

# Master of Public Health (MPH) Student Handbook



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS

**College of Education  
& Health Professions**  
*Health, Human Performance,  
& Recreation*

2024 – 25 Academic Year

Last Updated: August 2024

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## Welcome Message

Welcome to the Master of Public Health (MPH) Program at the University of Arkansas!

We are committed to making your educational experience positive and enriching. This manual is designed to assist you in the successful completion of your degree requirements. It is also advised that you familiarize yourself with the following resources:

- The most current Graduate Catalog of Studies found via at the following web address: <https://catalog.uark.edu/>
- The most current Graduate Student Handbook found on the Graduate School website or at the following web address: <https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/graduate/current-students/student-support/student-resources/graduate-handbook/index.php>



The University of Arkansas is proudly accredited by CEPH, the Council on Education for Public Health.

### Disclaimer

The MPH Program at the University of Arkansas reserves the right to amend the contents of the MPH Student Handbook at any time, in accordance with the university's rules and regulations and the expectations of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). When such changes are made, the updated handbook will be made available online and students will be emailed a notice.

## Directories

Public Health Faculty	E-mail	Office #
<b>Dr. Divya Bhagianadh</b> Assistant Professor	<a href="mailto:divyab@uark.edu">divyab@uark.edu</a>	HPER 308 C
<b>Dr. Shristi Bhochhibhoya</b> Assistant Professor	<a href="mailto:shristib@uark.edu">shristib@uark.edu</a>	PRES-W 157
<b>Dr. Kristin Bogda</b> Teaching Assistant Professor	<a href="mailto:kbogda@uark.edu">kbogda@uark.edu</a>	HPER 308 A
<b>Dr. Mance Buttram</b> <i>Associate Professor</i>	<a href="mailto:mance@uark.edu">mance@uark.edu</a>	PRES-W 154
<b>Dr. Robert Davis</b> <i>Assistant Professor</i>	<a href="mailto:red007@uark.edu">red007@uark.edu</a>	HPER 310 D
<b>Dr. Page Dobbs</b> <i>Assistant Professor</i>	<a href="mailto:pdobbs@uark.edu">pdobbs@uark.edu</a>	PRES-W 155
<b>Dr. Robert Elbin</b> <i>Associate Professor</i>	<a href="mailto:rielbin@uark.edu">rielbin@uark.edu</a>	HPER 308 X
<b>Dr. Bart Hammig</b> <i>Professor</i> <i>BS Program Coordinator</i>	<a href="mailto:bhammig@uark.edu">bhammig@uark.edu</a>	HPER 308 G
<b>Dr. Erin Howie-Hickey</b> <i>Associate Professor</i>	<a href="mailto:ekhowie@uark.edu">ekhowie@uark.edu</a>	HPER 308 I
<b>Dr. Ches Jones</b> <i>Professor</i> <i>MPH Program Coordinator</i>	<a href="mailto:ches@uark.edu">ches@uark.edu</a>	HPER 308 K
<b>Ms. Elizabeth Lindly</b> <i>Clinical Instructor</i> <i>Director of Public Health</i>	<a href="mailto:elindly@uark.edu">elindly@uark.edu</a>	HPER 310 B

Administrator/Office	E-mail	Office #
<b>Dr. Kate Mamiseishvili</b> <i>Dean of the College of Education and Health Professions</i>	<a href="mailto:kmamsei@uark.edu">kmamsei@uark.edu</a>	GRAD
<b>Dr. Michelle Gray</b> <i>HHPR Department Head</i>	<a href="mailto:rgray@uark.edu">rgray@uark.edu</a>	HPER 306 A
<b>Dr. Amanda Sullivan</b> <i>HHPR Assistant Department Head &amp; Graduate Coordinator</i>	<a href="mailto:alsulliv@uark.edu">alsulliv@uark.edu</a>	HPER 308 U
<b>Graduate School</b>	<a href="mailto:gradinfo@uark.edu">gradinfo@uark.edu</a>	GEAR 213



## Guiding statements

### Program Vision

The program's vision is developing positive change agents for a healthier and safer community, state, nation and world.

### Program Mission

The program's mission is to promote the health and safety of communities in the state of Arkansas and region through professional preparation of positive change agents, novel and relevant scholarship, and engaged professional service.

### Program Goals

1. Instruction. Promote a student-centered learning environment that encompasses student engaged learning through relevant and contemporary curricula.
2. Scholarship. Enhance the public health knowledge base through faculty and student research and scholarship.
3. Service. Promote public health by engaging with public health practitioners in the state of Arkansas and surrounding regions to support and enhance the health of our diverse community.
4. Student Success. Ensure students are equipped with professional competencies necessary to becoming a public health professional and embark upon a career to impact population health.

