

**University at Albany
State University of New York
School of Public Health**

DOCTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH (Dr.P.H.)

The Dr.P.H. prepares leaders in the public health profession who will address the complex public health issues our society will continue to face over the coming decades. Graduates will be expected to combine sophisticated analytic and research skills with a broad-based understanding of the political, scientific, medical, statistical, psychosocial, ethical and economic factors that contribute to health problems. The Dr.P.H. curriculum is predicated upon intensive practical instruction, offering the opportunity to do four internships in a range of public health programs and culminates in a professional dissertation.

The Dr.P.H. program will be highly individualized and tailored to the interests of the student and the availability of advisors and mentors with matching interests.

Dr.P.H. Admission Requirements

Students are admitted on a competitive basis. Only those with an M.P.H. from an accredited school or program or another graduate degree with substantial public health content will be considered. Some experience working in the field of public health is strongly preferred. The admissions committee will evaluate each application based on the applicant's demonstrated ability to excel at graduate work and evidence, contained in the application, that the applicant has clearly defined career goals that can be advanced by completing the Dr.P.H. program. Applicants should have met the undergraduate course requirements of the University at Albany's M.P.H. program. GRE or MCAT scores should be submitted, along with letters of recommendation and transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work, as required in the University at Albany's graduate application. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language, in accordance with University requirements.

A narrative statement of the applicant's career and educational goals and the objectives of his/her planned graduate study should accompany the application. This statement should include present or previous professional experience, the desired area of concentration and the area of interest for the dissertation. The narrative statement will be an important factor in reviewing the applicant's interests as related to the capacities of the School of Public Health.

If the submitted credentials are judged acceptable, the student may be invited to visit the School of Public Health to discuss his/her public health career goals with appropriate faculty members to ascertain whether the objectives for graduate study are compatible with the resources of the School. Those individuals who are unable to visit the campus are encouraged to discuss their objectives by phone with the program director and other faculty..

Applicants whose graduate academic experience is limited or whose career goals are not sufficiently well defined may be advised to enter the M.P.H. program to gain more knowledge and

experience in public health before reapplying to the Dr.P.H. program.

Dr.P.H. Program Requirements

The program leading to the Dr.P.H. degree requires a minimum of 48 hours of course work past the bachelor degree and 12 to 24 hours of internship, depending on previous public health experience. In addition, the student will undertake a doctoral project of at least 30 weeks of an extended internship, worth at least 15 credits.

Students may apply for admission with advanced standing, based on previous graduate work, and be allowed a maximum of 24 credits for courses applicable to the Dr.P.H. Transfer credits must be approved by the Professional Programs curriculum committee. For students with prior public health experience, up to 12 credits of internship may be waived with permission of the Professional Programs internship committee. All students must complete at least 36 graduate credits, including at least 12 credits of internships but not including the doctoral project, in residence at the University at Albany.

Part time study is permitted. Students must carry at least 3 credits per semester before admission to candidacy and, according to University requirements, be continuously registered. All students must spend two semesters in full-time study. For the Dr.P.H. program, a 6 credit internship is considered full-time study.

A. Core curriculum (30 credits)*:

The core curriculum includes the following courses or their equivalents. Students will have completed the equivalent of many of these courses as part of a master's degree program.

1. EPI 501, Principles and Methods of Epidemiology I (3);
2. EPI 502, Principles and Methods of Epidemiology II (3);**
3. STA 552, Principles of Statistical Inference I (3)***;
4. STA 553, Principles of Statistical Inference II (3)***;
5. HPM 500, Health Care Organization, Delivery and Financing (3);
6. EPI 503, Principles of Public Health (3);
7. BMS 505, Biological Basis of Public Health (3)
8. EHT 590, Introduction to Environmental Health (3);
9. HPM 525, Social & Behavioral Aspects of Public Health (3); and
10. HPM 641, Organization and Management in Health Institutions (3).

or other course in management as approved by advisor

* Students are required to maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in the core courses.

