Public Health

Degrees Offered:

Master of Public Health
- Biostatistics
- Epidemiology
- Health Policy, Management and Leadership
- Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences
- Social and Behavioral Sciences

Master of Public Health (Online)

Master of Science
- School Health Education

PhD in Public Health Sciences
- Epidemiology
- Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences
- Social and Behavioral Sciences

Certificate Programs
- Applied Biostatistics Certificate
- Women’s Health Certificate

INTRODUCTION

West Virginia University’s School of Public Health combines the excitement and challenge of a newly launched school with a well-established faculty and successful programs that focus on education, research, and service.

West Virginia University and its academic programs are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) program is further accredited by the Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH). The WVU School of Public Health has been approved to conduct an intensive self-study as it transitions from an accredited program to a CEPH-accredited School of Public Health. M.P.H. Students from throughout the world who choose West Virginia University begin making a difference even before graduation. We truly believe in learning by doing. Students remain engaged in community health throughout their training and complete practicum/internship experiences in diverse settings. Our School Health Education program is nationally unique and attracts future leaders in education. The Ph.D. in Public Health Sciences prepares graduates for future careers in academia and research in a variety of settings.

School of Public Health faculty and staff involve students in their active research programs. Research efforts at the School often focus on the health of rural communities, consistent with our West Virginia roots. Students publish in leading peer-reviewed journals and present at national scientific conferences with their faculty mentors.

The practical and rigorous education WVU provides prepares our graduates to be effective professionals and competitive in today's job market. Our established programs are growing quickly to meet the needs of our students and the substantial public health challenges that face our state. WVU School of Public Health alumni continue to improve the health of individuals and communities throughout the U.S. and around the globe.

MISSION

We train the coming generation of public health practitioners and researchers, and we identify and create solutions to prevent and reduce public health problems.

VISION

The West Virginia University School of Public Health serves as a model for public health influence in our state, region, and beyond.

We are dedicated to a high-quality education for our students that:

- Provides innovative, high-quality education programs with focus on research and service.
- Prepares students to practice contemporary public health with emphasis on improving health and eliminating disparities in our region.
• Educates students to design and implement high-impact prevention, intervention, evaluation, quality assurance, and disease and injury surveillance and research programs.
• Delivers an innovative, rigorous graduate curriculum centered on a framework of preventing or alleviating health disparities in our region.
• Attains diversity and inclusion for all graduate students.

For additional information about the School of Public Health or our many affiliates, which provide a wealth of research and service, please visit our website at http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu.

Faculty

Interim Dean
• Alan M. Ducatman - M.Sc. (City U. of NY)
  Professor, Toxic Exposure Worker’s Compensation

Interim Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
• George Kelly - D.A. (Middle Tenn. St. U.)
  Professor, Meta-analysis, Effects of Physical Activity on Health Related Diseases

Interim Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
• Ruth Kershner - Ed.D. (WVU)
  Professor, Coordinator - MS in School Health Education, Substance Abuse Education, Violence Prevention, Women’s Health

Interim Assistant Dean for Academic Programs
• Janet B. Hunt - M.P.H. (U. of Tenn)
  Teaching Assistant Professor, Practicum Director, Curriculum Development and Academic Public Health

Interim Chair
• Matthew J. Gurka - Ph. D. (UNC)
  Department of Biostatistics, Associate Professor, Director of Biostatistics Consulting Group, Longitudinal Data Analysis, Model Selection, Power Analysis, Child Health, Childhood Obesity and Metabolic Syndrome
• Michael Hendryx - Ph.D. (Northwestern)
  Department of Health Policy, Associate Professor, Management and Leadership, Health Policy and Health Disparities
• Michael McCawley - Ph. D. (New York U.)
  Department of Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences, Research Professor, Air Pollution, Aerosols, and Occupational Health
• Anoop Shankar - Ph.D. (Mahatma Ghandi U.)
  Department of Epidemiology, Professor, Cardiovascular Diseases, Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, Chronic Kidney Disease
• Keith Zullig - Ph. D. (U. of S.C.)
  Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Associate Professor, Director - Ph. D. in Public Health Sciences, Adolescent Quality of Life Research, Measurement, Substance Use, and Community-Based Interventions

Professors
• Jeffrey Coben - M.D. (U. of Pitt)
  Clinical Research Methods
• Geri Dino - Ph. D. (Kansas State University)
  Management of Public Health, Tobacco Prevention
• Edward J. Doyle - M.S. (Geo. Wash. U)
  Clinical Director, Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health, Worker’s Compensation, Repetitive Strain Disorders
• Kimberly A. Horn - Ed.D. (WVU)
  Grant Writing, Tobacco Prevention, Health Disparities, Community-Based Participatory Research
• Sarah Knox - Ph.D. (U. of Stockholm)
  Clinical and Population Aspects of Cardiovascular Disease, Epigenetics and Systems Biology
• Ranjita Misra - Ph. D. (Old Dominion University)
  Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome
• Ian R. H. Rockett - Ph.D (Brown U.)
  Epidemiology of Injury and Substance Abuse, Suicide Misclassification, History of Public Health
• Pete Shaffron - Ed.D. (WVU)
  Interim Director, MPH Public Health Practice (online degree), Injury Prevention, Driver Behavior, Impact of Physical Fitness on the Older Driver
Associate Professors