## Admission Requirements

For acceptance to the MPH program, the students must meet the general requirements for admissions to the Graduate School, have earned an undergraduate degree in public health (or in a related field). Students with a non-health related undergraduate degree will also be considered but should articulate in the interest statement why prior course work and/or experiences have led to an interest in obtaining an MPH.

In addition, all applicants will need to meet following admission standards:

- A 3.00 grade-point average on the last 60 hours of undergraduate course work (excluding student teaching)
- Submit a resume/curriculum vitae
- Submit a 500-word interest statement.

## Graduate Assistantships

The HHPR department has a limited number of graduate assistant (GA) positions available to qualified students each year. These positions are 12-month, 50% appointments and require the graduate assistant to provide support to an individual program in the form of course teaching, research assistance, or a combination of both. Decisions regarding how these positions will be awarded is typically made by individual programs. GA positions offer in-state and out-of-state tuition waivers and a competitive monthly stipend. HHPR GAs must enroll for a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester (Fall/Spring) and 3 credit hours during the Summer semester to maintain their funding.

Effective May 1, 2022, graduate students may be paid hourly on top of a 50% graduate assistantship without the pre-approval of the Graduate School Dean. The Graduate School will approve through Workday and the position must comply with appropriate University policies for hourly positions. The Graduate School imposes no limit on hours worked above the graduate assistant position.

Students interested in being considered for a departmental graduate assistantship must first apply to the University of Arkansas Graduate School and be admitted to a HHPR graduate program. Students pursuing a doctoral degree beginning with the baccalaureate degree may receive financial support as a graduate assistant for no more than twelve semesters (4 years) beyond the baccalaureate degree.

## MPH Curriculum

All students awarded an MPH degree must have a minimum of 42 credit hours. Students may choose from two concentrations: Public Health Practice or Physical Activity.

The MPH Program curriculum consists of 4 components: foundational courses common to all concentrations (27 credit hours), concentration-specific courses (9 credit hours), an applied practice experience (3 credit hours) and a capstone integrative learning experience (3 credit hours).

### MPH Foundational Courses

Course number	Course name	Credits Hrs.
	<b>Foundational Curriculum for both Concentrations</b>	<b>27</b>
PBHL 55603	Public Health: Practices and Planning	3
PBHL 56303	Health Administration, Organizations & Systems	3
PBHL 56503	Social Determinants of Health	3
NURS 50603	Health Care Policy	3
PBHL 55703	Foundations of Public Health <sup>1</sup>	3
PBHL 56103	Epidemiology for Public Health Practice	3
HHPR 53503	Research in Health, Human Performance, & Recreation	3
ESRM 53903	Statistics in Education & Health Professions	3
PBHL 54103	Evaluation of Public Health Programs	3

<sup>1</sup> Course taken by MPH students who did not graduate from a CEPH accredited undergraduate program. Those who did graduate from a CEPH accredited undergraduate program may opt to take this course or replace with an elective

## Concentration-Specific Courses

Course number	Course name	Credits Hrs.
	<b>Public Health Practice Concentration</b>	<b>9</b>
PBHL 68003	Health Communication: Research, Theory, & Practice	3
PBHL 55303	Theories of Social & Behavioral Determinants of Health	3
Elective	Faculty-Approved Elective	3
	<b>Physical Activity Concentration</b>	<b>9</b>
EXSC 53403	Physical Activity & Health	3
EXSC 53503	Exercise Psychology	3
EXSC 54603	Promoting Physical Activity in the Community	3

## Applied Practice and Integrative Learning Experiences

Course number	Course name	Credits Hrs.
PBHL 5840V	Internship- Applied Practice Experience	3
PBHL 5660V	Integrative Learning Experience	3

See [Appendix A](#) for suggested semester-by-semester coursework.

