concentration Courses

This policy describes implications and procedures for Incomplete (IN) grades in an MPH Core (SPHG 701, 711, 712, 713, 721, 722), Practicum (SPHG 703, 707), all required concentration courses, and elective courses.

A grade of Incomplete (IN) is given when the course instructor determines that exceptional circumstances warrant extending the time for the student to complete course requirements. The MPH program does not recognize requests for IN grades for personal convenience. An IN grade in an MPH course is only appropriate for students who cannot complete course requirements because of unforeseen circumstances, typically in cases of illness, a family emergency, or other extraordinary circumstances.

To qualify for an Incomplete:

- Students must have substantially engaged in the course throughout the semester and be positioned to pass the course when the missing assessments/assignments are completed.
- Students should explore all options with their Academic Coordinator, such as a medical withdrawal, before petitioning for an Incomplete.
- Students with verifiable, unavoidable reasons for being unable to complete the course within the semester registered must submit the MPH Incomplete Petition Form to their course instructor to request a grade of Incomplete.

Students petitioning to receive an Incomplete must do so before the last day of classes for the term. As part of the petition, students must provide a compelling explanation of the difficulties/challenges that kept them from satisfying course requirement(s), and the student must acknowledge that they agree to complete the work/assignments by the course instructor- approved due date(s). The instructor should set clear expectations for course completion requirements. Any renegotiation of the petition's due dates is at the discretion of the instructor and must be completed before the deadline(s) listed in the [MPH Incomplete Petition Form](#). In no case will this extension exceed one year set forth by the Graduate School.

While the Graduate School permits up to one year to convert an IN to a permanent grade (See UNC Graduate School Handbook for official policy: <https://handbook.unc.edu/grading.html>), the Gillings MPH program requires students to complete work to receive a final grade in the MPH Core (SPHG 701, 711, 712, 713, 721, 722), MPH Practicum (SPHG 703, Practicum Hours, 707), and all required concentration courses by the last day of the fall or spring term following the term for which the IN grade was granted. Students must have permanent grades in all MPH Core (SPHG 701, 711, 712, 713, 721, 722) and Practicum courses (SPHG 703 only) before they can begin the Culminating Experience (992 course). The summer terms are not included in the timeline for completion of work for IN grades. This shortened timeframe ensures that students can complete all MPH requirements without delaying graduation. In cases where students do not abide by the agreed upon deadline(s), the currently assigned IN grade will remain on their record until a final grade has been assigned by the faculty or will automatically convert to an F* by the Graduate School at the end of one calendar year. A grade of F* will render a student [academically ineligible](#) to continue in the MPH program.

According to Federal Guidelines, students must maintain SAP – Satisfactory Academic Progress – to be eligible for financial aid at UNC. SAP standards will be evaluated at the conclusion of each semester. Students must successfully complete one-third of the coursework in which they are enrolled. To estimate this completion rate, divide the number of credit hours successfully completed by the number of credit hours attempted. Incomplete courses will not count as completed until a grade has been recorded for the class. Incomplete grades will affect the completion standard.

Implications of Incomplete Grades

- Students may be at risk of becoming [academically ineligible](#) if outstanding coursework is not completed by the agreed upon timeline.
- An Incomplete in any MPH Core course may prevent a student from being able to start their practicum or take the comprehensive exam.
- MPH students must have permanent grades in all MPH Core courses prior to sitting for the comprehensive exam.
- MPH students must have permanent grades in all MPH Core, Practicum, concentration, and elective courses before enrolling in the culminating experience (992) course. An Incomplete in any MPH Core, Practicum, concentration, or elective course will prevent a student from beginning the culminating experience (992) course.
- Students with one or more Incomplete grades will not be permitted to register for an independent study course as part of their MPH requirements.
- Students are not permitted to receive IN grades in the culminating experience 992 course.
- An Incomplete grade in any course will prevent a student from graduating, even if the course credit hours are not needed to fulfill degree requirements.

Workflow for Requesting Incomplete Grade

1. Student completes the MPH petition form to request an Incomplete and obtain approval from the course instructor.
2. Course instructor reviews, approves or denies, and signs the petition for Incomplete grade.
 - a. For MPH@UNC: The section instructor will also notify and obtain the approval of the course lead instructor of the approved petition and agreed upon timeline for completion.
3. Students send the approved and signed petition to their Academic Coordinator. The Academic Coordinator will keep the approved petition in the student's file and will inform the student's Faculty Mentor of request for IN grade.
4. Student completes outstanding work by agreed upon deadlines or renegotiates an approved new timeline with course instructor.
5. Course instructor grades outstanding work, calculates overall grade in course, submits grade change request in ConnectCarolina, and communicates grade to student.
 - a. For MPH@UNC courses where the section instructor may not be available, the course lead instructor or department chair will receive/grade the coursework and submit the grade change in ConnectCarolina.

Changes to MPH Concentration

Current students (online or residential) wishing to change MPH concentrations may do so for extenuating circumstances, on a limited basis only, must be in good academic standing, and must abide by the timelines for changing concentrations. Students may only change concentrations once during their MPH program. The MPH program does not require a student to submit a new application to change MPH concentrations within the same program platform. Residential MPH to MPH@UNC (or vice versa) are required to submit a new application. A petition request to change concentration must be completed before a student starts their practicum work.

Concentration change deadlines:

- Effective Fall term: June 1st
- Effective Spring term: November 1st
- Effective Summer term: April 1st

Process for Changing MPH Concentrations:

Students must meet with either the Residential MPH Program Coordinator or the MPH@UNC Program Coordinator before they initiate the petition to change MPH concentrations. In this meeting the implications for changing concentrations will be explained. Students should note that concentration changes are not guaranteed and may have financial, course registration, and academic implications. Consequences may include but are not limited to, extending time to degree completion, taking more than 42 total credits, incurring additional tuition and fees, and changes to financial aid or funding eligibility. Due to the MPH program course sequencing, prerequisites and when courses are offered (some only once per academic year), students who wish to change MPH concentrations may not take courses out of designated sequence.

The petition to change MPH concentration should include the following from the student:

- Student to complete the Change in Concentration form given to them by their respective MPH Program Coordinator or Academic Coordinator.
- The petition form signed by the current concentration acknowledging that the student wishes to change concentrations.
- A cover letter outlining the reason for switching MPH concentrations.
- A brief statement of purpose. It should be similar in content to the one submitted in their original admission application, tailored to the new concentration.
- A semester-by-semester plan of study outlining the MPH degree in the new concentration.
- Any additional documents to support the petition request.