- Peter Giacobbi - Ph. D. (U. of Tenn.)
  Physical Activity, Epidemiology
- Lan Guo - Ph. D. (WVU)
  Bioinformatics and Information Integration
- Gerry Hobbs - Ph. D. (Kan. St. U.)
  Biostatistics
- Kimberly Innes - Ph.D. (Cornell University)
  Epidemiology, Etiology, Chronic Age-Related Disorders

Assistant Professors

- Rachel T. Abraham - M.D. (U. of Bangalore, India)
  Bridging the Gap Between Medicine and Public Health
- Scott Cottrell - Ed. D. (WVU)
  Design and Instructional and Assessment Strategies
- Stephanie Frisbee - Ph.D. (WVU)
  Health Policy, Policy and Epidemiologic Approaches to Pediatric Cardiovascular Health Outcomes
- Kelly Gurka - Ph.D. (UNC)
  Epidemiology, Injury Prevention and Control, Maternal and Child Caree
- Alfgeir Kristjansson - Ph.D. (Karolinska Institute)
  Social Research Methods, Substance Abuse Prevention
- Dustin Long - Ph. D. (U. of North Carolina)
  Biostatistics
- Juhua Luo - Ph. D. (Karolinska Institute)
  Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention, Health Disparities in Underserved Populations
- Michael Mann - Ph. D. (University of Florida)
  Adolescent Health
- Toni Morris - M.S. (WVU)
  Community Medicine, First Aid Instruction
- Dougals Myers - Sc. D (U of Massachusetts)
  Workplace Safety
- Cecil Pollard - M.A. (WVU)
  Survey Research Methods, Collaborative Research Efforts
  Environmental Policy, Injury Control Epidemiology
- Michael D. Regier - Ph. D. (University of British Columbia)
  Biostatistics, Community Medicine
- Nancy O’Hara Tompkins - Ph. D. (U of Md.)
  Youth Physical Activity, Obesity Prevention
- Kimberly Williams - Ph.D. (McMaster U., Canada)
  Effects of Yoga Therapy on Low Back Pain
- Motao Zhu - Ph. D. (SUNY at Albany)
  Injury Epidemiology

Assistant Research Professor

- Melissa Ahern - Ph.D. (Fla. St. U.)
  Public Health Impacts of Energy Use
- Stephanie Frost - Ph. D. (WVU)
  Influence of Build and Social Environments on Health Behavior and Factors Influencing Childhood Obesity
- Christa L. Ice - Ph. D. (Vanderbilt University)
  Pediatrics

Research Instructors

- Thomas Bias - Ph. D. (WVU)
  Public Health Policy, Obesity Prevention, Built Environment, Community Development, Program Evaluation
- Kristi Kelly - M. Ed. (WVU)
  Meta-Analysis, Effects of Physical Activity on Health-Related Diseases
The field of public health encompasses a number of specific disciplines whose mission is to prepare individuals to help improve the health and quality of life in the population through education, research, and service. Public health strategies are typically focused on broad, societal, and population levels; for example, environmental regulations, water quality control, immunization programs, and health education initiatives.

The M.P.H. program seeks students with a strong, genuine commitment to a career in public health. A M.P.H. degree is appropriate for health professionals as well as individuals with bachelors’ degrees from a wide-range of disciplines who have a strong interest in preventive medicine and community/population health. We welcome applications from mid-career professionals and from students who have recently completed a bachelor’s degree.

Program Description

Public health is shaped by our nation’s public health agencies via health assessment, policy development, and public health services. The WVU School of Public Health addresses these core functions through the M.P.H. degree with discipline-specific programs in the Departments of Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Health Policy, Management and Leadership, Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. The MPH program prepares students for roles in decision-making in managed care and other integrated delivery systems, the medical products industry, health departments, and other governmental agencies, consumer groups, and community-based organizations. The M.P.H. program is accredited by the National Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH).

Admission Requirements

Please see each department for additional admission requirements.

Please note that strong computer skills are needed to be successful in this program. The school has minimum computer/laptop systems requirements; every student will sign an agreement to abide by these.

Since unforeseen circumstances and program implementation may necessitate changes in our curriculum, we encourage prospective and current students to visit the School of Public Health website at http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/ for current requirements.

For more information about the MPH program, contact:

Leah Adkins, Educational Programs Senior Program Coordinator at leadkins@hsc.wvu.edu .

Or

Janet Hunt, Interim Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs at jhunt@hsc.wvu.edu .

