School of Public Health

Degrees Offered

ON CAMPUS:

Master of Public Health (MPH):
- Biostatistics
- Epidemiology
- Health Policy
- Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences
- Social and Behavioral Sciences

MPH Dual Degree:
- MD/MPH
- DDS/MPH
- MBA/MPH

MS Degree:
- MS in Biostatistics

Ph.D. in Public Health Sciences
- Epidemiology
- Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences
- Social and Behavioral Sciences

ONLINE:
- MPH in Social and Behavioral Sciences
- MS in School Health Education

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 School of Public Health is further accredited by the Council for Education in Public Health (CEPH). MPH 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 mission of the West Virginia University School of Public Health is to improve the health of West Virginians through innovation and leadership in education, research, and service.

We achieve this by:
- Implementing educational programs that produce highly qualified practitioners, educators, and researchers
- Promoting interdisciplinary research to understand and solve complex health problems with local impact and global significance
- Engaging communities, businesses and government partners in accomplishing our shared mission

The vision of the School of Public Health is to be internationally recognized for demonstrating how academic public health can transform lives.

The School of Public Health is guided by the following values:
- Community Engagement: we are proud of the communities we serve and recognize the importance of bidirectional participatory activities.
Collaboration: we collaborate with partners who join us in improving the public’s health.
Equity: we promote equity and social justice in defining health and eliminating health disparities.
Integrity: we adhere to the highest ethical standards of honesty and fairness and we recognize that integrity and ethical behavior are essential elements of our professions.
Respect: we respect diverse points of view and the cultural heritage and traditions of all people.
Accountability: we hold ourselves accountable to one another and to the many stakeholders who support the School of Public Health.

ADMINISTRATION

FOUNDING DEAN
Gregory A. Hand - Ph.D. (University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas)
Professor, Department of Epidemiology

INTERIM ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Lillian U. Smith - Dr.PH. (University of South Carolina)
Associate Professor, Department of Health Policy, Management, and Leadership

ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Linda J. Rudy - MBA (West Virginia University)
Business and Operations

ASSISTANT DEAN FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS
Janet B. Hunt - MPH (University of Tennessee)
Teaching Assistant Professor, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences

DIRECTOR OF PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING
Bobbi Sykes - MS (West Virginia University)
Instructor, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES
Sherry Kuhl - MS (Walden University)
Ruth E. Kershner Office of Student Services

CHAIRS
Robert Duval - Ph.D. (Florida State University)
Associate Professor, Department of Health Policy, Management and Leadership
Thomas Hulsey (Interim) - Sc.D. (Johns Hopkins University)
Professor, Department of Epidemiology
Matthew J. Gurka - Ph.D. (University of North Carolina)
Associate Professor, Department of Biostatistics
Michael McCawley - Ph.D. (New York University)
Research Professor, Department of Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences
Keith Zullig - Ph.D. (University of South Carolina)
Associate Professor, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Degree Designation Learning Goals

MASTER OF SCIENCE (MS)

MS School Health Education Program Competencies

• Demonstrate the knowledge and skills of a health literate educator.
• Assess needs to determine priorities for school health education.
• Plan effective comprehensive school health education curricula and programs.
• Implement health education instruction.
• Assess student learning.
• Plan and coordinate a school health education program.
• Serve as a resource person in health education.
• Communicate and advocate for health and school health education.

MS Biostatistics Program Competencies
• Assess foundational concepts of probability and statistical inference.
• Analyze clinical and public health data using descriptive biostatistical methods.
• Distinguish appropriate basic inferential statistical analyses and summarize their results.
• Manage standard statistical software to efficiently manage data structures.
• Summarize central concepts of statistical theory and inference.
• Develop appropriate plans to analyze standard continuous data in order to make valid inferences.
• Develop appropriate plans to analyze standard categorical data in order to make valid inferences.
• Communicate effectively, in writing and verbally, with substantive investigators and members of the community when assisting in the design of research studies as well as the results of statistical analyses.
• Weigh a public health problem in terms of magnitude, person, time, and place.
• Explain each of the five core disciplines in public health and illustrate the ways each of the core disciplines have contributed to the historical evolution of public health.

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH)

MPH Common/Core Competencies:
• Explain and assess basic concepts of probability and statistical inference. (BIOS)
• Summarize public health data using descriptive biostatistical methods. (BIOS)
• Distinguish the appropriate basic inferential statistical analyses and summarize their results. (BIOS)
• Derive and assess basic epidemiologic frequencies and association. (EPID)
• Compare and contrast epidemiologic study designs. (EPID)
• Explain health care and public health services within the context of the U.S. policy system. (HPML)
• Propose policy strategies for improving the health status of populations. (HPML)
• Assess specific health outcomes for individuals and selected populations. (OEHS)
• Summarize the ethical perspectives and conflicts which arise with respect to human health and the environment. (OEHS)
• Analyze the results of environmental health research and formal risk assessments, and be able to evaluate the validity of the methods used and the conclusions drawn. (OEHS)
• Compile the management principles necessary to manage public health functions in an environmental disaster. (OEHS)
• Illustrate the social and behavioral factors that affect the health of individuals and populations. (SBHS)
• Recommend appropriate social and behavioral theories and models that are relevant to population health problems. (SBHS)
• Recommend evidence-based approaches in the development of public health interventions. (SBHS)
• Apply MPH core competencies in a practice-based experience. (Practicum)
• Integrate and synthesize MPH core competencies in the context of a culminating experience. (Culminating Experience)

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

• Develop effective strategies for teaching in higher education
• Review and synthesize pertinent literature and formulate focused research questions that address identified knowledge gaps
• Design and conduct original research that uniquely contributes to the public health scientific knowledge
• Disseminate research findings through appropriate peer-reviewed publications and presentations, and to other public health community audiences

Important Note: For all School of Public Health programs, non enrollment/completion of program relevant courses in four (4) or more sequential, long semesters (Fall, Spring) may result in suspension from the program.