The new concentration lead will have the opportunity to review the petition, supporting documents, current MPH transcript, as well as the original MPH program application. Should the petition be denied the concentration lead will provide a justification for the student. If the new concentration lead approves the change, the MPH Program Coordinator (residential or MPH@UNC) will review and submit to the Dean of Master's Programs to approve the change. Once all parties have reviewed and approved/denied, the Director of MPH Program will send the petition form to the Graduate School to ensure the student's subplan is updated appropriately. The petition decision will then be communicated to the student.

Admitted Students Requesting to Change Concentration:

Students who have been admitted to the MPH program (online or residential), but have not yet begun classes, may request to change concentrations. Students wishing to change concentrations should request, in writing, the desire to change, write a new personal statement tailored to the new concentration, and submit that to the MPH Program Coordinator (residential or MPH@UNC). The MPH Program Coordinator will submit the request, new personal statement, and original application to the

old concentration for approval to change and the new concentration for approval to enter the concentration. **Students should not request to change to a concentration for which they were denied admission.** Students should note that a change in concentration is not guaranteed.

Impact on Assistantships and Funding:

Changing from one MPH concentration to another MPH concentration may affect the student's assistantships and/or other Gillings department and faculty supported funding. These funding sources cannot guarantee continued funding if the student is accepted into another MPH concentration. To aid in their decision to change concentrations, students should have a conversation with their current concentration to understand the potential changes to their funding.

Request to Change MPH Delivery Format

Students wishing to change MPH delivery format may do so for extenuating circumstances only, must be in good academic standing, and must abide by the appropriate application deadlines. Students should note that delivery format changes are not guaranteed and may have financial, course registration, and academic implications. Students may only change formats once during their MPH degree.

Process for Changing MPH Delivery Format:

Students should submit a statement outlining the reason for switching MPH delivery format and meet with the new MPH Program Coordinator (Residential or MPH@UNC) before they initiate the process to change MPH delivery formats. In this meeting, the implications for changing formats will be explained and a new program of study will be developed. Students requesting to change the delivery format (from online to residential or residential to online) will require students to submit a new admissions application to the desired format, regardless of desired concentration. Admission to the alternative format is not guaranteed. Applications are reviewed based upon the ongoing admissions cycle for each program format. Online students are admitted to three start times (Fall, Spring, Summer) per academic year and residential students are admitted once per academic year in the Fall. The 30% credit transfer rule (12 credits) will apply to changing delivery formats.

Impact on Assistantships and Funding:

Changing delivery formats may affect the student's assistantships and other Gillings, department, and faculty supported funding. These funding sources cannot guarantee continued funding if the student is accepted into the other MPH format. To aid in their decision to change concentrations, students should have a conversation with their current concentration to understand the potential changes to their funding.

MPH Dual Degree Programs (Residential Students Only)

Dual degree programs balance structural efficiency with individual program integrity and result in the awarding of two degrees from two different disciplines with coordination across the degrees. The Gillings School of Global Public Health Master of Public Health is a 42-credit graduate professional degree program. Dual degree options are currently for residential MPH students only.

Gillings School of Global Public Health currently partners with four programs to offer dual degrees with the Master of Public Health program:

- **Available Dual Degree Programs:**
- **Juris Doctor (JD)**
 - Typically paired with the following MPH Concentrations: Health Behavior, Health Equity, Health Policy, Global Health, Leadership in Practice, or Maternal, Child and Family Health
- **Master of City and Regional Planning (MCRP)**
 - Typically paired with the following MPH Concentrations: Environment, Climate and Health, Health Behavior, Health Equity, Health Policy, Global Health or Leadership in Practice
- **Master of Social Work (MSW)**
 - Typically paired with the following MPH Concentrations: Health Behavior, Health Equity, Global Health, Leadership in Practice or Maternal, Child and Family Health.
- **Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)**
 - Typically paired with the following MPH Concentrations: Applied Epidemiology, Global Health, Health Equity, Health Policy, Leadership in Practice, Maternal Child and Family Health, or Population Health for Clinicians

To participate in the dual degree program, the student must apply and be admitted into each degree program individually. It is recommended for students to apply to each program at the same time or apply to the second program no later than during the first year of the first program.

Juris Doctor (JD) Required Coursework:

- 110 credit hours of coursework, which includes:
 - 77 credits of required coursework within the Juris Doctor program, and
 - 33 credits of required coursework within the Master of Public Health program.
 - The MPH degree requires three major milestones for students to complete the degree: a comprehensive exam, practicum, and culminating experience (master's thesis substitute).
- **Shared Credits:** The MPH degree plan of study includes 9 credits that count toward the JD degree required credits and 9 credits of the JD degree that count towards the MPH degree required (elective) credits.
- **Typical Timeframe:** Typical plan of study allows for students to earn a JD and MPH in four years.
 - Year one and two: JD program course work
 - Year three: MPH program course work
 - Year four: completion of remaining degree requirements in both programs
- **Tuition and Fees:** MPH/JD dual degree students are required to pay three semesters of full-time MPH tuition and fees and five semesters of JD tuition and fees regardless of either their course enrollments or the order in which the individual programs are started.
- **Awarding of Degrees:** Students must apply to graduate for both degrees at the same time. Both degrees must be awarded concurrently, even if the requirements for one degree are satisfied first, to maintain eligibility for benefits of the dual degree program.

Master of City and Regional Planning (MCRP) Required Coursework:

- 66 credit hours of coursework, which includes:

- 33 credits of required coursework within the Master of City and Regional Planning program, and
- 33 credits of required coursework within the Master of Public Health program.
- The MPH degree requires three major milestones for students to complete the degree: a comprehensive exam, practicum, and culminating experience (master's thesis substitute).
- **Shared Credits:** The MPH degree plan of study includes 9 credits that count toward the MCRP degree required credits and 9 credits of the MCRP degree that count towards the MPH degree required (elective) credits.
- **Typical Timeframe:** Typical plan of study allows for students to earn a MCRP and MPH in three years.
 - Year one: MCRP or MPH program coursework
 - Year two: MPH or MCRP program course work
 - Year three: completion of remaining degree requirements in both programs
- **Tuition and Fees:** Students will pay tuition in the College of Arts and Sciences (where the MCRP program is based) for one full academic year plus one semester and in the Gillings School of Public Health (where the MPH program is based) for one full academic year plus one semester.
- **Awarding of Degrees:** Students must apply to graduate for both degrees at the same time. Both degrees must be awarded concurrently, even if the requirements for one degree are satisfied first, to maintain eligibility for benefits of the dual degree program.

