

# EXECUTIVE PROGRAM IN PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

MPH Degree Program

PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE MAJOR

## Summer 2008 Student Guidebook

The logo for the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. It features a vertical gold line on the left side. To the right of the line, the text "UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA" is written in a black, serif font. Below that, the words "School of Public Health" are written in a bold, dark red, sans-serif font.

UNIVERSITY  
OF MINNESOTA  
**School of  
Public Health**

All students are responsible for knowing the rules and policies that govern their academic program. To this end, the School of Public Health is providing you with this guidebook and with online resources.

School-wide Student Policies and Procedures can be found online at <http://www.sph.umn.edu/current/home.html> under Resources and Incoming Students

*The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.*

This publication can be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities. Direct requests to Students Services Center, School of Public Health, MMC 819 Mayo, 420 Delaware St SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455; 612.626.3500 or 800.774.8636; [sph-ssc@umn.edu](mailto:sph-ssc@umn.edu).

## 8. EXECUTIVE PROGRAM IN PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

### 8.1 Welcome

**Welcome to the Executive Program in Public Health Practice!** Sections 8.1 – 8.14 will give you specific information about the Executive Program. We trust that these sections will answer your questions and provide *practical* information through which you can successfully complete the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree. Please feel free to contact the Director of the Program, Dr. James Hart at 612.626.6573 or hartx013@umn.edu and/or the Programs and Instructional Coordinator, Anne Ehrenberg at 612.626.5665 or [php@umn.edu](mailto:php@umn.edu) with any questions or concerns.

#### OVERVIEW AND GOALS

The purpose of the Executive Program in Public Health Practice is to provide students with an innovative and flexible curriculum that will enable them to achieve their career goals in Public Health. In addition to obtaining a broad background in Public Health through course work in areas such as Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental Health and Health Administration (24.5 credits), students design a focus area based on their academic goals (17.5 credits). Among the focus areas are:

- Public Health Preparedness, Response and Recovery
- Food Safety and Biosecurity
- Public Health Leadership Studies
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Occupational Health and Safety (with an emphasis on preparedness)

#### STUDENTS

There are approximately seventy students enrolled in the Executive Program, all of whom have advanced graduate/professional degrees. The educational backgrounds of our students include the disciplines of education, law, medicine, nutrition, pharmacy, psychology, chiropractic and veterinary medicine. The goal of some students is to become more effective in their current practice. Others are looking to make major career shifts - moving from clinical practices to leadership roles in the Public Health community. The career goals of the Executive students are truly diverse. Some envision working in national and local health agencies/organizations. Others are enhancing their skills to work in regulatory agencies while some wish to redirect their clinical skills to the health needs of disadvantaged people. Some are simply looking to add a public health component to their current work. Whatever the career goal, students share a common value and that is to make a *significant impact on the health of the public*.

#### ACADEMIC ADVISING

One of the most important persons for students enrolled in the Executive Program is the academic advisor. We make every effort to link a faculty advisor whose research and professional interests complement the academic need of the student. *It is important for students to keep faculty advisors informed as to progress and to periodically assess the curriculum and its relevance to your career goals.* At times, the educational objectives of students change and a different academic advisor may be needed. Please consult with the Director of the Program if a change is considered. Below you will find guidelines for students and advisors.

#### STUDENT GUIDE TO MISSION, DEFINITIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF ADVISING

The School of Public Health strives to provide advising that promotes collaboration among students, staff and faculty to enhance students' academic and professional development in the field of public health. The School's goal is educational and experiential excellence that prepares students for successful careers improving the health of populations.

The School of Public Health is committed to creating and sustaining high quality advising in the following four areas:

1. **Administrative Advising:** advising on course planning and scheduling, policies, procedures and benchmarks of the degree program/major, SPH, and the University.
2. **Academic Advising:** general guidance on topics related to program/major including, but not limited to program focus (may include identifying appropriate course work options), project selection and career planning.
3. **Field Experience/Internship/Practicum Advising:** specific and targeted advising for field experience/internship/practicum development, placement and completion.
4. **Masters Project/Thesis/Plan A&B/Dissertation Advising:** specific and targeted direction on a master's project or a PhD dissertation including, but not limited to development, completion and in some cases publication.

SPH students are expected to...

- Regularly read and respond to University email (ideally once per day); email is the official mode of communication at the University of Minnesota
- Review program objectives and educational documents at least once per semester, (i.e. Student Guidebook, etc.), or when directed by major coordinator or major chair/DGS; students are responsible for knowing the requirements of the degree program
- Actively contribute to a welcoming and supportive SPH climate
- Initiate meetings with advisor(s) at least once per semester; regularly communicate with faculty advisor(s) and/or major coordinator about program progress
- Respond to inquiries from faculty or staff in a timely manner (ideally within 5 – 7 business days)
- Behave in a professional and courteous manner; fulfill educational and advising commitments, such as appointments, project deadlines, etc.

## **FACULTY GUIDE TO MISSION, DEFINITIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF ADVISING**

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1. **Administrative Advising:** advising on course planning and scheduling, policies, procedures and benchmarks of the degree program/major, SPH, and the University.
2. **Academic Advising:** general guidance on topics related to program/major including, but not limited to program focus (may include identifying appropriate course work options), project selection and career planning.
3. **Field Experience/Internship/Practicum Advising:** specific and targeted advising for field experience /internship/practicum development, placement and completion.
4. **Masters Project/Thesis/Plan A&B/Dissertation Advising:** specific and targeted direction on a master's project or a PhD dissertation including, but not limited to development, completion and in some cases publication.

Faculty advisors are expected to...