## MPH Competencies

### Foundational Competencies

The following are foundational competencies that are addressed and assessed in the foundational courses shared by both concentrations:

Foundational MPH Competencies
<b>Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health</b>
1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice
<b>Public Health &amp; Health Care Systems</b>
5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings



6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels
<b>Planning &amp; Management to Promote Health</b>
7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs
<b>Policy in Public Health</b>
12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes
14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity
<b>Leadership</b>
16. Apply principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges
<b>Communication</b>
18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content
<b>Interprofessional Practice</b>
21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams
<b>Systems Thinking</b>
22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

## Concentration Competencies

The following are competencies that are addressed and assessed in the concentration-specific courses of the **Public Health Practice** concentration:

1. Develop empirically supported methods and strategies for a public health intervention based on behavioral theory.
2. Design an evidence-based health communication strategy at the individual or community level to inform and promote public health.
3. Identify and interpret behavioral theories and models as they relate to the onset and solution of a public health problem.
4. Critique public health media campaigns (historical and current) communicated through a variety of communication channels and recommend changes.
5. Analyze secondary data quantitatively to describe the epidemiology of a health condition or concern with a public health impact.

The following are competencies that are addressed and assessed in the concentration-specific courses of the **Physical Activity** concentration:

1. Evaluate scientific evidence regarding the impact of physical activity on population health and disease outcomes.
2. Compare physical activity levels across populations using multiple surveillance systems.
3. Assess barriers and influences to physical activity behavior in a community by applying theoretical behavior frameworks.
4. Evaluate physical activity interventions using appropriate measures of physical activity.
5. Recommend intervention strategies to promote physical activity within a population informed by both objective and subjective assessments.

### **Applied Practice Experience**

All MPH graduate students are required to complete an applied practice experience (internship) and enroll in 3 credit hours of PBHL 5840V Applied Practice Experience.

This experience provides students with the opportunity to synthesize, integrate and apply the skills and knowledge gained through the curriculum. Additionally, it provides students the opportunity to gain professional experience and serve as a resource for the community in a public health work environment that is of interest to the individual student. A list of pre-approved placement sites is available on the Public Health Program website. However, a student may also request to complete his/her applied practice experience at an alternate site via an application.

### **Integrative Learning Experience**

All MPH graduate students will complete a capstone Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) and enroll in 3 credit hours of PBHL 5660V Integrative Learning Experience. The 3 credit hours can be split over two semesters.

This experience allows students to demonstrate the synthesis of foundational and concentration-specific competencies. Students, in consultation with their ILE faculty advisor will decide on the topic and format of their ILE final product. The resultant product should be a high-quality written product that aligns with the student's professional objectives and interests. These might include the following: a program evaluation report, a training manual, a policy statement, legislative testimony with supporting research, etc.

### **Other Academic Policies and Procedures**

For a comprehensive list of academic policies and procedures please refer to the [Graduate Catalog](#) and the [Graduate Student Handbook](#).

### **Time Limit for Degree Completion**

All requirements for a master's degree must be completed within six consecutive calendar years from the first semester of enrollment in that program.

## **Transfer of Credit**

A maximum of 6 hours of course work may be transferred from another institution towards a master's degree at the University of Arkansas. A form is required and may be obtained from the Graduate School. In addition, an official transcript must be on file with the Graduate School.

The following are the criteria for acceptable transfer credit:

- The course must have been regularly offered by a CEPH accredited graduate school.
- The course must have been a bona fide graduate level course, approved for graduate credit and taught by a member of the graduate faculty.
- The student desiring to transfer graduate credit must have been enrolled as a graduate student in the graduate school at the institution offering the course.
- The course must appear on an official transcript as graduate credit from the institution offering the course.
- The grade on the course must be a "B" or "A". (The student's grade point average will NOT include grades on transfer courses.)
- The course must be recommended by the student's major adviser and be applicable to the degree requirement at the University of Arkansas.
- The course must not have been taken by correspondence or for extension credit.
- The student must have satisfied the 24 hour residence requirement.

## **Grade Point Average and Course Grade Requirements**

In order to receive an MPH, a candidate must present a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.00 on all graduate courses required for the degree. Failing to earn such an average on the minimum number of hours, the student is permitted to present up to six additional course (not thesis) hours of graduate credit in order to accumulate a grade-point average of 3.00. In the computation of grade point, all courses pursued at this institution for graduate credit (including any repeated courses) shall be considered. Students who repeat a course in an endeavor to raise their grade must count the repetition toward the maximum of six additional hours. If a student encounters academic difficulty after having already completed six credit hours for the degree beyond the minimum degree requirements, no additional hours may be taken.

In addition, a student must receive a grade of B or better in all foundational and concentration-specific courses.

## **Change of Grades**

All courses included in a program of study must have an acceptable grade (a letter grade or a mark of CR). A mark of "S" does NOT carry any degree credit, and any course with a mark of "S" cannot be included in a final program of study. If the course is to be included in a program of study, the mark of "S" must be changed to an acceptable grade or a mark of "CR". A "Change of Grade Notice" form must be submitted by the instructor of the course when a course grade is changed. Please note that all work for the course must have been submitted by the student to the instructor by the last day of final

examinations in order to be eligible for graduation for that specific semester (as verified by the "Date Work Completed" entry on the "Change of Grade Notice" form).