Master of Social Work (MSW) Required Coursework:

- 77 credit hours of coursework, which includes:
 - 44 credits of required coursework within the Master of Social Work, and
 - 33 credits of required coursework within the Master of Public Health program.
 - The MPH degree requires three major milestones for students to complete the degree: a comprehensive exam, practicum, and culminating experience (master's thesis substitute).
- **Shared Credits:** The MPH degree plan of study includes 18 credits that count toward the MSW degree required credits and 9 credits of the MSW degree that count towards the MPH degree required (elective) credits.
- **Typical Timeframe:** Typical plan of study allows for students to earn a MSW and MPH in three years.
 - Year one: MSW program coursework
 - Year two: MPH program course work
 - Year three: completion of remaining degree requirements in both programs
- **Tuition and Fees:** Students will pay tuition in the School of Social Work for one full academic year and in the Gillings School of Public Health for two full academic years.
- **Awarding of Degrees:** Students must apply to graduate for both degrees at the same time. Both degrees must be awarded concurrently, even if the requirements for one degree are satisfied first, to maintain eligibility for benefits of the dual degree program.

Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) Required Coursework:

- 171 credit hours of coursework, which includes:
 - 138 credits of required coursework within the Doctor of Pharmacy program, and
 - 33 credits of required coursework within the Master of Public Health program.
 - The MPH degree requires three major milestones for students to complete the degree: a comprehensive exam, practicum, and culminating experience (master's thesis substitute).
- **Shared Credits:** Students in the MPH program can use 9 credits (approximately 20%) of the PharmD degree that count towards the MPH degree required (elective) credits. There are no shared credit requirements for the PharmD program.
- **Typical Timeframe:** Typical plan of study allows for students to earn a MSW and MPH in five years.
 - Year one and two: PharmD program coursework
 - Year three: MPH program course work

- Year four and five: completion of remaining degree requirements in both programs
- **Tuition and Fees:** Students will pay tuition in the PharmD program for their first, second, fifth and one semester of their fourth year. Students will pay tuition in the MPH degree in their third year and one semester of their fourth year.
- **Awarding of Degrees:** Students must apply to graduate for both degrees at the same time. Both degrees must be awarded concurrently, even if the requirements for one degree are satisfied first, to maintain eligibility for benefits of the dual degree program.

Gillings School Career Services

Gillings MPH students have access to various career services and resources. Residential students should contact the Gillings School Career Services office. MPH@UNC online students are served by an independent career services office and should contact their Student Success Advisor or Academic Coordinator for additional information.

Handshake

Handshake is a talent recruiting platform that connects students and employers. Features include:

- Job postings from thousands of employers;
- Ability to get messages from employers;
- Peer learning tools (Q&A, company reviews); and
- Information about public career events and career fairs.

Access [Handshake](#) using your Onyen. From there, you can complete your profile.

Handshake includes employers and postings across a wide variety of career sectors. We at Gillings are committed to helping increase the volume of targeted public health resources over time. We work with public health employers to encourage them to add their employer information and jobs.

University Career Services (UCS)

UCS offers access to virtual career services for both residential and MPH@UNC students in the form of online workshops, strengths assessments, resume templates and social media strategies.

For those of you who are local, drop-in advising in their Chapel Hill office in [Hanes Hall, Monday through Friday from 1 pm until 4 pm](#). Drop-in hours are for quick (10-15 minute) resume or cover letter critiques, UCS resources and using Handshake



Concentrations

Our 13 residential concentration areas and 3 online concentrations include a wide range of research and practice portfolios – from helping to solve the opioid abuse epidemic, to preventing and controlling cancer, to improving water access and quality, to using big data and machine learning. Explore all these areas and see how our engaged faculty, students and staff members work with communities and across disciplines — in North Carolina and around the world — to solve some of our most challenging health problems.

Gillings faculty designed MPH concentration curricula to augment and enhance the foundational competencies in more discipline-specific domains, bringing their world-renown expertise and experience into the classroom setting to provide you with unparalleled public health training. In your declared MPH concentration plan of study, you will develop the following concentration-specific competencies through required coursework and applied learning experiences.

MPH Residential Concentrations:

- Applied Epidemiology
- Environment, Climate, and Health
- Global Health
- Health Behavior
- Health Equity and Social Justice
- Health Policy
- Leadership in Practice
- Maternal, Child and Family Health
- Nutrition
- Nutrition & Dietetics
- Place-Based Health
- Population Health for Clinicians
- Public Health Data Science

MPH@UNC Online Concentrations:

- Applied Epidemiology
- Leadership in Practice
- Nutrition

For Concentration Specific Admissions Requirements: [Admissions Requirements](#)

Applied Epidemiology

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

- **Understand surveillance systems** and how they can be applied to a disease or condition of public health importance using evolving technologies and data linkages.
- **Recommend and implement the appropriate study design and understand:**
 - What to measure to track disease, specific disease indicators and possible causal factors (i.e., to determine if X causes Y);
 - How to measure it, including recommending strategies of data collection; and
 - In what groups of people.
- **Accelerate the development and implementation of evidence-based solutions** to pressing health problems in your area(s) of interest.
- **Advance a holistic understanding of current and emerging public health challenges** with a unique focus on prevention, quality and effectiveness.
- **Collaborate across disciplines and professions** to improve the health of communities and populations as well as individual patients.

Examples of recent public health topics that our students have explored include the COVID-19 pandemic, HIV, cardiovascular disease, environmental exposures, the opioid epidemic, suicide rates, HPV vaccine, cancer treatment efficacy and the role of nutrition.

Students often apply knowledge and skills from other fields of interest to epidemiology, including sociology, psychology, statistics, and cellular or molecular biology.

More Information about Applied Epidemiology Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plans](#)
- MPH@UNC length to complete MPH degree program may be longer than residential format.
- For both MPH program formats: EPID 710 must be completed prior to EPID 716

Environment, Climate and Health

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

- **Critically examine various types of environmental health threats** (such as climate change and severe weather, particulate matter, lead in drinking water, mold and work-related hazards).
- **Communicate** about linkages between sources, exposures, biological responses, and disease.
- **Lead interdisciplinary teams** to design evidence-based approaches that promote a healthier, more equitable, and more sustainable future.

Through collaborative work led by internationally renowned experts in environmental health, science and policy within the top *public* school of public health in the nation, you will graduate uniquely positioned to advance environmental health solutions.