- Refer advisee to Major Coordinator for course planning/scheduling, policy and procedural information

- Review program objectives and educational documents at least on an annual basis, (i.e. Student Guidebook, etc.), or when directed by major coordinator or major chair/DGS
- Actively contribute to a welcoming and supportive SPH climate
- Initiate meetings with advisee at least once per semester; regularly communicate with students on program progress
- Respond to student inquiries in a timely manner (ideally within 5 – 7 business days)
- Provide reasonable office hours and/or appointments and be generally available to student inquiries; communicate with students about extended absences or travel
- Serve as a model and example of respectful behavior
- Provide referrals to school and university resources when appropriate (e.g. Student Mental Health Services)

## **FACULTY PERSPECTIVE ON PUBLIC HEALTH**

In keeping with the vision of "Healthy People in Healthy Communities", faculty members see Public Health as a broad social movement that seeks to impact the health of large populations in innovative ways. This calls for leadership skills through which the health of the public can be improved through education, engineering, and enforcement strategies. Public Health is unique in its interdisciplinary approach and its emphasis on preventive strategies, and its linkages with government, private and voluntary organizations. One of the things you will discover in the curriculum is a belief that if major public health problems are to be solved, it will take a coordinated, team approach in which the skills of every discipline are valued and employed.

## **CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS**

If students have the flexibility to take a full-time course load, it is possible to complete the curriculum in approximately sixteen months. Most students however, pursue their studies on a part-time basis. At least 15 credits of the program can be taken online. A maximum of 15 credits can be transferred in from other accredited graduate programs, provided the courses have been taken in the past five years (among other requirements) and relate directly to the student's focus area. In addition, the School of Public Health offers a wide listing of courses during a concentrated three-week Public Health Institute offered every Spring. Attendance at Public Health Institutes and participation in online classes allows students to continue with their work responsibilities. *Sections 8.2 – 8.12* will provide information on graduation requirements. Curriculum objectives can be found in *Section 8.5*. *Section 8.13* provides a perspective on the faculty and their professional interests.

The Executive Program is located in the Public Health Practice Major in the School of Public Health. In addition to the Executive program, the Public Health Practice Major offers programs in Public Health Medicine leading to a dual MD/MPH Degree and Veterinary Public Health, leading to a dual DVM/MPH degree. The Major also offers certificate programs in specialized fields of study.

## **8.2 Master of Public Health Graduation Requirements**

**NOTE:** See *section 8.12* for the EPHP Graduation Checklist

### **PUBLIC HEALTH CORE AREA REQUIREMENTS**

Students working towards an MPH degree must satisfy competency requirements in the six core areas of public health – administration, behavioral science, biostatistics, environmental health, epidemiology, and ethics – by completing one of the following in each core area:

- Satisfactorily pass one of the pre-approved courses in the core area (see pre-approved course list below);  
OR
- Pass an equivalency exam in the core area. Equivalency examinations for the 2008-2009 academic year will be scheduled; OR

- Pass an advanced course in the core area as approved by the respective division head or the Educational Policy Committee, OR
- Complete a graduate level course, with a grade of B or better, at an accredited university or college that meets the competencies defined by CEPH. The Educational Policy Committee, upon petition of the student, will determine acceptance of a course for transfer.

## **PRE-APPROVED COURSES MEETING PUBLIC HEALTH CORE AREA REQUIREMENTS**

### **Administration**

- PubH 6751 Principles of Management in Health Services Organizations – 2 cr.
- PubH 6752 Public Health Management – 3 cr.

### **Behavioral Science**

- PubH 6020 Fundamentals of Social and Behavioral Science – 3 cr.

### **Biostatistics**

- PubH 6414 Biostatistical Methods I – 3 cr.
- PubH 6415 Biostatistical Methods II – 3 cr.
- PubH 6450 Biostatistics I – 4 cr.
- PubH 6452 Biostatistics II – 4 cr.

### **Environmental Health**

- PubH 6101 Environmental Health – 2 cr.
- PubH 6102 Issues in Environmental and Occupational Health – 2 cr.

### **Epidemiology**

- PubH 6320 Fundamentals of Epidemiology – 3 cr.
- PubH 6341 Epidemiologic Methods I – 3 cr.
- PubH 6342 Epidemiologic Methods II – 3 cr.

### **Ethics**

- PubH 6741 Ethics in Public Health: Professional Practice and Policy – 1 cr.
- PubH 6742 Ethics in Public Health: Research and Policy – 1 cr.

## **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT**

Students are required to register for at least 2 semesters and 15 credits in the School of Public Health.

## **COURSEWORK AND CREDITS**

Students must complete all required coursework and credits; *see section 8.3.*

## **COURSE NUMBERS AND GRADUATE CREDIT**

5xxx 6xxx, 7xxx and 8xxx-level courses are considered graduate-level. 1xxx and 3xxx-level courses are for undergraduates and will not receive approval for graduate credit. Under some circumstances – with approval of the student’s Major Chair – 4xxx courses may also be applied toward a MPH degree as long as a member of the graduate faculty teaches them.

## **SPH GRADING POLICIES**

### **Grade Point Average**

Students must achieve a grade point average of no less than 3.0 (B) across their entire program to receive an MPH degree.

### **S-N Grade Option**

MPH students may take no more than 20% of their coursework on an S-N grading basis, exclusive of those topics, seminars, and field experience courses offered only on an S-N basis. Courses designated as part of the public health core can NOT be taken on an S-N basis.

## Public Health Core Courses

All courses designated as part of the public health core must be taken for a letter grade (A-F). Students will be required to achieve no less than a B- grade in each course taken on an A-F basis. Students may retake public health core courses at their own expense until they achieve a grade of B- or better. However, a retaken course may be counted only once toward degree requirements in the student's study plan.

Each public health major may require higher levels of achievement for its own students in public health core courses that are also core to the major. This may include restrictions on retaking public health core courses that are also core to the major, or requiring more than a B- performance level. Students should consult their Major Coordinator for documentation of these requirements.