## Residence Requirement

The candidate must be in residence a minimum of 24 weeks. A total of 12 weeks of residence may be accredited from University of Arkansas off-campus graduate courses (restriction does not apply to graduate degree programs offered through the Graduate Residence Centers) or for work done in off-campus classes held in Fayetteville. Acceptance of transferred credit does not reduce the minimum residence requirement of 24 weeks.

## Graduation Ceremonies

Masters students are only allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies if they have signed up for all final coursework during the semester that they are planning to graduate and have passed their capstone project. Students must also complete an application for graduation through the Registrar's Office and pay appropriate graduation fees.

## Advising

Students will be assigned two advisors once admitted into the MPH program. The Assistant Director of Public Health will serve as an academic advisor, and tenured or tenure-track faculty member will serve as an ILE advisor. The academic advisor will serve as the student's guide through the MPH program and will be the main point of contact for questions regarding academic procedures. The ILE advisor will serve as a professional mentor and will guide the student through the formulation of their Integrative Learning Experience. A student can change ILE advisors, at any time. If a student wishes to switch ILE advisors, they should first get approval from the new advisor, and formally notify the previous Advisor, in writing, of their intent to change ILE advisors. Failure to know or follow program guidelines is NOT considered a legitimate reason for not completing program requirements.

It is each student's responsibility to contact their academic advisor and ILE advisor to initiate the advising process. It is the student's responsibility to register for courses that are appropriate for the Master of Public Health program; as well as become familiar with course rotation sequences. **Failure to attend advising sessions is not an acceptable reason for requesting a program modification and/or not adhering to program requirements.**

Students should maintain regular contact with their academic advisor to ensure smooth progress through the degree program.

## Required Forms

For the MPH degree, the graduate school requires that the following form be completed by the student: Master's Advisory Committee form.

Note – Major Advisor must inform the Graduate Coordinator of the date the student successfully completed the capstone project. The Graduate Coordinator will clear this on the degree audit. The Master's Record of Progress form is no longer required.

## Master's Program Completion Guidelines

<b>REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>	<b>HANDLING</b>	<b>PROCEDURE</b>
Plan a Program of Study	Immediately following admission to program.	Major Advisor Student	First advising session
Capstone Project Pass/Fail	Following completion of PBHL 584V and 566V	Major Advisor Student	Major Advisor informs Graduate Coordinator of pass/fail date
Graduation application	Deadline is typically early in the semester. Check dates on graduate school website.	Student	Pay fee through UA Connect.

## Resources and Services

For a more comprehensive list of academic, financial, research, health, leadership, community and transportation resources please refer to the [Student Resources section of the Graduate School website](#).

### Career Development Center

The [Career Development Center](#) offers services such as: CV reviews, job search assistance, mock interviews, and job fairs among others. These services are available to all university students and alumni.

### Center for Educational Access (CEA)

The [CEA](#) serves as the central campus resource for students with disabilities and accommodations. In partnership with students, faculty and staff, CEA staff members work with students individually to determine reasonable accommodations that will enable every student to have equal access to the full range of program and services.

### Student Success Center

Student Success at the CORD is here to support you with outreach, programs, and resources to help overcome barriers on your path to success from your first day until graduation. Find your success here by engaging with our Academic Initiatives Programs, such as Tutoring, Writing Studio, Supplemental Instruction, and Peer Academic Coaching, and learn more about our first-year programs and courses that can kick-start your academic achievements.

## **Informational Technology Services**

Students have access to comprehensive hardware and software support through the [Informational Technology Services](#) office. In addition, they offer free equipment checkout options from the [Student Technology Center](#). The equipment includes laptops, tablets, webcams and accessories.

## **Library Services**

The [U of A library system](#) offers more than 3.1 million books and e-book titles, 180,000 current journals, and 1,900 manuscript collections. In addition, it offers an efficient interlibrary loan service, special collections and subject-specific librarians.

## **Pat Walker Health Center**

The [Pat Walker Health Center](#) has a primary care clinic, a women's clinic, and allergy, immunization and travel clinic. Additionally, it offers counseling and psychological services, wellness support and nutrition services.

## **Statistical and Measurement Support Services (SMSS)**

At the [SMSS](#), senior graduate students and faculty from the Educational Statistics and Research Methods program provide research, statistical and measurement assistance to COEHP faculty, students and staff at no charge.

