

**Multidisciplinary Master of Public Health**  
**Student Handbook**

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**Academic Year 2019-20**

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# MMPH Program | Student Handbook

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## **Mission and Objectives of the MMPH Program**

The mission of the Multidisciplinary Master of Public Health (MMPH) degree program is to prepare doctoral-level health professionals to practice in community, public, and global health settings. They will use population-based concepts, health education, health promotion and the preventive components of public and personal health care and practice. The educational program provides these individuals, who have varied health science backgrounds, with advanced public health training with which they can incorporate and apply the public health knowledge and skills in a public or private setting. The program is designed to foster a comprehensive overview to bridge the gaps among public health disciplines and subdisciplines. The MMPH is uniquely designed for individuals with advanced degrees (MD, RN, DDS, DO...) and allows them the freedom to design their MPH. Comprised of the Pitt Public Health core curriculum (21 credits) the students are encouraged to choose electives from varied public health departments to form an area of focus of relevance to them. They are also required to develop five advanced competencies that specifically apply to their program and personal goals. This degree gives the student the flexibility necessary to work around busy clinical schedules. Upon completion of the MMPH, students will have an understanding of statistics, health policy, research design and the ability to contribute to new research in their chosen fields of interest.

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## Prerequisites for Admission

- In addition to the standard Pitt Public Health admission requirements:  
The applicant must have earned a doctoral degree in a health science OR be currently enrolled in a United States doctoral/master's level clinical health training with preferably two years completed.
- The GRE or US clinical equivalent is required. For applicants who already have a doctorate at an American university, but who no longer have documentation of the GRE or the clinical equivalent, this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the MMPH director. For graduates of foreign universities, the GRE is still required.
- Admissions to the MMPH program are for fall, spring or summer term. Applications are reviewed when the application and all supporting documents are received.

Graduates of foreign medical or dental schools, to be eligible for consideration should:

- hold a valid dental or medical license in the United States or be eligible for dental, or medical licensure in the United States, e.g., passed all necessary examinations and served required time in an approved residency program,
- are currently in a residency or fellowship program, or
- are an outstanding candidate with appropriate clinical and/or research training to justify consideration for admission, i.e., a visiting scholar clinician who will return to their native country.

More information on the application process is available on the Pitt Public Health website at: [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/apply#degree](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/apply#degree).

## I. Program of Study

The Multidisciplinary Master of Public Health (MMPH) is a 42 credit degree program. Incoming students consult with the program director to ensure they receive appropriate advanced standing credits for graduate degrees earned prior to admission, or relevant graduate degrees pursued concurrently with the MMPH. In many cases, incoming students may be awarded six (6) transfer block credits based upon prior education.

### A. MPH Core Requirements

<b>Course Name</b>		<b>Credits</b>
<b>BCHS 2509</b>	Social & Behavioral Sciences and Public Health	<b>3</b>
<b>BIOST 2011</b> or <b>BIOST 2041</b>	Principles of Statistical Reasoning	<b>3</b>
	Introduction to Statistical Methods I	<b>3</b>
<b>EOH 2013</b>	Environmental Health and Disease	<b>2</b>
<b>EPIDEM 2110</b>	Principles of Epidemiology	<b>3</b>
<b>HPM 2001</b>	Health Policy and Management in Public Health	<b>3</b>
<b>PUBHLT 2015</b>	Public Health Biology	<b>2</b>
<b>PUBHLT 2022</b>	The Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds [2 terms required]	<b>0</b>
<b>PUBHLT 2033</b>	Foundations in Public Health	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBHLT 2034</b>	Public Health Communications	<b>2</b>
<b>PUBHLT 2035</b>	Applications in Public Health	<b>2</b>

For further details on the MPH core curriculum, refer to the school's academic handbook ([www.publichealth.pitt.edu/academic-handbook](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/academic-handbook)). When planning to complete core courses, refer to the school's core course extended schedule ([www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/academics/classes/extended-core-curriculum](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/academics/classes/extended-core-curriculum)).

## *B. Coursework and Advisement*

Exclusive of the school's MPH core course requirements that meet the CEPH MPH foundational competencies, the MMPH curriculum is flexible. Students work with the program director upon admission or shortly thereafter, to identify advanced competencies (areas to concentrate their study) and to complete the Advanced Competencies Tracking Sheet. The director will suggest courses for the completion of the identified competencies. See appendix B for the MMPH for the worksheet.

Throughout the time in the program, students are to meet with the program director at minimum, twice a year. The program director is available at any time to help direct the trajectory of each individual and to advise on courses, practicum, essay, and graduation requirements.

## *C. Practicum and e-Portfolio*

All students are required to complete a practicum (or internship). Practica are individually arranged between the student, a practicum advisor, and the MMPH program director. Depending on student interest, the practicum can blend the student's existing clinical or professional work with additional experience that has a public health focus. The practicum requires a minimum of 200 hours. Students, depending upon other course credits, will register for the course for 1-3 credits. Five competencies must also be selected (see forms here). Deliverables for the practicum experience should also be clearly articulated before the practicum starts and must benefit the site. The site agreement form must be completed before initiating the practicum experience. Evaluation of the practicum experience is completed by the program director, the student and the preceptor.