## Sequence of Public Health Core Courses

Students are encouraged to take PubH 6414 Biostatistical Methods I early in their academic program to ensure the necessary skills required for completion of the master's project. Additionally, we recommend that students take PubH 6414 Biostatistical Methods I prior to taking PubH 6320 Fundamentals of Epidemiology.

## FIELD EXPERIENCE

Students matriculating in the EPHP MPH program must complete a formal, supervised fieldwork experience consisting of at least 180 hours (4 credits) in order to graduate. Neither prior professional degrees nor prior work experience in a field not closely related to the MPH degree program are sufficient grounds for waiving the fieldwork requirement. Each major has established requirements for completion of fieldwork; see *section 8.6*.

## MPH STUDY PLAN

Students are required to submit a completed *Master of Public Health (MPH) Study Plan* to their Major Coordinator at least one semester prior to their anticipated completion of coursework. Earlier submission (e.g. in the second to last semester) is suggested to allow the Major Coordinators to review the study plan and notify students if they are missing any requirements prior to their last term of study. The *Master of Public Health (MPH) Study Plan* can be downloaded at <http://www.sph.umn.edu/current/studyplan/home.html>

## MASTER'S PROJECT

MPH students must complete a master's project, demonstrating familiarity with the tools of research or scholarship in the major, the capacity to work independently, and the ability to present the results of the investigation effectively. The master's project should involve a combined total of approximately 160 hours of work. The major faculty specifies the nature and extent of the options available to satisfy this requirement and determines whether the requirement is to be satisfied in conjunction with or independent of the coursework in the student's major; see *section 8.7*.

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

MPH students must complete a written and/or oral examination as specified by the major; see *section 8.10*.

## TIME FRAME

The maximum time allowed by the School of Public Health for completion of an MPH degree is seven years. The seven-year period begins with the first term of enrollment after admission to a degree program within the School.

## COURSE TRANSFER CREDITS

A student may seek transfer of no more than 40% of the total number of credits required to complete the MPH degree. (**EPHP program limits transfer credits to 15**). Transfer courses may be taken at the University of Minnesota or at another college or university. Course credits may be used to satisfy public health core or other program requirements as jointly approved by the Major Chair and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Courses approved for transfer into the program must be graduate or professional degree level

courses taken at an accredited institution within the last 5 years. Courses older than 5 years may be allowed for individuals with prior earned advanced degrees who have been actively working in their field of study as demonstrated by their current resume. A grade of "B" or better is required for each course requested for transfer credit.

MPH students who have completed graduate-level coursework at the University of Minnesota or another college or university may petition to transfer those courses toward their MPH degree. To be considered for transfer, graduate level coursework must have been taken at an accredited graduate institution. Students must:

1. Meet with their advisor to discuss the petitioning process. If the petition is acceptable to the advisor, the student will complete and sign the *Petition* form, obtain the advisor's signature, attach an official transcript on which the final grade has been posted and submit the full course syllabus.
2. Submit the *Petition* form and materials to the Major Coordinator for processing. The *Petition* form can be obtained from the Student Services Center or Major Coordinator.

The Major Coordinator will forward the petition to the major chair and then to the Associate Dean for final evaluation and/or approval.

### **COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS AND WAIVERS**

All student requests that deviate from the degree curriculum requirements outlined in this Guidebook must be made on a *Petition* form. The *Petition* form can be obtained from the Student Services Center or Major Coordinator.

Students should note that the process for approving a course substitution or waiver could take up to one month, so plan accordingly.

#### **Course Substitution Procedures:**

The following process should be followed when requesting that a course substitute for a required course in your degree program.

1. Gather the course syllabus of the required course in your degree program and the proposed substitute course and a transcript on which the proposed course grade has been posted (if the proposed course has already been completed).
2. Complete the *Petition* form with the following information in each section:
  - **REQUEST SECTION:** describe the course requested for substitution including the course title, number of credits, term and year taken, and the name of the institution where the course was taken. Also list the course/requirement in your degree program for which you are asking for the substitution.
  - **REASON/EXPLANATION SECTION:** Indicate what skills and/or content overlaps between the required course(s) and the proposed substitute course(s).
3. Compile the above materials and have the request reviewed by your advisor. He/she will complete the Department section of the *Petition* form and indicate approval/non-approval of the request.
4. After the advisor has made his/her recommendations, the student should submit these materials to the Major Coordinator who will forward it to the appropriate Credentials Committee for review. The student will be notified via e-mail of the committee's decision.
5. If the substitute course is to replace a School of Public Health Core course (administration-PubH 6751/6752, behavioral/social science-PubH 6020, biostatistics-PubH 6414/6450, environmental health-PubH 6100/6102, epidemiology-PubH 6320/6330, ethics-PubH 6741/6742), upon receipt of those materials listed above, the Major Coordinator will review the request with the Major Chair and then if approved by the Major Chair, all copies of the request will be forwarded to SPH Educational Policy committee

members. The student will be notified via e-mail of the committee’s decision. If the Major Chair does not approve of the request, the Major Coordinator will inform the student that the request will not be forwarded to the SPH Educational Policy Committee for review.

### APPLICATION FOR DEGREE

MPH students are required to complete an *Application for Degree* form. There are strict deadline dates before a student can be cleared for graduation. Copies of this form can be obtained from the Major Coordinator, the Student Services Center or downloaded from <http://www.php.umn.edu>. We strongly encourage students to submit the form in their first semester of matriculation.

### REFLECTIVE SUMMARY

Executive students are required to submit a reflective summary (not more than 5 pages) of their learning objectives/focus area, how they met the objectives, and how the MPH prepared them for public health practice.

## 8.3 Program Curriculum

Students are required to complete a minimum of 42 credits. The curriculum in EPHP is divided into two components: Basic Curriculum and Focus Area Curriculum.