More Information about Environment, Climate and Health Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

Global Health

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

- Undertake deep and thoughtful self-reflection on the ethics of engagement in global health as a scholar, researcher, and practitioner.
- Develop management and implementation skills to deliver evidence-based interventions that address global health challenges.
- Analyze qualitative and quantitative data to advance research, policy, and practice in global health.
- Monitoring the quality of program implementation and evaluating program outcomes
- Engaging in interdisciplinary problem-solving with multinational teams.

Students can take advantage of the many global health organizations located in the Research Triangle Park area bordering the University of North Carolina. We have close partnerships with organizations such as FHI360, RTI and Intra Health International in addition to broad contacts with health departments in North Carolina and relationships with diverse research and practice institutions worldwide. Through these connections, we will provide you with opportunities to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to real-world problems.

More Information about Global Health Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

Health Behavior

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

Through in-depth coursework and a year-long, community-led, group service-learning project, you will develop skills in quantitative and qualitative research methods, program planning and evaluation, intervention design, adaptation and implementation, community engagement and project management.

- **Apply** health behavior and social science theories to public health.
- Critically **evaluate** the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative research findings related to health behavior.
- **Apply** qualitative data collection and analysis skills for health behavior research or practice.
- **Adapt and evaluate** health behavior programs or policies.
- **Design** participatory strategies to engage communities in health behavior initiatives to promote health equity.

More Information about Health Behavior Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

Health Equity and Social Justice

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

Students in the interdisciplinary Health Equity and Social Justice concentration will develop skills to improve population health through measuring, identifying, and intervening to eliminate health inequities and advance social justice. Students will develop an in-depth understanding of structural inequities and gain practice in assessing and devising solutions to address key health determinants. Students also will gain experience in community-centered approaches to public health practice and research.

Specifically, you will learn to:

- **Critically evaluate the social determinants of health** and understand how they contribute to health inequities; and
- **Apply a range of community-engaged strategies and methodologies** to advance health equity, social justice and human rights through mentored fieldwork in the United States or another nation.

More Information about Health Equity and Social Justice Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

Health Policy

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

Our Health Policy concentration will empower you with the skills required to design, implement and evaluate health care and public health policies in a variety of settings, and to advocate for and lead changes in a policy setting. You will gain an intricate understanding of the current United States health care system and the politics and environment that shape policy decisions. You also will learn policy analysis and advocacy skills, as well as the foundational management skills necessary to plan for and effectively supervise financial and human resources.

More Information about Health Policy Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plans](#)

Leadership in Practice

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

- Use critical-thinking, design-thinking and system-thinking to solve problems.
- Advance knowledge using evidence-based research and practice-based evidence.
- Mobilize others in order to strategically align organizations and systems and accomplish large-scale change.

More Information about Leadership in Practice Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plans](#)

Maternal, Child, and Family Health

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

The Master of Public Health (MPH) concentration in Maternal, Child and Family Health focuses on the determinants, mechanisms and systems that promote and maintain the health and safety of women, children and their families to enhance the future health and welfare of society. Our field is population-based and interdisciplinary, and we provide a strong foundation of knowledge, frameworks and methods for program monitoring, process/impact evaluation and program planning and implementation. As a graduate, you will be equipped with a highly adaptable toolkit and prepared to lead interdisciplinary efforts that require multiple perspectives and competencies in domestic and global contexts.

More information about Maternal, Child, and Family Health Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

Nutrition (non-Registered Dietitian)

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

As a student in the Nutrition concentration, you will gain the skills to:

- Assess scientific evidence for nutritional guidelines and recommendations.
- Evaluate how social, cultural, environmental and community factors affect dietary intake and nutrition-related outcomes in individuals, families and communities.
- Demonstrate proficiency in writing evidence-based, nutrition-related professional and consumer communications using a variety of media platforms.
- Practice in compliance with current federal regulations and state statutes related to public health nutrition programs.

More Information about Nutrition Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

Nutrition and Dietetics

- [General Information](#)
- Please see separate handbook, [Nutrition MPH-ND Degree Handbook](#) listed here: <https://sph.unc.edu/students/gillings-school-student-handbook/>
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

Place-Based Health (in Asheville only)

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

The Place-Based Health concentration is designed to support professionals in all areas of public health practice at every level of leadership whether entry-level public health practitioners, program managers, evaluators, public health directors, executives or someone in between.

In this concentration, you will develop the leadership skills needed to build strong relationships with members of your own team as well as with leaders from other sectors, political ideologies and disciplines.

As a student in the Place-Based Health concentration, you will develop skills in:

- Assess, promote, and enact health equity in systems, organizations, and communities.
- Learn place-based approaches through courses, field trips, guest panels of practitioners, hands-on experiences, and culminating team projects that help WNC communities.
- Practice transforming systems through problem-based learning, by assessing system dynamics and leverage points, clearly and persuasively sharing critical health information, developing and sustaining relationships, and informing policymakers.
- Support and engage in community transformations using community-based participatory research and action methods.
- Conduct research and evaluate programs to contribute to the knowledge base and advance public health practice.
- Deepen knowledge and awareness to lead transformation of self, public health teams, and change efforts.

More Information about Place-Based Health Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

Population Health for Clinicians

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

Developed with the needs of clinical professionals in mind, our curriculum focuses on several areas relevant to improving population health:

- Prevention
- Critical appraisal of the health literature
- Evidence-based practice
- Research translatable to clinical practice areas
- United States health system policy

With the mentorship of our distinguished faculty members, you can tailor the curriculum to your clinical interests in order to better apply your MPH training and practicum experience to advance your career goals and clinical work.

Population Health for Clinician concentration does **not complete** the MPH Core Courses referenced previously in the MPH Handbook, required courses are below:

Core Courses:

- PUBH 890: Health Systems Functions & Key Challenges
- PUBH 746: Public Health Program Planning, Implementation & Evaluation
- PUBH 706: Advanced Health Policy for Clinicians
- PUBH 749: Leadership & Professional Development
- PUBH 992: PHC MPH Culminating Experience

Required Concentration Courses:

- BIOS 641: Quant Methods for HC Professions
- PUBH 760: Clinical Measures and Evaluation
- PUBH 751: Critical Appraisal of Health Literature I
- PUBH 750: Strategies of Prevent for Clinicians
- PUBH 749: Leadership & Professional Development
- PUBH 702: Systemic Review Course

Practicum Course:

- PUBH 886: Practicum Assignments

Other:

- MPH Practicum Hours (200 hours)
- MPH Comprehensive Exam (embedded in PUBH 746)

Population Health for Clinician concentration abides to the same policies and procedures as the other MPH Concentrations. In those policies and procedures, if the MPH Core and/or Required Concentration are referenced, the PHC concentration will reference the courses listed above, accordingly.