## Appendix A: Advising Worksheets

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ILE Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

### Academic Advising Worksheet Master of Public Health Public Health Practice



The following includes all course requirements and is the suggested course sequence.  
 Concentration-specific courses are in *red italicized* font.

	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Term(s) Offered	Proposed Term
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester</b> (Fa)- 9 hrs	NURS 50603*	Health Care Policy	3	Fa	
	PBHL 55703* <sup>1</sup>	Foundations of Public Health	3	Fa	
	HHPR 53503*	Research in Health, Human Performance and Recreation	3	Fa, <del>Sp</del>	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</b> (Sp)- 9 hrs	PBHL 55603* <sup>2</sup>	Public Health: Practices and Planning	3	<del>Sp</del>	
	PBHL 56103*	Epidemiology for Public Health Practice	3	<del>Sp</del>	
	PBHL 56503*	Social Determinants of Health	3	<del>Sp</del>	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Semester</b> (Su)- 6 hrs	ESRM 53903*	Statistics in Education and Health Professions	3	Su, Fa, <del>Sp</del>	
	PBHL 5740V	Applied Practice Experience	3	Su	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Semester</b> (Fa)- 9 hrs	<i>PBHL 55303*</i>	<i>Theories of Social and Behavioral Determinants of Health</i>	3	Fa	
	PBHL 56303*	Health Administration, Organizations and Systems	3	Fa	
	PBHL 54103	Evaluation of Public Health Programs	3	Fa	
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Semester</b> (Sp)- 9 hrs	<i>PBHL 68003*</i>	<i>Health Communication Theory, Research and Practice</i>	3	<del>Sp</del>	
	<i>TBD</i>	<i>Faculty Approved Elective</i>	3	Fa, <del>Sp</del> , Su	
	PBHL 5660V <sup>4</sup>	Integrative Learning Experience	3	Fa, <del>Sp</del>	

**Total Credit Hours    42**

<sup>1</sup>May be waived if student graduated from CEPH accredited undergraduate program; can be substituted with graduate-level elective.

<sup>2</sup> Prerequisite: PBHL 5573

<sup>3</sup> Corequisite: ESRM 5393 or ESRM 6403

<sup>4</sup> Can be split over two semesters.

\*Must receive a grade of B or better in course.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ILE Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Academic Advising Worksheet

### Master of Public Health



#### Physical Activity

The following includes all course requirements and is the suggested course sequence.  
 Concentration-specific courses are in *red italicized* font.

	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Term(s) Offered	Proposed Term
1 <sup>st</sup> Semester (Fa)- 9 hrs	NURS 5063*	Health Care Policy	3	Fa	
	PBHL 5573* <sup>1</sup>	Foundations of Public Health	3	Fa	
	HHPR 5353*	Research in Health, Human Performance and Recreation	3	Fa, Sp, Su	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester (Sp)- 9 hrs	PBHL 5563* <sup>2</sup>	Public Health: Practices and Planning	3	Sp	
	PBHL 5613*	Epidemiology for Public Health Practice	3	Sp	
	PBHL 5653*	Social Determinants of Health	3	Sp	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester (Su)- 6 hrs	ESRM 5393*	Statistics in Education & Health Professions	3	Fa, Sp, Su	
	PBHL 584V	Applied Practice Experience	3	Su	
4 <sup>th</sup> Semester (Fa)- 9 hrs	<i>PBHL 5453*</i>	<i>Physical Activity and Health</i>	3	Even Fa	
	PBHL 5633*	Health Administration, Organizations and Systems	3	Fa	
	PBHL 5413	Evaluation of Public Health Programs	3	Fa	
5 <sup>th</sup> Semester (Sp)- 9 hrs	<i>PBHL 5463*</i>	<i>Promoting Physical Activity in the Community</i>	3	Odd Sp	
	<i>EXSC 5353*</i>	<i>Exercise Psychology</i>	3	Sp	
	PBHL 566V <sup>5</sup>	Integrative Learning Experience	3	Fa, Sp	

**Total Credit Hours    42**

<sup>1</sup>May be waived if student graduated from CEPH accredited undergraduate program; can be substituted with graduate-level elective.

<sup>2</sup> Prerequisite: PBHL 5573

<sup>3</sup> Corequisite: EXSC 5513

<sup>4</sup> Prerequisite: EXSC 5513

<sup>5</sup> Can be split over two semesters.

\*Must receive a grade of B or better in course.