### BASIC CURRICULUM

The Basic Curriculum (24.5 credits) incorporates the core areas of public health instruction: biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health, health services administration, ethics, and social/behavioral sciences. It focuses on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary in each of these areas of fundamental competency needed to understand, assess, evaluate, and manage population health in the community.

#### Required Coursework

Course	Notes	Title	Term(s) Offered	Credits
PubH 6299	①	Public Health is a Team Sport: The Power of Collaboration	May	1.5
PubH 6320	②	Fundamentals of Epidemiology	Spring/Summer	3
PubH 6414	②	Biostatistical Methods I	Fall/Summer	3
PubH 6020	②	Fundamentals of Social and Behavioral Science	Spring/Summer	3
PubH 6741	②	Ethics in Public Health: Professional Practice and Policy	Fall/Summer	1
PubH 6102		Issues in Environmental and Occupational Health	Spring/Sum	2
PubH 6752	②	Public Health Management	Fall/Summer	3
PubH 7296	③	Field Experience: Public Health Practice	All Terms	4
PubH 7294		Master’s Project: Public Health Practice	All Terms	4

① This course is offered the weekend before the start of each Public Health Institute. Students are strongly encouraged to take it during their first attendance at a Public Health Institute.

② This course is offered in online and traditional classroom format options.

③ Minimum of 180 hours in a public health setting.

### FOCUS AREA CURRICULUM

The Focus Area Curriculum of a minimum of 17.5 credits gives the student the opportunity to investigate specific public health applications. Students are required to choose across four goals incorporating public health practice domains as established by the Council on Linkages (<http://trainingfinder.org/competencies/>):

1. Public policy development using a systems framework;
2. Interventions based on the dimensions of community and culture;
3. Assessment and application of basic public health sciences; and
4. Program management and communications principles.

Students, in collaboration with their Academic Advisor, must arrange their curriculum around a theme of interest or focus representing current public health issues. See *Student Focus Area Planning Guide* in *Appendix B*. Activities chosen in completion of the Program's Field Experience and Master's Project are coordinated with the theme chosen by the student for the Focus Area Curriculum. Key learning objectives of the curriculum and how they are acquired are listed in *section 8.5*.

**\*\*\*Please save the syllabi from all focus area courses as you will need to submit those to the PHP program office for inclusion in your permanent file in support of your MPH degree.\*\*\***

## FOCUS AREA PLANNING GUIDE

When you applied to the Executive Program in Public Health Practice, you were asked to define a "focus" area. Some students have precise plans as to the areas in which they wish to concentrate; others are more generalized. However, for your MPH program to have the most meaning, it is imperative that you have a focus area that relates directly to your educational and career goals.

How do you sharpen your focus area so that it has relevance to your educational program?

1. Re-read the letter of intent you wrote when you applied to this program.
2. Read this guidebook carefully and consult with other resources. For instance, you may wish to conduct informational interviews with public health leaders to discuss your professional goals.
3. Ask for the names of students in the Executive Program or alumni who have career goals similar to your own and compare notes on potential course work.
4. Review the *Competencies Feedback Project* by the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice at <http://trainingfinder.org/competencies/>. This website provides information about Public Health domains and core competencies in current public health practice including policy development, community interventions, applications of knowledge, and program planning and management. What you discover in this website will give you a sharper perspective on what you wish to accomplish in your MPH program. You are encouraged to view this website early in your program.
5. Review the many courses offered through the School of Public Health at [onestop.umn.edu](http://onestop.umn.edu) under class schedule or class search.

The above suggestions will help you sharpen the definition of what you wish to accomplish in your focus area.

After completing the above tasks, meet with your academic advisor to complete the *EPHP Focus Area Planning Form* (see *Appendix B*). Upon the completion of this meeting, you should have a precise description of your focus area and an agreement on specific courses (17.5 credits minimum) as well as a preliminary understanding of what you might wish to accomplish in your master's project.

Please note that your academic progress is documented by the completion and signing of various forms that can be found in the appendices section of this guidebook as well as the online field experience contract. These forms will become a permanent part of your file. Before the Master of Public Health degree is awarded, all forms must be signed by the appropriate individuals. **It is the student's responsibility to make certain that the forms are discussed with his/her academic advisor and filed at appropriate times with the Major in Public Health Practice and/or the School of Public Health.** A copy of each form should be submitted to Anne Ehrenberg, Public Health Practice Instructional Coordinator.

If at any point in your studies your educational expectations are not being achieved, please discuss your concerns with your academic advisor. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, please consult the Director of the Executive Program, Dr. James Hart at [hartx013@umn.edu](mailto:hartx013@umn.edu).

## 8.4 Required Course Descriptions

### **PubH 6299 Public Health is a Team Sport: The Power of Collaboration**

Designed to demonstrate how innovative public health strategies can impact the health of populations utilizing interdisciplinary approaches to change

### **PubH 6020 Fundamentals of Social and Behavioral Science**

Four major approaches to public health problems: psychosocial, economic, community, policy. Lectures provide overview of theory/implementation. Small groups provide opportunity to practice skills.

### **PubH 6102 Issues in Environmental and Occupational Health**

The field, current issues, and principles and methods of environmental and occupational health practice.

### **PubH 6320 Fundamentals of Epidemiology**

Basic concepts and knowledge of epidemiology, a methodology used to study the etiology, distribution, and control of diseases in human populations.

### **PubH 6414 Biostatistical Methods I**

Descriptive statistics, graphical methods. Use of Excel. Proportions, relative risk, odds ratios. Random sampling. Estimates of mean, medians, measures of variability. Normal distribution, t-/chi-square tests. Confidence intervals. Correlation/regression. Inference/causality.

### **PubH 6741 Ethics in Public Health: Professional Practice and Policy**

Introduction to ethical issues in public health practice/policy. Ethical analysis. Recognizing/analyzing moral issues.