More Information about Population Health for Clinicians Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

Public Health Data Science

What You Will Learn in this Concentration:

Data science draws upon multiple disciplines, combining the statistical skills to manipulate data and make inferences, the mathematical skills to model phenomena and make predictions and the computer science skills to manage and analyze large data sets.

Steeped in the public health context, our program offers a unique focus on leveraging the foundational statistical, mathematical and computer science elements of data science to generate useful information from data sources relevant to public health. As a student in this concentration, you will benefit from the instruction and mentorship of top-ranked faculty in the biostatistics department and across the Gillings School. Our chief focus is to optimize data science to help address the most critical public health problems in the world today.

More Information about Public Health Data Science Concentration:

- [General Information](#)
- [2024 MPH Degree Requirements & Study Plan](#)

General University Academic Information and Policies

Academic Calendar

Residential:

The Academic Calendar contains important dates, deadlines, holidays and exams per academic year at the University of North Carolina. Please visit: <https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-calendar/>

MPH@UNC:

The MPH@UNC program operates on an alternative trimester academic calendar, different from the UNC residential academic calendar, in order to maintain equal 14-week terms. There are three admission terms for students: Fall, Spring and Summer.

Typically, classes are scheduled Monday – Thursday, between 6:00 pm and 9:30 pm (EST) to accommodate the needs of working students.

The MPH@UNC academic calendar is available here: <https://carolinamph.web.unc.edu/mphunc-calendar/>.

Master's Degree Course Credit Guidelines

The 30 Percent Rule

Upon recommendation of the academic program and approval by The Graduate School, up to 30 percent (12 credits) of the total hours required for the master's degree may be graduate-level courses transferred from another approved institution, or from this institution for courses taken before admission to the academic program in The Graduate School (e.g., courses taken as a non-degree or Continuing Studies student, an undergraduate, or a degree student in another program).

- All credits requested to be transferred in cannot have been taken more than 5 years prior to the transfer request.
- 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, will not carry either course or residence credit, and will not be entered into the student's Graduate School academic eligibility calculation.
- All requests must be submitted to the student's Academic Coordinator for initial review.
- Transferred credits will not be included in the program [residence credit](#) calculation.

Students requesting transfer credit to count towards the following courses should follow this process: Students must provide an original or copy of an official transcript, including the course grade, as well as a syllabus of the course(s). Students can only transfer 30% of the MPH program's 42 credits (total of 12 credits). Students are required to show attainment of all MPH foundational and concentration specific competencies to fulfill the MPH degree requirements. These competencies are taught and assessed in the MPH core and concentration required courses. Students are not required to meet competencies in their 9 credits of electives, so transfer credits are most likely to be transferred into the MPH program as electives.

- **MPH Core Courses:** SPHG 711 and SPHG 712 are the only courses eligible for transfer credit. Must be reviewed and signed off on by the respective core faculty member.
- **MPH Concentration Courses:** Required concentration courses are not eligible for transfer credit, exemption or substitution.
- **MPH Elective Courses:** Must be reviewed and approved by the MPH Program Coordinator (residential or MPH@UNC) or Co-Director/Concentration Lead for the residential Asheville program. The Senior

Executive Director of Academic Advising and Student Affairs may review and approve in the absence of the MPH Program Coordinators.

Pass/Fail Courses

No graduate-only level courses (at UNC-Chapel Hill, those numbered 700 and above) may be established as pass/fail courses. All required coursework intended to count toward degree credits or requirements, including those taken on this campus or elsewhere via inter-institutional registration, study abroad, etc., may not be taken on a pass/fail basis. Students who wish to take a non-required or undergraduate level course pass/fail should contact The Graduate School.

Auditing Courses

To audit a course, students must obtain the written permission of the course instructor and the academic program chair. Students can request this permission only after the end of the official registration period. Students may later enroll in and receive academic credit for a previously audited course; however, retroactive academic credit for an audited course is not permitted. Degree-seeking students cannot audit courses in the Friday Center for Continuing Education or a course preparing a student for “Credit-by-Examination.” Students officially registered for other courses during a semester or summer session may audit a course without paying a fee. For more information, please refer to the [University Registrar's Policy Memo No. 9](#).

Registration

Residential:

Full-Time Registration

- A full-time student is one who is matriculated and meets the conditions for each term noted below:
- Registers for nine or more graduate credit hours in a fall or spring term; or
- Registers for a minimum of three hours of thesis substitute (992), thesis (993), or dissertation (994) in a fall, spring, or summer term. Note: A student may register for additional courses as needed, but if registering for less than nine hours, this must include a minimum of three hours of 992/993/994 to be considered full-time; or
- Registers for fewer than nine graduate credit hours in a fall, spring, or summer term, exclusive of 992/993/994, and has been granted a [Waiver of Hours](#) for that term.

A student who was registered for the immediately preceding fall and spring semesters does not need to enroll during either of the summer sessions to maintain status as a full-time matriculated student. Individual graduate programs may set guidelines on research enrollments, including which academic milestones should be passed before enrolling in 992/993/994. Once students successfully defend their dissertation or thesis or complete their thesis substitute, no further enrollments are necessary or permissible, and graduation should not be delayed. All 992/993/994 courses are similarly named following university guidelines and hold fixed credit hours at 3.0, thereby always conferring full-time status.

MPH@UNC:

Students in the MPH@UNC program register for classes on a different schedule than residential graduate students. The MPH@UNC program will communicate term-based registration days and time to the students in advance of the registration process.

Please note that support from campus offices will only be available during normal business hours.

- Remember to check any holds you have that will prevent registration prior to your enrollment appointment and continue checking for holds throughout the registration period! To check holds, go to the Holds section on your ConnectCarolina Student Center.
- If you are graduating at the end of the current term and have not been officially admitted into a new

- program, you will not be activated to register for the following term.
- Review important University policies located at <https://registrar.unc.edu/guide/registration-policies/>, under “Registration” and then “Registration Policies.”
 - Students expecting financial aid or other third-party support may request deferment of their term bill due before the start of each term.
 - Deferment requests must be submitted by the due date on the first bill of each semester.

Required Registration

Students are required to be registered whenever degree progress is being made or University resources (including faculty time) are being used to appropriately reflect work being done. Academic programs and students should be aware that students who lapse enrollment lose official student status and recognized University affiliation. Relinquishing formal student status can disadvantage students by eliminating their eligibility for financial aid and student campus services and benefits.

