Online MPH in Public Health Practice: Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: Am I ready for a distance learning program?
A: To see if online learning is right for you visit: http://commons.suny.edu/assessment/. To help you on your way, we have prepared several resources for you -- everything from gauging your readiness for online learning to tips and tricks for success. This portal is your first step in determining if online education is right for you!

Q: What does “online” mean? Will I be expected to travel to the School of Public Health?
A: The Online MPH in Public Health Practice allows you to complete ALL coursework online; therefore, you never have to set foot on campus. Our online coursework is in an asynchronous learning environment, using a tool called Blackboard. Communication is commonly facilitated through e-mail and discussion boards. It supports the relationship between students and instructors even when participants cannot be online at the same time, making it very flexible and accommodating for those juggling work, family, and other commitments. Asynchronous e-learning makes it possible for students to log on to an e-learning environment at any time and download documents or send messages to instructors and fellow students in the course. However, there will be specific dates and deadlines for most course activities.

Q: How long does it take to complete the program?
A: That depends. The program is structured so that students can typically complete the coursework in three years, since it is designed to be completed on a part-time basis. In most circumstances, students who complete five courses each academic year can complete the program in three years.

Q: How many courses do I need to take each semester?
A: Students generally take 1 - 2 courses each semester (spring, summer and fall). Pending course availability, students may take more courses each semester. If you are working full-time, we recommend that you do not take more than 2 courses a semester.

Q: How many hours per week should I expect to spend on each online course?
A: In general, students should expect to dedicate at least 12-15 hours per week for each online course in which they are enrolled.

Q: Can I take some classes online and some classes face-to-face?
A: No. This program is designed to be completed fully online.

ADMISSIONS QUESTIONS

Q: How do I apply for the program?
A: The application process is completed through the Schools of Public Health Application Service (SOPHAS). Visit www.sophas.org to apply. You do not need to complete the application in one sitting; you may log in and out to complete different sections of the application at different times. The fee to apply is $115.

- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the SOPHAS application process can be found at: http://www.sophas.org/Faq.cfm#.
- A Getting Started Checklist can be found at: http://www.sophas.org/Appchecklist.cfm#.

Notes:
1. Please allow ample time to complete the application process. Once SOPHAS has received your completed application and credentials, it may take up to four weeks to verify and deliver your application to your choice of accredited schools.
2. The official transcript that will be sent to SOPHAS will be used for verification purposes and will not be forwarded to the University at Albany. Please request a second official transcript to be sent directly to the address below:
   Online MPH Program
   University at Albany, School of Public Health
   One University Place
   Rensselaer, NY 12144

Q: What are the admission criteria?
A. Admission criteria include:

- Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution
- Minimum GPA of 3.0 in a completed bachelor’s and/or graduate degree program
- GRE, GMAT, MCAT, PCAT, LSAT or DAT scores
- Personal statement describing your interests and goals in public health
- Resume
- 3 References

Q: Can the GRE or standardized test score be waived?
A: The standardized test score requirement can be waived for 1) applicants who have completed a graduate degree program from an accredited US institution and received a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the program; 2) Completed the USMLE Parts I and II; or 3) Completed the UAlbany Certificate in Public Health Fundamentals and Principles with a GPA of 3.0 or higher and upon approval. A GRE waiver form must be submitted, and is available at: http://www.albany.edu/sph/admissions.php

Q: What is the deadline to apply?
A: The deadline to apply for admission in the fall semester is April 15. The deadline to apply for admission in the spring semester is October 15. See note above about time required to complete the application process.

Q: Can International students apply?
A: At this time we are only able to accept international students living in the US for the full duration of their study. International students who meet these criteria should view these special instructions before applying: http://www.sophas.org/documents/SOPHAS_Intl.pdf.

Q: I have completed the Public Health Fundamentals & Principles Certificate Program; can I apply to the Online MPH Program?
A. Yes, students who have completed the certificate program can apply to the Online MPH Program. It is strongly recommended that applicants have a B+ or better in the analytical courses (EPI 501 and EPI 551 or 552).
Q: I am currently enrolled in the Public Health Fundamentals & Principles Certificate Program; can I apply to the Online MPH Program?
A: Students who are currently enrolled in the certificate program are required to complete the certificate program prior to applying to the Online MPH Program. You may apply to the Online MPH program during your last semester of study in the certificate program.

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PROGRAM LOGISTICS

Q: What does the program cost?
A: For more information about the current University at Albany tuition and fees, please visit the Office of Student Accounts: http://www.albany.edu/studentaccounts/ or call 518-442-3202. Please note that the cost varies for in-state and out-of-state graduate students. Generally students enrolled in this program will take 3-6 credits each semester. The estimated cost for an in-state resident taking 6 credits in fall 2013 is $2,842.08 (includes tuition and fees). This does not include the cost of textbooks.

Q: How many credits do I need to complete for this program?
A: The program of study is a total of 51 credits. See the University at Albany School of Public Health Academic Department websites for more information on specific courses http://www.albany.edu/sph/academicdepthome.php.

- Track Courses (12 credits): Principles of Public Health, Program Development in Health Promotion, Program Evaluation, and Public Health Leadership
- Electives (9 credits): Choose 3 from a range of online elective courses available throughout the School of Public Health, including such courses as: Public Health Law, Public Health Nursing, Infectious Disease Epidemiology, and Emergency Preparedness: The Public Health Perspective
- Practice-based Internship (9 credits)

Q: Can I get credit for my previous public health experience?
A: Yes. Up to 6 internship credits may be waived for students with previous public health experience. The application for waiver of internship credits is to be completed after enrollment in the program.

Q: What does the internship requirement include?
A: The internship is practice-based. Students may fulfill credits towards this requirement at their workplace if it is a public health setting, but must complete a project beyond their normal job function or regular duties. To complete this requirement, students are required to spend a minimum of 240 hours for each 3 credits of internship.

Q: Is the program accredited?
A: Yes, both the Online and traditional MPH Program offered by the University at Albany School of Public Health are accredited. For more information on accreditation, visit the Council on Education for Public Health website at http://www.ceph.org/.

Q: Can I transfer credits from an outside institution?
A: Students who have taken coursework at an outside institution may transfer up to 24 credits. Core and required courses must be considered equivalent to the courses offered by the University at Albany School of Public Health. Elective courses are evaluated on relevancy and appropriateness for the degree. To transfer a course, students must have a grade of B or better. Only classes taken at an accredited institution can be applied toward the degree. Requests for transfer credits will be reviewed after admission into the program.

Q: How many people will be in my online classes?
A: Generally, online classes are limited to 25 students.

Q: Are there specific areas of concentration similar to the traditional MPH?
A: The Online MPH Program currently provides a concentration in Public Health Practice. This concentration provides a strong academic foundation in the core disciplines of public health and opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills gained to real-world public health practice.

Q: If I apply and do not get accepted, can I reapply?
A: Yes, you will be required to submit an application through SOPHAS each time you apply (fees apply).
If you have additional questions about this program, please contact:

onlinemph@albany.edu
518-486-1936

For more information on the School of Public Health, visit www.albany.edu/sph.