### **PubH 6752 Public Health Management**

Managing projects and organizations in public health. Focuses on the skills and knowledge necessary to determine the mission of the organization and plan for the future, structure the organization to support individuals in their work, and motivate and manage activities to achieve their goals.

## 8.5 Curriculum Competencies

Specific Competencies	Learning Opportunities	Evaluation Opportunities
Apply a population perspective for health promotion and disease/injury prevention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PubH 6299</li> <li>• Elective Course in Assessment/Basic Sciences</li> <li>• Elective Course in Policy/Systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Examinations</li> </ul>
Describe the principles and practices of health promotion and disease/injury prevention and protection of human populations from environmental hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PubH 6299</li> <li>• PubH 6320</li> <li>• PubH 6752</li> <li>• PubH 6102</li> <li>• Elective course in Intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Examinations</li> </ul>
Integrate public health principles into the practice of health and human services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PubH 6299</li> <li>• PubH 6320</li> <li>• PubH 6414</li> <li>• Elective Course in Intervention</li> <li>• Elective course in Assessment/Basic Sciences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Examinations</li> </ul>
Address the social, cultural and environmental factors that affect community health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PubH 6020</li> <li>• PubH 6102</li> <li>• Elective course in Policy/System</li> <li>• Elective course in Management/Communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Examinations</li> </ul>
Describe public health as a social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elective course in Policy/System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> </ul>

system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elective course in Intervention</li> <li>• Elective course in Management/Communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examinations</li> </ul>
Identify the ethical issues in disease/injury prevention and health systems policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PubH 6741</li> <li>• Elective course in Policy/Systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Examinations</li> </ul>
Analyze a current public health issue or program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elective Course in Assessment/Basic Sciences</li> <li>• Elective course in Policy</li> <li>• PubH 7294</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Examinations</li> <li>• Project</li> </ul>
Apply public health tools to the evaluation and control of a specific health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elective course in Policy/Systems</li> <li>• Elective course in Intervention</li> <li>• Elective course in Assessment/Basic Sciences</li> <li>• Elective course in Management/Communications</li> <li>• PubH 7294</li> <li>• PubH 7296</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Examinations</li> <li>• Project</li> </ul>
Apply collaborative leadership skills in a community practice setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PubH 7296</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Oral examinations</li> </ul>
Advocate community action for health improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PubH 7296</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course evaluations</li> <li>• Oral examinations</li> </ul>

## 8.6 Field Experience

### INTRODUCTION

Part of the curriculum for the master's degree includes an opportunity for students to learn first-hand about the organization, operations, and special activities of selected agencies, institutions, and industries concerned with public health practice.

The PHP field experience provides students with a means of gaining additional insight into programs, personnel management, governmental relations, public relations, legislative support and, particularly, knowledge of special investigations conducted by these organizations. Participation in the activities of public health practice programs external to the University adds a dimension of experience to the curriculum that enriches the student's training and may be beneficial in seeking employment.

As part of fulfilling the MPH degree requirements, you must participate in a field placement experience. Please be aware that certain facilities are required by Minnesota law to submit paperwork for a criminal background check for all personnel with direct, unsupervised client contact. If you are placed in such a facility, you may be asked by the institution to submit paperwork, or the institution may require that you have this check facilitated by the School of Public Health. The School is prepared to assist you. Facilities that are covered by this law are hospitals, boarding care homes, outpatient surgical centers, nursing homes, home-care agencies, residential care homes, and board/lodging establishments providing health supervision services. Client contact must be direct and unsupervised (outside the hearing or vision of a supervisor at the facility). In the event this situation arises, please call The School of Public Health Student Services Center at 612.626.3500 or come to D305 Mayo, University of Minnesota TC campus for assistance. If you are outside the metro area, please feel free to call 800.774.8636.

### REQUIREMENTS

1. All PHP major students are required to complete a field experience as part of their degree program.

2. Students, in consultation with their academic advisor, should select the particular organization with which they wish to work. Selection of the organization, contact with it and designation of a preceptor in the organization may be arranged any time during the academic year.
3. Students register for a minimum of 4 semester credits for PUBH 7296. These credits may be taken during one semester, or divided among several semesters. As a guideline, a total minimum effort of 180 hours is expected. Students may register during any term for the field experience credits, not necessary over the time when the field experience will be conducted. However, the online contract (see next item) MUST be completed before beginning a field experience.
4. Before beginning a field experience, the online *Field Experience Contract* form must be completed. This form will be signed by the person the student will work with at the agency, the academic advisor, and the student before filing it is placed in the student's academic file. File as soon as arrangements are completed for the agency assignment. The form is intended to avoid misunderstandings concerning expectations on the part of people involved.
5. Students must submit an online Field Experience Evaluation at the conclusion of the Field Experience. The preceptor must also submit an online Field Experience Evaluation at the conclusion of the Field Experience.
6. Some students may find certain aspects of the agency activity of sufficient interest to do a "Master's Project" project while assigned to the agency. This requires study that is more extensive, an appropriate literature review, and an expansion of the subject beyond the field experience. The ultimate feasibility of such arrangements should be decided jointly by the student, the academic advisor, and the preceptor.

## OVERALL GOALS

Provide students with an opportunity to apply public health concepts to practice in a specific program, agency, or industry.

## STUDENT OBJECTIVES

Development of your specific objectives should include consideration of:

1. The availability of a high quality learning experience in public health practice;
2. Your professional goals and interests;
3. Selected theories and concepts applicable to a role in the practice of public health;
4. The potential for practice in a leadership role(s); and
5. Your potential contribution(s) to the setting in which your field experience is based.

## CREDITS AND GRADING

The number of credits is arranged between students and their advisor. The grading for the field experience is S/N. Grades for PubH 7296 are submitted when the academic advisor has accepted the evaluation on the field experience. (A total of 4 credits is required for graduation.)