** Students in the Behavioral Science/Community Health concentration should take HPM 520, Fundamentals of Research Design instead of EPI 502

*** Students selecting the Biostatistics concentration take STA 554 and STA 555, Introduction to the Theory of Statistics, I and II (6 credits total) instead of STA 552 and STA 553.

B. Area of Concentration (18 credits, minimum):

Students will have chosen an area of concentration on admission to the program and an academic advisor will be assigned at that time. A change in the area of concentration may be allowed with concurrence of the new department and assignment of a new academic advisor. The change must be approved by the original advisor, the department chair of the original area of concentration, the new advisor, the department chair of the new area of concentration, and the director of professional programs.

Dr.P.H. students are required to take at least six additional courses beyond the core, excluding internships. These are to be selected with the approval of the advisor and should be chosen to prepare the student to undertake the doctoral project and dissertation. They must include the course requirements of the University at Albany M.P.H. program or their equivalents. The student and his/her advisor are encouraged to seek out doctoral level courses in other departments of the University or at other academic institutions if necessary to ensure selection of the most relevant courses to fulfill the student's program objectives.

Specific requirements by area of concentration:

Social Behavior and Community Health:

HPM 521 Introduction to Family and Community Health (3)
HPM 627 Public Health Education: Targeting Social, Organizational and Behavioral Factors to Promote Health (3)
HPM 647 Program Evaluation
Choice of three 600 level or above electives in any department as approved by advisor

Biomedical Sciences

BMS 601A Introduction to Biomedical Sciences (3)
BMS 601B Introduction to Biomedical Sciences (3)
Choice of three 600 level or above elective in Biomedical Sciences as approved by advisor
Choice of two 600 level or above electives in any department as approved by advisor

Biostatistics:

STA 558 Methods of Data Analysis
Choice of two 600 level or above electives in Biometry and Statistics as approved by advisor
Choice of three 600 level or above electives in any department as approved by advisor

Environmental Health

EHT 530 Principles of Toxicology (3)

EHT 665 Risk Assessment (3)

EPI 613 Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology (3)

Choice of one elective in Environmental Health and Toxicology as approved by advisor

Choice of two 600 level and above elective in any department as approved by advisor

Epidemiology

EPI 601 General Topics in Epidemiological Methods (3)

An advanced level methods course (in epidemiology, biostatistics or another department) as approved by the advisor and the DrPH subcommittee.

Two 600 level or above Epidemiology courses as approved by advisor;

Choice of two 600 level or above electives in any department as approved by advisor

Health Policy and Management

HPM 501 Health Policy Analysis and Management (3)

HPM 511 Economic Analysis for Health Policy and Management (3)

HPM 650 Strategy and Leadership Applications in Health Management (3)

Choice of three 600 level or above electives in any department as approved by advisor

C. Preliminary Examination:

Upon completion of the core courses, each student will be required to pass a written preliminary examination. This examination assesses the student's level of knowledge of the core areas of public health and should be taken as soon as possible after matriculation in the program, usually at the end of the first academic year. While the exam is based on material contained in the core courses, it is expected that the student will demonstrate a superior ability to organize and express these concepts. If a student fails to pass the examination, he/she must attempt it a second time within one year. A second failure will result in the student's being dropped from the program. All Dr.P.H. students, including part-time students, should have passed the preliminary examination by the end of their third academic year in the program.

D. Topics for Public Health Practice (3 credits):

All Dr.P.H. students are required to complete SPH 701, Topics for Public Health Practice (3). Students will be expected to enroll in this course as soon as possible after passing the preliminary exam. The course addresses current public health problems from an interdisciplinary perspective, providing an opportunity for doctoral students to synthesize their academic knowledge with public health experience of their own and fellow students and of the faculty. Assigned readings, critical analysis and group interactions are aimed at developing novel approaches to public health policy related to the problems discussed. The course will have a mix of formats, including journal club, student presentations on their research and practice experiences, and faculty presentations. Topics will vary from year to year. This is the only doctoral level course that all Dr.P.H. students take and it will provide an opportunity for doctoral students to interact with each other. Students will be encouraged to take the course more than once

E. Research Tool

The research tool requirement for the doctoral degree is met by satisfactorily demonstrating computer literacy; competency is evaluated by the faculty. Satisfactory completion of EPI 514 fulfills the research tool requirement.