P.O. Box 9190
WVU School of Public Health
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Phone (304) 293-2502
Fax (304) 293-3755
Master of Science (M.S.) in School Health Education

The M.S. degree in School Health Education is only open to applicants holding a professional teaching certificate and/or licensure (in any teaching area). A copy of your teaching certificate is required for admission. This program is a member of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

Program Description

Students in this program will complete thirty credit hours of coursework. Students may transfer nine credit hours that are pre-approved, upon admission. All courses are offered on-line. Students can complete this degree in two years or less. The goal of the M.S. degree program in School Health Education is to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to instill in school-age students the information necessary to make healthy decisions regarding well-being. Experiential instruction, coupled with critical thinking skills, enables students to be informed health consumers. The program will provide an optimal experience to equip students to be models and mentors for their own students.

Admission Requirements

Please see each department for additional admission requirements.

Please note that strong computer skills are needed to be successful in this program. The school has minimum computer/laptop systems requirements; every student will sign an agreement to abide by these.

Since unforeseen circumstances and program implementation may necessitate changes in our curriculum, we encourage prospective and current students to visit the School of Public Health website at http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/ for current requirements.

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Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Public Health Sciences

The Ph.D. program in public health sciences is a degree for scientist-practitioners focused on prevention of premature mortality, morbidity, and disability resulting from communicable disease, chronic disease, and injury. The program offers specializations in three discipline-specific areas of public health: Social and Behavioral Sciences (117 credit hours), Epidemiology (114 credit hours), and Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences (117 credit hours). Detailed curricula are available at the School of Public Health website: http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/.

Goals of the Ph.D. Program

• Educate and train the next generation of public health leaders, thereby producing a self-renewing cadre of teachers, researchers, and practitioners who will help shape and sustain the best public health practices.
• Identify and address public health disparities.
• Improve health and health care in West Virginia while simultaneously improving the economic competitiveness of the WVU Health Sciences Center, emulating peer training programs in other states.
• Feature trans-disciplinary teaching and research in order for our graduates to be competitive and successful in high-level public health jobs, grants, and research opportunities.
• Create a pool of talent for developing highly technical enterprises in West Virginia.

Program Description

The first two years of the program emphasize research and statistical methods complemented by theoretical and process-oriented coursework relevant to the student’s selected area of specialty. In the first year, students take courses in the core areas of public health, scientific integrity and ethics, research writing, and research and statistical methodology, as well as seminars introducing them to pedagogy and faculty research. In the second year, students engage in required courses and electives in their specialty track and additional research study opportunities.

At the conclusion of the second year, students are matched with a mentor and transition to a funded faculty research project, lab, or group. The last two years will largely be dedicated to the dissertation proposal process and research; however, after qualifying exams, students also engage in teaching practica (to be determined by the student’s departmental advisor).

Qualifying Examination Summary

At the conclusion of the second year of coursework, students are required to pass a comprehensive qualifying examination. This comprehensive exam is based on core public health and discipline-specific material and administered by the student’s dissertation committee. Students are only allowed to take the comprehensive exam twice. If a student fails the exam twice, they will be dismissed from the program.
Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

Upon successful completion of the qualifying exam, the student will set a date for the doctoral dissertation proposal defense. The proposal takes the form of a NIH or equivalent grant proposal including: specific aims, introduction, succinct yet detailed literature review, applicant capability, materials and research methodology, references, human subjects, and supporting documents. The proposal must be defended by the student in a forum that includes the student’s complete Doctoral Dissertation Committee (comprised of five members).

Dissertation Summary

The program will culminate in a dissertation research project on an important public health topic. The dissertation can take the form of a traditional research dissertation or a series of three publishable papers or monographs on a related, important public health topic. The papers must be cleared for submission by the committee and submitted before the dissertation defense. We emphasize peer-reviewed research publications as desired outcomes because of their positive impact on skills and the professional placement options for our graduates. This is consistent with a trend in public health Ph.D. programs around the country.

The dissertation will be defended in a forum that has been announced to the school and university. All members of the Dissertation Committee must sign the dissertation approval form for the dissertation to be complete. The dissertation must be submitted following WVU policy regulating electronic submission of theses and dissertations.

Program Delivery

Most courses in the program will be taught using the face-to-face, on-campus, small, or large group format. A small number of core courses and some electives will be delivered by web-based technology.

Admission to the Program

Admission to the doctoral program is limited to highly qualified and motivated candidates. Competitive stipend support is offered to these students. The application deadline is February 15.

Please note that admission is preferentially given to US citizens and permanent residents. International students are considered for acceptance by the Admissions Committee if they have excellent academic credentials and research experience and can demonstrate stipend support for the duration of Ph.D. training from an individual source, government source, or by written agreement with a WVU HSC faculty mentor. Detailed admissions procedures, including online application materials, can be found at the School of Public Health website: http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/.

For more information contact:
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