## 8.7 Master's Project

### REQUIREMENTS

The use of the word Master's Project signifies a planned undertaking involving studious inquiry or examination. The product of that undertaking is a formal, written, scholarly report that demonstrates writing proficiency; and the ability to critically approach a topic, synthesize, interpret, and successfully convey information to the appropriate audience. The Master's Project provides a culminating experience for the student that allows the student to demonstrate the use of public health principles and competencies.

Students are expected to demonstrate familiarity with the tools of applied research or scholarship in public health practice, the ability to work independently, and the ability to apply skills learned in coursework by

completing either a Research Paper, Systematic Literature Review, Consultative Report or Grant Proposal. The Project will involve three faculty members: the primary academic advisor (who in some cases will also be the project advisor), the project advisor (if this is not the primary academic advisor), and one or two readers who will be present at the oral exam and may give feedback on the Project before the exam. The Master's Project is worth four credits and should involve a combined total of 160 hours of work (the equivalent of four full-time weeks of work). Note: the traditional Master's Thesis requires 240 hours of work. The project paper will typically be about 40 pages in length and will cite 15 – 20 references.

The student, his/her academic advisor, and the faculty member (project advisor) for whom the work is to be done (if different from the academic advisor) decide how the Master's Project requirement is to be met. The student is responsible for consulting with and acquiring approval from the academic advisor to confirm that the project meets the requirements of their program of study (use the *Master's Project Proposal Form* found in *Appendix A*). The topic and form of the Master's Project depend upon the student's experience and the interests of both the student and the faculty. For example, if the student lacks experience in writing scholarly papers the student may profit from writing a Systematic Literature Review that involves a critical synthesis and interpretation of the literature on a public health topic using validated methodologies. However, those students with demonstrated writing skills and an interest in research might profit from working on a Research Paper involving collaboration with School of Public Health faculty on a data based project (which may use primary or secondary data).

The student's work could culminate in the preparation of an article for potential publication. Guidelines for a Research Paper, Systematic Literature Review, a Consultative Report or a Grant Proposal can be found in *section 8.8*.

Refer to the class schedule of the semester you plan to register for the Master's Project. It is listed as PubH 7294 Master's Project: Public Health Practice, select the section # of your Advisor. Contact Anne Ehrenberg before registering for PubH 7294.

## **APPROVAL PROCESS**

In order to maximize the benefit from the academic advisor's input, students must have their topic approved by their academic advisor. Approval must be received in writing before work can begin on the project proposal. After receiving the academic advisor's approval on the topic, the student should begin to develop the project proposal. (Use the *Master's Project Proposal Form* – a sample can be found in *Appendix A* of this guidebook.) The proposal sets up a guiding framework for the project and establishes a timeline for completion that is mutually satisfactory to the student and his/her advisor. The project proposal should include the following:

- Statement of purpose or the idea for the project – this should be clear even to someone not familiar with the topic.
- Indication of culminating product: Research Paper, Systematic Literature Review, Consultative Report or Grant Proposal
- Statement of key research questions to be addressed and rationale
- List of associated objectives for the project
- Brief description of the project's methodology
- Proposed timeline
- Project budget (if applicable)

The Project Proposal must be approved by the Academic Advisor and, where appropriate, the Project Advisor before beginning the project itself. For projects involving collection of information from people,

approval must be obtained from the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research; see *sections 6.9 and 8.9* for more information.

### **COMPLETION OF THE MASTER'S PROJECT**

Students must keep in touch with their academic advisor during the course of the Master's Project. Each Advisor should specify how he/she prefers to work with the student. Students should know that faculty may decline working with a student's project that is out of their area of expertise or if the student's timeline does not work out for the faculty member. Therefore, students are encouraged to seek information and ideas from other faculty members as well. A draft or drafts of the project should be submitted to the academic advisor and/or project advisor for review and comments. These should be incorporated into the final draft of the project, and resubmitted to the advisor and reader. A crucial aspect of the project is to describe the public health implications of the project in terms that are understandable even to lay person. A student desiring publication of the Master's Project should discuss this with the advisor. Master's Projects written in publication format meet the program requirements with prior academic advisor approval. Once the academic advisor has approved a final version of the project, the final draft should be typed and submitted for acceptance. Finally, students must submit one copy of the final approved version of the project; the copy will be retained in the PHP Program Office. No grade will be assigned for PubH 7294 until the student has complied with this request.

## 8.8 Master's Project Options

### OPTION ONE: RESEARCH PAPER

The Research Paper will focus on pertinent questions or issues in public health practice. This Master's Project option provides students with an opportunity to apply research skills to pertinent issues and questions under faculty supervision.

The component parts of a Research Paper are as follows:

- I. Abstract
- II. Introduction
  - A. Purpose of the study
  - B. Statement of the problem and its significance (historical background)
  - C. Review and synthesis of relevant literature (extent of written review dependent on nature of project)
    - 1) Statement of conceptual framework, hypotheses and/or focused research questions, and the underlying rationale for each
- III. Methodology
  - A. Study design
  - B. Sample selection and description of sample characteristics - including nature of response and non-response, as appropriate
  - C. Description of data/information collection procedures, study site and instrumentation, as appropriate
  - D. Analytic technique used - quantitative, analytical techniques to be used
- IV. Results (only the facts) - presentation and analysis of data/information
- V. Discussion
  - A. Study limitations – e.g. methods, data, conceptualization, bias (what types?)
  - B. Consistency with prior research
- VI. Conclusions and recommended actions
- VII. References (APA reference style or appropriate alternative)
- VIII. Tables
- IX. Figures
- X. Appendices
  - A. Data collection instruments and letters
  - B. Institutional Review Board permission (as appropriate)

A Master's Project resulting in a Research Paper may, but need not necessarily involve the collection of primary data by the student. A Master's Project can be completed through secondary analysis of data as well. Projects may be undertaken in conjunction with ongoing faculty research, a student's class, or be carried out in conjunction with a fieldwork experience. Doing research at the experience site can create the opportunity for the student to systematically investigate issues or problems that are of direct relevance to his/her fieldwork organization. Such research in an "applied" mode will then provide an opportunity for the student to wrestle with the issues of knowledge and research utilization in practice or program development. However, this option must be discussed and approved by the Academic Advisor and Preceptor early in the practicum experience and before beginning the Master's Project itself.