Affirmation of competency achievement is a requirement for graduation.

MPH Admission Requirements (Fall Only)

The WVU School of Public Health participates in the Schools of Public Health Application Service (SOPHAS (http://www.sophas.org)). Our MPH Admissions process is a two-step process. All MPH applications must be submitted through the national SOPHAS service and applicants must also submit a WVU Graduate application. In addition to the application, applicants must submit to SOPHAS a statement of purpose and objectives, official GRE test scores, three letters of reference, a current resume/curriculum vitae, and all university transcripts. SOPHAS requires original transcripts from ALL U.S. and international institutions attended.

Please see each department and major’s website for additional admission requirements.
MS in School Health Education Admission Requirements (Fall, Spring, Summer)

Students interested in applying for the MS in School Health Education must: Complete the WVU graduate application, complete the MS in School Health Education application, and submit official school transcripts, CV/Resume, three academic letters of recommendation, and a copy of the applicant’s professional teaching certificate and/or licensure. Please see the MS degree under Academics on the School of Public Health for further admission requirements: http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/.

MS in Biostatistics Admission Requirements (Fall Only)

The MS in Biostatistics program does not participate in SOPHAS (Schools of Public Health Application Service) like the MPH programs. All MS applications must be submitted through the WVU application system, which includes a $60.00 application fee, payable to WVU. Applicants must submit a statement of purpose, official GRE test scores, three letters of reference, a current resume/curriculum vitae, and an official copy of all university transcripts. The deadline for applications to be considered for the fall (no spring/summer admissions are permitted) is July 1 (priority deadline is April 1).

Applications that are complete will be sent to the department for review. Students will receive an email from the WVU School of Public Health regarding their acceptance.

Ph.D. Admission Requirements (Fall Only)

Fully completed applications received by February 15 are considered.

Admission to the doctoral program is limited to highly qualified and motivated candidates. Competitive stipend support is offered to these students.

Detailed admissions procedures, including online application materials, as well as application deadline, can be found at the School of Public Health website: http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu/.

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Master of Public Health (MPH)

Welcome to the West Virginia University School of Public Health. Our mission is to improve the health of West Virginians through innovation and leadership in education, research, and service. Each day, the affiliates and centers within the School of Public Health conduct research on today’s pressing public health issues. Diabetes, obesity, substance abuse, and tobacco use top the list of health disparities faced by West Virginians. 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 Master of Public Health program seeks students with a strong, genuine commitment to a career in public health. This degree is appropriate for health professionals, as well as individuals with bachelor’s degrees from a wide range of disciplines, who have a strong interest in community/population health and preventive medicine. Our faculty and staff look forward to your decision to become a public health practitioner, researcher, and educator by enrolling in one of our master degree programs. Each department and major can be explored by visiting our website http://publichealth.hsc.wvu.edu.

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 the core functions of public health by offering the MPH in the discipline-specific majors of:

• Biostatistics
• Epidemiology
• Health Policy
• Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences
• Social and Behavioral Science (On campus and Online)

All MPH programs are accredited by the national Council for Education for Public Health (CEPH). For more information about the MPH program, please contact:

Sherry Kuhl, Director of Student Services
West Virginia University
School of Public Health
P.O. Box 9190
1 Medical Center Drive
Morgantown, WV 26505-9190
Master of Science (MS) School Health Education

The mission of the MS in School Health Education Program is to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to instill in school-age students the information needed to make healthy decisions regarding well-being. The MS 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) (http://www.electroniccampus.org).

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 MS 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.

For more information about the MS in School Health program, contact:

Michael Mann, School Health Coordinator
West Virginia University
School of Public Health
P.O. Box 9190
1 Medical Center Drive
Morgantown, WV 26505-9190
Phone (304) 293-3560
Fax (304) 293-6685

Master of Science (MS) Biostatistics

The Master of Science (MS) Program in Biostatistics is meant for college graduates with interest and background in mathematics and statistics who wish to learn both the methodology and the application of biostatistics in the health sciences. The goals of this program are similar to the current MPH in Biostatistics Program in learning objectives; however, MS students will receive a more extensive methodological foundation as well as be expected to take additional statistical courses instead of the “core” public health courses required for any MPH.

A typical student who graduates with an MS in Biostatistics from WVU would be qualified to work as a biostatistician or research coordinator in research organizations such as a pharmaceutical company, contract research organization (CRO), a university, or a health department. MS graduates also will be prepared to pursue doctoral education in biostatistics or similar disciplines.

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

Welcome to the WVU School of Public Health, Ph.D. program in Public Health Sciences. Our mission is to provide state of the art doctoral education to a select group of highly qualified students who desire to positively impact the public's health. We aim to train these students in a research intensive curriculum that is guided by a distinguished faculty at the leading edge of effective public health science. The degree emphasizes both evidence-based primary prevention of disease and injury, and health promotion research and practice.

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 Ph.D. program offers four discipline-specific majors of:

- Epidemiology (114 credit hours)
- Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences (118 credit hours)
- Social and Behavioral 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.

For more information contact:

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