F. Internships and Seminars (12 - 24 credits):

Students who have completed the M.P.H. at the School of Public Health will have completed six months of field experience in public health programs, usually structured as two internships of three months duration each. Doctoral students with other academic preparation must fulfill this requirement by taking SPH 690 - 695, Internships in Public Health, or by waiver by petition to the Professional Programs Internship Committee.

DrPH students are required to complete, after satisfying the master's level internship requirement, 12 credits of doctoral level internship experience, usually structured as two internships of three months duration each in two different areas as follows:

SPH 790 Doctoral Internship in Area of Concentration (6)

SPH 791 Doctoral Internship Outside Area of Concentration (6)

To ensure the breadth of the student's total practice experience, the 24 credits of internship (including those waived) must be completed in three separate concentration areas.

Students registering for doctoral internships must complete registration forms describing the objectives of the internship as agreed upon by the student, the advisor and the mentor and signed by all three individuals, in a process equivalent to that required of M.P.H. students. A one-month review should similarly be documented. On completion of each internship, the doctoral student must submit a written report of the experience, and present an oral report in a public forum, attended and evaluated by the mentor, advisor, and Director of Professional Programs.

All Dr.P.H. students must enroll in SPH 780, Doctoral Seminar in Public Health, one semester for every semester they register for a doctoral internship.

G. Doctoral Committee:

After passing the preliminary examination, in consultation with the academic advisor, each student will assemble a doctoral committee of at least three members, including the academic advisor and the dissertation mentor. To conform with University at Albany requirements, the chair of the dissertation committee must hold an unqualified appointment at the University. The chair and two other members must hold an earned doctorate or full professorship. Two members must be faculty of the School of Public Health and the third member should have an academic appointment external to the School of Public Health. If the dissertation project is conducted in a public health practice setting with a mentor that does not meet the degree or faculty requirements, it will be necessary for the committee to include a fourth member. The doctoral committee must be formally approved by the Director of Professional Programs before the student takes the qualifying examination.

H. Qualifying Examination/Proposal Defense:

After completing all course requirements and internship requirements, Dr.P.H. students must

take and pass a qualifying examination before beginning the doctoral project. The examination will consist of a written and oral presentation by the student of the planned project to his/her doctoral committee, with questioning by the committee to ascertain that the project is appropriate and the student has an understanding of the area of concentration adequate to conduct the project.

I. Admission to Candidacy

A student will be admitted to candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Public Health upon completion of the following:

1. Satisfactory record in course and internship experiences (minimum GPA of 3.0 in core courses and minimum GPA of 3.0 overall)
2. Satisfaction of the residence requirement.
3. Satisfaction of the research tool requirement
4. Satisfactory performance on the preliminary examination.
5. Satisfactory performance on the qualifying examinations and approval by the dissertation committee of the doctoral project proposal.

J. Doctoral Project and Dissertation (15 credits):

The doctoral project is the culmination of the Dr.P.H. experience for the student. It consists of an extended internship (at least 30 weeks) investigating a significant public health problem in the student's area of concentration. The doctoral project is described in the doctoral dissertation, which is intended to be the product of the student's original thinking and analysis. While the doctoral project does not require the collection of new data, it must demonstrate that the candidate is capable of sophisticated independent analysis. Upon acceptance of the dissertation, which must be of professional quality as judged by the doctoral committee, the student will present a formal defense of the dissertation in a public forum. Students may register for SPH 898 before admission to candidacy. After admission to candidacy they may register for SPH 899.