Post-Semester Registration Changes

Course changes after the last day of classes for the current term must be submitted on a Post-Semester Registration/Drop/Add form available through the student's academic program or the Office of the University Registrar. Please contact your respective Academic Coordinator for assistance. An appropriate justification and approval by the academic program should be attached to the post-semester form prior to submission for processing by The Graduate School.

Inter-Institutional Registration

Students may take a maximum of two graduate-level courses through inter-institutional registration during a fall or spring term or a maximum of one graduate-level course during a summer term, provided that the student is also registered for the balance of his/her normal load (at least three credit hours) at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Students may take courses in residence at North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, North Carolina Central University, or Duke University. Students may also take courses online through the UNC System inter-institutional website by having a request approved and paying tuition directly to the visited institution. No inter-institutional course may be taken pass/fail (satisfactory/unsatisfactory, etc.) and all courses must earn a specific grade. Please refer to the [Graduate Grading](#) section of this Handbook for the policy concerning inter-institutional grading.

To register for a [residential inter-institutional course](#), the student must complete an [Inter-Institutional Approval Form](#) and obtain the director of graduate studies' signature certifying the following requirements:

- the course is appropriate for the student's degree program, and is a graduate-level course according to the current numbering schemes below:
 - Duke — 500 and above (except Divinity and Nursing courses)
 - NCCU — 4000 and above
 - NCSU — 500 and above
 - UNC-C — 5000 and above
 - UNC-G — 500 and above;
- an equivalent course is not available on this campus; and
- the course does not earn a pass/fail grade.

The Graduate School can serve as the Dean's Office authorization for University Registrar forms. The student then submits the request form to the UNC-Chapel Hill Office of the University Registrar for approval and processing.

Courses taken by UNC-Chapel Hill degree students via inter-institutional registration earn residence credit as if they were courses on this campus.

The exchange of inter-institutional grades between universities is a time-consuming process and grades may not appear on a student's record at the same time as grades from their home campus. Students opting to take inter-institutional courses during their final semester should closely monitor their academic record for posting delays that may prevent graduation.

International Students

English Prerequisite to Registration

All new international students subject to the English proficiency exam requirement (TOEFL or IELTS) will have their test scores reviewed in their first semester of study. Students who may benefit from additional support services in reading, speaking, and writing will be notified of campus resources available to them.

Full-time/Continuous Registration

International students must observe all enrollment conditions required by their student visa, including remaining enrolled full-time in the program to which they were admitted. Changes in the enrollment status of international students must be reported to [International Student and Scholar](#) by the student as soon as possible. Please note that certain restrictions may apply on distance and online course enrollments. Please consult with your graduate program with questions about maintaining full-time enrollment. **Failure to maintain continuous and accurately reported full-time registration can have severe consequences, including, but not limited to, loss of visa status and deportation.**

International Teaching Assistants

International teaching assistants may be evaluated for their teaching ability and choose to register for ["GRAD 810: Communicating in the American Classroom."](#) This course focuses on interpersonal communication, teaching skills, and classroom phrases and pronunciation.

To DEFER your bill:

1. Log in to [ConnectCarolina](#) and access the Student Center through Self Service.
2. In the Student Financials section, select Request Deferment from the drop-down box.
3. Click/check the box for Financial Aid Deferment AND the Statement of Understanding and then click submit.
4. There will be a confirmation screen after you hit submit, click OK. You must request the deferment before the due date on the billing statement.
5. The new due date will be displayed under Charges/Bills in the Student Financials dropdown list section of the Student Center.
6. Once the new due date is less than 30 days away, the balance will show as DUE NOW instead of FUTURE DUE.

Please follow this link for the registration guide <https://registrar.unc.edu/guide/>.

Waiver of Hours

Graduate School approval of a waiver of hours is contingent upon the student submitting a [Waiver of Hours Form](#). This form must also include a statement from the academic program certifying that the student's overall academic involvement-teaching assignments, research projects-is consistent with the workload of a full-time student.

All waiver of hours requests must arrive in The Graduate School by the close of the normal add period

(generally five days after classes begin) for final review and processing before the semester's census date ("census date" is generally two weeks after classes begin). No waiver of hours requests will be retroactively approved.

Cancellation of Registration

Prior to the first day of classes, if you, the student, decide you cannot or will not attend the University that term, you may request to cancel your registration.

The University will only cancel registration for students who have not attended any classes in a term. If a student never attended a single class in the term, and classes have begun, you must request a cancellation of your registration through your Academic Coordinator and provide verification of non-attendance from each professor.

If a student attended or participated in any portion of his/her courses, then Dropping Courses or official Withdrawal from the University processes should be followed. A student who withdraws during the first semester of enrollment in an academic program may request [Readmission](#) if later wishing to pursue the degree. After two years have passed, the student must submit a [Reapplication](#) to that program if later wishing to pursue the degree. Appropriate justification and approval by the academic program should be included with the cancellation request prior to submission for electronic processing by The Graduate School.

Upon Readmission, Reinstatement, or Reapplication to the MPH program, students will continue with their original admit term MPH degree Study Plan if they have been absent from the program for less than 2 academic years. Readmittance for students that originally begun their MPH degree more than 2 academic years prior may be subject to complete the latest version of their concentration's MPH degree study plan. This decision is left up to the MPH program after consultation with both the respective Concentration Lead(s) and Academic Coordinator.

Additionally, registration may be canceled under the following circumstances:

Academic Ineligibility

The Graduate School will automatically cancel the registration of those students who become academically ineligible. See [Academic Eligibility](#).

Nonpayment of Tuition and Fees

A student's registration will be canceled if s/he does not pay tuition and fees (or properly arrange for their deferment) by the payment deadline given in the [University Registrar's Calendar](#). To register subsequent to such cancellation, students must pay tuition and fees in advance and add courses no later than the last day for adding courses specified in the [University Registrar's](#).

Failure to Submit Campus Health Services Forms

If a new or transfer student, or a matriculated student not registered for two years, fails to submit the immunization record and [Medical History Form](#), registration will be canceled. For additional information about the University's Cancellation policies, please refer to the [Office of the University](#).

Assistantships, Fellowships, and Research

Each student holding a service (assistantship), or non-service (fellowship) appointment must be registered full-time to hold that position during the fall and spring semesters. Students must be on-campus unless the award requires their presence at another campus or research center.

For students pursuing research opportunities for course credit, the Graduate School allows students to utilize more than 6 credits counted towards their Master's degree.