## **OPTION TWO: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Systematic Literature Review will focus on pertinent questions or issues in public health practice. This Master's Project option provides students with an opportunity to apply analytical skills in the synthesis and interpretation of the literature under faculty supervision.

The component parts of a Systematic Literature Review are as follows:

- I. Abstract
- II. Introduction
  - A. Statement of the problem and its significance (historical background)
  - B. Statement of focused research questions and the underlying rationale for each
- III. Conceptual framework
- IV. Methodology (how is the search of the literature being conducted)
  - A. Locating and selecting studies
    - 1) Search methodology
    - 2) Selection criteria
  - B. Quality assessment of studies
    - 1) Evaluation of study designs
    - 2) Evaluation of study data
    - 3) Evaluation of study results
  - C. Data extraction from the studies
    - 1) Outcomes evaluated
    - 2) Data extraction protocol
    - 3) Data extraction method
  - D. Data synthesis from studies - analytic techniques (quantitative, qualitative)
- V. Results
  - A. Studies selected
  - B. Quality of studies
  - C. Findings of studies
  - D. Synthesis of findings
  - E. Assessment of biases
  - F. Limitations
- VI. Conclusions and recommendations - significance to the field of public health
- VII. References (APA reference style or appropriate alternative)

A Master's Project resulting in a Systematic Literature Review can be undertaken in conjunction with a faculty research project, student's class, or be carried out in conjunction with a fieldwork experience. Doing synthesis and analysis of the literature at the placement site can create the opportunity for the student to investigate issues or problems that are of direct relevance to his/her fieldwork organization. Such review in an "applied" mode will then provide an opportunity for the student to wrestle with the issues of knowledge and information utilization in practice or program development. However, this option must be discussed and approved by the Academic Advisor and Preceptor early in the practicum experience and before beginning the Master's Project itself.

### **OPTION THREE: CONSULTATIVE REPORT**

The Consultative Report gives the student the opportunity to address an actual public health problem that is currently faced by a public health agency (public or private). The student performs a consultation for the agency and then writes the Consultative Report. This option may emanate from a field experience or it may be separate from the field experience.

The component parts of a Consultative Report are as follows:

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Introduction
  - A. Description of the agency (purpose, structure, etc.) and its issue and the significance of the issue
  - B. Limited literature review for information relevant to this specific issue
  - C. Identification of the stakeholders
- III. Methodology
  - A. Process of consultation
  - B. Sources of information and data – e.g. literature, primary data collection, surveys, interviews
  - C. Analysis of information and data
- IV. Findings
- V. Discussion
- VI. Conclusions and recommended actions and changes and dissemination of information
- VII. References (APA reference style or appropriate alternative)

The Consultative Report offers students to address a real problem and produce a product for a real client. By necessity, students who choose this option will need to work closely with a community preceptor as well as their advisors. Production of a Consultative Report will most often involve components of options one and two also, so in some ways, this option is the most comprehensive of the three.

## OPTION FOUR: GRANT PROPOSAL

Students may have the opportunity to work with a faculty member or outside collaborator in applying for a research grant to explore a public health topic. Learning how to write a successful grant application is a very important skill to possess in the practice of public health. Ideally, such proposals, if funded, may provide additional project opportunities for subsequent MPH students.

The grant proposal should be substantial enough in content that the student has the opportunity to explore the topic to a similar depth of that required for a research paper or literature review. A grant proposal, such as those submitted to the NIH, would be appropriate. Ultimate approval of this project option is subject to the program director.

The components of a grant proposal include the following\*:

### I. Introduction

### II. Research Plan

- A. Specific aims (endpoints)
- B. Background and significance
  - 1. significance to increasing scientific knowledge
  - 2. significance to improving public health
  - 3. review of relevant literature
- C. Preliminary studies
  - 1. provide preliminary data if available
  - 2. critically interpret preliminary results and relate to current proposal
- D. Research design and methods
  - 1. description of research and study design
  - 2. detailed description of methods for work and analysis
  - 3. include charts and tables when appropriate
  - 4. discuss alternatives and handling of negative data

### III. Special Considerations

- A. Human subjects research
- B. Animal care and use
- C. Contractual agreements
- D. Consultancies

### IV. Budget

### V. Bibliography and References

### VI. Biographical sketches

### VII. Supplemental discussion of public health implications

### VIII. References (APA reference style or appropriate alternative)

\*Some variation is to be expected depending on the funding agency.

## 8.9 Human Subjects Protections

All students at the University of Minnesota who conduct any research using human subjects are required to submit their research proposal to the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval prior to conducting their study. The approval process can take up to two months. This time must be accounted for when developing the proposal timeline. No contacts with potential or actual study participants, including recruitment, or other research may occur until final IRB approval. After the outline has been

approved, each student should allow a minimum of six months to complete all the tasks involved in preparing the IRB application and getting approval, conducting the project and preparing the final draft. Please see *section 6.11* for IRB procedures and further information.

## 8.10 Final Oral Examination

All master's degree candidates are expected to pass a final comprehensive oral examination, taken after submission of the Master's Project.

A committee will examine the student on the content of the master's project as well as questions on general areas of public health. The examining committee will consist of the academic advisor, a School of Public Health faculty member who also serves as reader of the Master's Project and the PHP major chair or designate. A second focus specialist from the practice community is optional. Final approval rests with the Dean of the School of Public Health. (Two of the committee must have an appointment within the School of Public Health; the third member must have an appointment within the University of Minnesota.)