Examinations and Thesis/Dissertation

A student must be registered during the semester(s) or summer terms in which any written and/or oral examinations are taken and graded. Students must be registered for a minimum of three credit hours of thesis substitute (992), thesis (993), or dissertation (994) during the semesters or summer terms in which the thesis/dissertation is proposed and defended or a thesis option is completed. Registration for the prior semester will cover events that occur during a break between semesters. This registration covers a student from the first day of class in a semester until the day before classes begin for the next semester. For example, if a student is registered for a minimum of three credit hours of 992/993/994 in the fall semester and intends to defend in the same term, s/he must defend between the first day of fall classes and the day before the first day of spring classes. Similarly, summer registration would cover a defense occurring anytime between the first day of summer session I classes until the day before the first day of fall classes. If the defense takes place during the summer, students must be registered for a minimum of three credit hours of 992/993/994 during either the first or second summer session to be covered for the entire summer term.

Individual graduate programs may set guidelines on research enrollments, including which academic milestones should be passed before enrolling in 992/993/994. Once the student has completed all courses, including a minimum of three credit hours of thesis substitute (992)/thesis (993) or a minimum of six credit hours of dissertation (994), s/he must continue to register for three credit hours of 992/993/994 each academic semester (fall/spring) until the degree is completed to reflect academic progress and in order to use University resources (including faculty time). Once students successfully defend their dissertation or thesis or complete their thesis substitute, no further enrollments are necessary or permissible, and graduation should not be delayed.

**Students are not able to request an Incomplete or drop the course after the final drop date for all 992/992/994 courses.

Courses

Credit/Course Load

Students should register for no more than 16 credits in any semester. A student enrolled in the summer may not register or receive graduate credit for more than 8 credits a session.

Overload/Underload Requests: 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 eight hours a session. Overload requests are considered on an exceptional basis and should be initiated by the student's Academic Coordinator and sent to the respective MPH Program Coordinator for approval.

A student who holds a service appointment within the University or is employed either on- or off- campus is advised to register on the following basis:

- A student engaged in teaching three to six credit hours or in performing other part-time duties for 10 to 20 hours weekly is advised to register for no more than nine credits of courses.
- A student engaged in teaching more than six credit hours or in performing other part-time duties for more than 20 hours weekly is advised to register for no more than six credits of courses.
- A student engaged in full-time employment is advised to register for no more than three credits of courses per term.
- During a summer session, a student who holds a service appointment should register for no more than

three credits of courses.

Adding Courses

Courses may be added only during the official add period. Residential MPH students, please refer to the [University Registrar's Calendar](#) for official add period dates for the standard semester and summer terms. MPH@UNC students should refer to the [MPH@UNC Calendar](#). The Graduate School can serve as the Dean's Office authorization for University Registrar forms. A Graduate School signature is required to process an add in a regularly scheduled course after the census date in each term. Effective dates are not altered. For courses scheduled outside the standard term dates, proportional deadlines are similarly applied.

Dropping Courses

Drop deadlines for the standard semester and summer terms are given in the [University Registrar's Calendar](#) for Residential students. MPH@UNC students should refer to the [MPH@UNC Calendar](#). To drop a course outside the close of the normal drop period (generally eight weeks after classes begin) and before the last two weeks of a semester, the student must complete and obtain the required signatures on the Registration Drop/Add Form, available through the student's academic program or the Office of the University Registrar. The Graduate School can serve as the Dean's Office authorization for University Registrar forms. A Graduate School signature is required to process a drop in a regularly scheduled course after the normal drop period in a given term. Effective dates are not altered. No regularly scheduled course may be dropped in the last two weeks of classes in a fall or spring semester or during the last week of a summer session. For courses scheduled outside the standard term dates, proportional deadlines are similarly applied. IMPORTANT NOTE: Dropping a course after the census date may have financial and academic consequences. Please refer to the [Academic and Financial Policy](#) Regarding Tuition and Drop Dates.

A student registered for and wishing to drop an inter-institutional course follows the same procedures and deadlines as required for dropping courses at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Official [withdrawal from the University](#) is required if a student wishes to drop all courses after a semester begins.

Graduate Grading

All master's programs administered through The Graduate School operate under the same grading system. The graduate grading scale in use at UNC-Chapel Hill is unique in that it cannot be converted to the more traditional ABC grading scale. Graduate students do not carry a numerical GPA.

Grade Scale

Grading at the graduate level is intended to offer feedback to students on their performance in a given course, including once students reach the thesis and dissertation stage. Faculty are encouraged to specify course requirements and grading expectations for students. Students enrolled in courses numbered 400 and above must receive one of the following grades:

Graduate Permanent Grades

- **H** High Pass - Clear Excellence
- **P** Pass - Entirely Satisfactory Graduate Work
- **L** Low Pass - Inadequate Graduate Work
- **F** Fail

Special Permanent Grades

- **F*** Fail-Administratively Assigned; equivalent to F
- **NG** No grade assigned; administratively assigned only
- **XF** Fail-Honor Court hearing outcome; equivalent to F

Temporary Grades

- **AB** Absent from final examination
- **IN** Work incomplete
- **NR** Not recorded

Temporary Grades

Failure to remove temporary grades of IN, AB and NR by the last day of classes of the term in which a student plans to graduate will prevent graduation. A temporary grade converts to F* unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later.

Temporary grades are not available as a graduate grade in thesis and dissertation research courses (992/993/994). Faculty advisors and instructors should use the permanent HPLF graduate grading scale for reflecting academic progress on research in a given term. Exception requests should be directed to The Graduate School. When extenuating circumstances warrant, The Graduate School may grant a student a time extension to complete a course and replace a temporary grade. The student must first complete the [Request for Extension of Time](#) for and receive approval from their academic program, after which time the program's director of graduate studies may forward a petition for extension to The Graduate School.

Absent (AB) Grade

An AB grade must be given to a student who did not take a final exam regardless of the reason but might have passed the course had they done so. AB is a temporary grade that converts to F* unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later.

If the absence is officially excused by the instructor, the student must take the final examination at a reasonable time designated by the course instructor, in no case to exceed one year from the original examination. Since the grade of AB is given after the deadline to change courses in that semester, a student may not retroactively drop a course where an AB was received. The student must complete the final exam in the timeframe expected or earn F*.

Incomplete (IN) Grade

A grade of IN is given when the course instructor determines that exceptional circumstances warrant extending the time for the student to complete the course. IN is a temporary grade that converts to F* unless it is replaced with a permanent grade by the date specified in the Petition or has reached the maximum time limit allowed (one calendar year). An Incomplete grade may not be submitted when a student has completed the course requirements but is absent from the final examination; in such cases, AB is the appropriate temporary grade.

The instructor may set the maximum allowable period for completing the coursework, but in no case will this timeline exceed one calendar year. If the time allowed is to be less than one calendar year, this timeline should be included in the Petition for an Incomplete Grade. It is the sole responsibility of the student to complete and submit the outstanding coursework prior to the established timeline included in the Petition and/or within a calendar year.

Since the grade of IN is given after the deadline to drop courses in a semester, a student may not retroactively drop a course where an IN was granted. The student must complete the missing coursework

in the timeline included in the Petition or the IN grade will convert to an F* and the student will become academically ineligible.

Students are not able to request an Incomplete grade in graduate thesis and dissertation research courses (992/993/994).

Not Recorded (NR) Grade

A grade of NR is administratively assigned by the University when the deadline to assign grades in a given term passes and the instructor has not finalized the grade roster. NR is a temporary grade that converts to F* unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later.

Since the grade of NR is listed after the deadline to change courses in that semester, a student may not retroactively drop a course where an NR was received. The student must complete the work and work closely with their instructor to ensure a permanent grade is assigned.

Grade Change

Course grades of H, P, L, F, and F* are permanent grades. A permanent grade may be changed upon the initiative of the instructor, only in cases of arithmetic or clerical error, and then only with the approval of the director, chair or dean of the instructor's academic program and of The Graduate School.

Such grade changes may be made no later than the last day of classes of the next succeeding regular semester. The Graduate School can serve as the Dean's Office authorization for University Registrar forms. More information about graduate grade changes can be found in the [University Registrar's Policy Memo No.24](#)

Grade Appeal

Before filing any appeal of a course grade, the student should first address his or her concerns to the instructor who assigned the grade. Should the instructor detect an arithmetic or clerical error that negatively influenced the grade assignment, a grade change form should be executed reflecting the corrected grade. An instructor may not initiate a change of a course grade as a result of reevaluating the quality of the student's performance or as a result of additional work performed by the student.

If, after consultation with the instructor, a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the student may appeal the grade to the instructor's chair or dean. Such an appeal should be lodged by the student in writing with the instructor's chair or dean, with a copy to be provided by the student to the instructor, and should cite the evidence by which the student judges:

- a) that an impermissible element existed in the instructor's evaluation of the student's coursework and
- b) that it influenced the grade assignment to the detriment of the student.

Appeals should be submitted no later than the last day of classes of the next succeeding regular semester.

For an appeal of a course grade to be considered, it must be based upon one or more of the following grounds and upon allegation that the ground or grounds cited influenced the grade assignment to the student's detriment:

1. arithmetic or clerical error;
2. arbitrariness, possibly including discrimination or harassment based upon the race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression of the student;

3. personal malice; and/or
4. student conduct cognizable under the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance.

For additional information, please refer to the Graduate School Handbook:

<https://handbook.unc.edu/grading.html>

Graduation

Application to Graduate

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 intends 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.

Complete the Graduation check-out page in ConnectCarolina's Self Service area: Log in to [ConnectCarolina](#), then in your Student Center, under the "Academic" tab, choose "Apply for Graduation" in the drop-down box, and then click the double arrows. Students in officially recognized dual degree programs, other than the MD-PhD program, must apply to graduate for both degrees at the same time, even if the requirements for one degree are completed sooner than the second degree. Academic programs are asked to provide flexibility so students may be able to walk ceremoniously with their cohort even if they do not earn the degree that semester. See [Dual Degree Programs](#) for additional information.

Clearance

Degree requirements and milestones vary by academic program, and The Graduate School maintains the master listing of milestones required for degree clearance. Graduate School staff certify each degree candidate has met all requirements before clearing them to graduate. Milestones include:

- Application(s) to graduate
- Minimum credit hours required for the degree
- Foreign language requirement, if required by the academic program
- Committee structure approved
- Certification of program degree requirements received (via [PCDR form](#))
- Exam documentation approved
- Thesis/thesis substitute/dissertation enrollments
- Residence credit requirement
- Thesis/dissertation approved via ProQuest; OR, thesis substitute documentation
- All grades submitted
- Exit survey completed

Students can view the status of their degree milestones in their Student Center in ConnectCarolina. Graduate School staff endeavor to clear students efficiently and accurately. Even if all completed milestones are in order and submitted, it can still take several business days for degree clearance to be processed. Any requests for early graduation clearance due to extenuating circumstances (generally only for employment or visa requirements) should be submitted through the academic program and only after the census date for the given graduation term.

Policies and Procedures

Course Communication Expectations

Students must maintain course communications (e.g., email, course announcements, course discussions, etc.) with their peers and instructor(s) to be successful in this academic program. You are expected to check, read, and respond when necessary to your course communications regularly (i.e., at least two times during the business week). Not reading email is an unacceptable excuse for missing course and program communications.

Student well-being is our primary concern. If we send you a communication that warrants a response and do not hear back from you after following up twice, we will submit a [Gillings School Graduate Student Early Alert Referral to Academic Coordinator Form](#). To ensure you have the support needed to be successful in this program, your academic coordinator, faculty mentor, assistant dean of master's degree programs, associate dean for student affairs, and/or dean of students may get involved if non-responsiveness becomes a significant concern.

All UNC affiliates (including students, faculty, and staff) must use their University email account to conduct UNC business. Use of personal email addresses, including auto-forwarding to external/personal accounts, is not allowed for conducting University business. For more information, see the [Individual Email Address Policy](#).

When submitting emails to Gillings staff and faculty affiliates, please include your PID and MPH Concentration to expedite response times.

Campus Policies and Procedures can be found online at:

- [Campus Policies and Procedures](#)
- [The Office of the Provost](#)
- [The Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies](#)
- [The Graduate Catalog](#)

The following are selected Policies and Procedures that may be of immediate interest for students.

- [Honor Code](#)
- [Research Misconduct](#)
- [Copyright Policy](#)
- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
- [Illegal Drug Policy](#)
- [Alcohol Policy](#)
- [Immunization Requirements](#)
- [Class Attendance](#)
- [University Travel Policy and Global Travel Registry](#)
- [Improper Relationships between Students and Employees](#)
- [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#)
- [Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct](#)
- [Faculty Grievance Committee](#)
- [Residency Status for Tuition Purposes](#)
- [Graduate Student Parental Leave Policy](#)
- [Interruption of Study](#)