The student is expected to present a professional seminar on their master's project (20-30 minutes) as part of the final comprehensive oral examination followed by questions. This seminar will be open to guests. A closed meeting between the candidate and the examining committee immediately follows the seminar. This closed meeting may include further questions on the master's project, as well as questions on general public health areas. Upon completion of the examination, the candidate is then excused and a formal vote of the committee is taken on whether the candidate passed the examination. In order to pass the examination, the candidate must receive at least three positive votes. After successful completion of the exam, committee members will sign the student study plan. The signed MPH study plan is forwarded to the PHP Major Coordinator.

## 8.11 Graduate Follow-up Survey

Students must submit the Graduate Survey prior to receiving their degree or certificate. Students may complete the process online at the Graduate Survey link on the SPH home page ([www.sph.umn.edu](http://www.sph.umn.edu)). Upon submitting the electronic survey, the student's relevant major coordinator will be notified by e-mail. Coordinators may opt to have the student complete a paper copy, and then enter the information for the student using the online form.

All graduates will receive a three-month and six-month e-mail message asking them to update survey information (e.g., employment). This is through secure access and coordinators will not be able to input on students' behalf.

## 8.12 Graduation Checklist

1. Submit completed MPH study plan at least one semester (or earlier) prior to anticipated completion of coursework. Submit to Anne Ehrenberg, Academic Programs and Instructional Coordinator, in the PHP Major office, Mayo C302. The MPH study plan can be found at <http://www.sph.umn.edu/current/studyplan/home.html>
2. File Application for Degree form at 200 Fraser Hall by semester deadline (see sample form in the Student Guidebook). Students can turn the form in anytime after starting the program up to the deadline date (contact Major Coordinator for deadline dates). The form can be downloaded from the U of MN website at: <http://www.sph.umn.edu/current/enrolled/home.html> under MPH/MHA Application for Degree or found in the PHP Major Office Mayo at C302 or the SPH Student Services Center at Mayo D305.
3. **Complete all coursework and requirements for your MPH** by the semester deadlines to be cleared for graduation (contact Major Coordinator for deadline dates)

4. Sign up for and complete at least 4 Field Experience credits (PubH 7296)
5. Sign up for and complete at least 4 Master’s Project credits (PubH 7294)
6. Schedule oral exam. The student is responsible for scheduling the oral exam with the committee members and arranging for any audio-visual equipment needed for the presentation. Contact the PHP Major Coordinator to confirm PHP conference room availability.
7. Provide each committee member with a copy of your master’s project paper **at least two weeks before the scheduled date of your oral exam.**
8. Submit the following items to the PHP program office to ensure you’re eligible to graduate:
  - a. Approved Focus Area Planning Form, in which you document how you achieved the EPHP focus area goals,
  - b. Course syllabi for ALL Focus area courses (**remember to save your course syllabi**),
  - c. The Master's Project Proposal Form,
  - d. Final master’s project paper,
  - e. MPH Study Plan, plus copies of any amendments added at a later time, and
  - f. A reflective summary (not more than 5 pages) of your learning objectives/focus area, how you met them and how the MPH has prepared you for public health practice.
9. Notify Anne Ehrenberg (612) 626-5665 or php@umn.edu of the date of the oral exam at least two weeks prior to the exam so that your student file can be forwarded to your academic advisor.
10. At the oral exam, the committee will sign the study plan. The academic advisor is responsible for returning the student file with the signed study plan to the Academic Programs and Instructional Coordinator as well as submitting a grade change for the master’s project credits.
11. Submit the *Graduate Survey* at [http://sphsdb.ahc.umn.edu/gradsurvey/gs\\_login.cfm](http://sphsdb.ahc.umn.edu/gradsurvey/gs_login.cfm)
12. To help us gather data on the effectiveness of the coursework, please complete the online simulation “Disaster in Franklin County” found at: <http://cpheo.sph.umn.edu/umncphp/franklincounty.html>
13. Sign up to participate in the SPH Commencement held every May, if interested, and have your name in the Commencement program. Details available from the Student Services Center.

## 8.13 Staff and Faculty

### PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE MAJOR STAFF

#### Public Health Practice Major Chair

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#### Executive Program in Public Health Practice Program Director

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### **Tim Church, MS, PhD**

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### **Ian Greaves, MD**

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Lung disorders caused by airborne exposures; agricultural health and safety issues; health and safety problems of small businesses; workers compensation; international environmental and occupational health issues

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## 8.14 Appendices

**Appendix A**

- Master's Project Proposal Form

**Appendix B**

- EPHP Focus Area Planning Form



APPENDIX B – SAMPLE FORM

## EPHP Focus Area Planning Form

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FOCUS AREA TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

FOCUS AREA DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FOCUS AREA GOALS	COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE				
	Example: PubH 6700 Foundations of Public Health Administration	Example: PubH 6717 Decision Making under Uncertainty	Example: PubH 6724 The Health Care System and Public Health	Example: PubH 6727 Health Leadership and Effecting Change	
Public policy development using a systems framework (Domain 2 and 8)	X		X		
Interventions based on the dimensions of community and culture (Domain 4 & 5)	X	X		X	
Assessment and application of basic public health sciences (Domains 1 & 6)	X	X			
Program management and communications principles (Domain 3 & 7)	X	X		X	

Place the course number and title of the course chosen for your focus area on the first line (the grey boxes)\* and then indicate with an X the Goal(s) that will be accomplished by taking the course. As noted the Domains of Public Health identified by the Council on Linkages (<http://trainingfinder.org/competencies/>) have been combined for application to EPHP Focus Goals for planning purposes. All Goals must be met through a combination of your courses.

\*Attach an additional sheet of paper if necessary