Starting fall 2019, each MPH and DrPH program will require use of the e-portfolio. The e-portfolio is a tool to document your completion of competencies during your practicum experience. Students are responsible for completing the requirements of the e-Portfolio. The Academic Advisor is responsible for verifying that all required paperwork has been submitted and that all necessary school and departmental competencies have been met. For the latest requirements on the practicum e-portfolio, please visit:  
[www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/academics/academic-handbook-degree-requirements/mph-e-portfolio](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/academics/academic-handbook-degree-requirements/mph-e-portfolio).

#### *D. Essay Requirement*

All MMPH students must complete a master's essay, and register for 1-2 credits of PUBHLT 2002 (essay) as a requirement before graduation. The essay serves as the synthesizing document and should demonstrate a mastery of public health concepts, principles and practice. The essay may be based upon the practicum experience or may be another related or unrelated research product, program proposal, or literature review. The essay topic and committee members must be chosen in concert with the program director, ideally, as early as possible in the student's path in the program. Research involving human subjects must be approved by the University of Pittsburgh's Institutional Review Board. The timeline for the MPH essay/ thesis submission is on the school's website.

The essay committee must consist of a minimum of two University of Pittsburgh graduate-level faculty members – a primary advisor and at least one additional reader. One of the two members must be on the core list\* of a Public Health department; the second reader/committee member cannot be on the same core list. The second reader may be on the core list of a second Public Health department or may be a faculty member with an appointment in another school at the University.

Students will confer with their academic advisor or other designee about the essay/thesis in the semester prior to the one in which they plan to graduate.

Students will request faculty members to serve as committee members/readers no later than the end of the semester prior to the one in which students plan to graduate.

The MMPH program administrator will submit the committee request on behalf of the student to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

It is expected that multiple preliminary drafts will have been reviewed by all or some of the readers before a final draft is submitted. The final document must be submitted to all readers for review and comments at a minimum of two weeks before graduation.

The MPH thesis/essay must be in accordance with the specifications stipulated in the Format Instructions for Pitt Public Health Essays, Theses, and Dissertations. For additional information regarding essay and thesis format and requirements, and committee composition please read the Pitt Public Health academic handbook. In order to present a thesis instead of an essay for graduation, three readers will be required and the student will defend an oral presentation along with the written essay deliverable. Examples may be found online at: [d-scholarship.pitt.edu](http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu).

\*Please note: core faculty of a department are those faculty with primary appointments in the department, and any other faculty included by the department on the core list because of significant involvement in the educational mission of that department.

## E. School of Dental Medicine Requirements

Students may complete a maximum of eight (8) credits from the following list of courses that will apply only to the MPH, and not to a degree in the School of Dental Medicine:

- a) Contemporary Issues in Dental Public Health | CDENT 5916 | 2 credits
- b) Independent Study | CDENT 5900 | 2-3 credits
- c) BCHS Practicum (*for Bridging the GAPS only*) | BCHS 2503 | 1-3 credits

Students enroll in courses with assistance from School of Dental Medicine student services staff. New MMPH students meet first with the MMPH director and/or administrator to formulate their plan of study. Students complete an enrollment form each term of study. A copy of the form is to be provide to the MMPH administrator for record keeping. If permission numbers are required for course enrollment, students are to must obtain them from the corresponding department/ program staff. Throughout the course of the program, students continue to meet with the director and/ or administrator as needed. When registering for variable credit courses, make sure to register for the correct number of credits. For example: if you are registering for a 3 credit practicum course (PUBHLT 2029, 1-3cr), you will need to manually change the unit to 3 credits because PeopleSoft is automatically set at 1 credit. Dental residents will follow this same procedure.

Students who are pursuing the MMPH simultaneously with the DMD at the University of Pittsburgh may fulfill the MMPH practicum requirement by completion of 130 - 160 hours in the dental school Scope 1 and Scope 2 experiences. Scope 1-community service experiences will be guided to include projects with potential public health relevance. These will be documented in the journals and writings of the students and will count towards the practicum.

These experiences will then be more directly applied during Scope 2 clinical experience. These more extensive experiences of Scope 1 and 2 should account for 130-160 hours, fulfilling the majority of practicum requirements. The MMPH director and Dr. Rubin may approve additional public health experiences. Such experiences may include community projects such as Bridging the GAPS, high school career mentoring, oral hygiene instruction to refugees and immigrants, missionary work, etc. A reflective journal or short paper documenting these events should emphasize the practical public health aspects of the experience.

Students should register for one credit of MMPH practicum during the period in which they are completing the final hours of the practicum project.

For those students who wish to develop a comprehensive alternative practicum project, the MMPH program has sufficient flexibility to approve meritorious proposals that would fulfill the 200 hour minimum requirement. The MMPH program director and Dr. Rubin should approve such alternative projects.

Residents in the Department of Periodontics and Preventive Dentistry who are pursuing the MMPH simultaneously with completing the certificate in periodontics may fulfill the MMPH practicum requirement by completion of the approximately 250 hours rotation at the Veterans

Administration Hospitals of Pittsburgh. As part of their training, periodontics residents serve veterans of the U.S. armed forces eight hours each week for eight months, providing periodontal and preventive dental treatment services to patients of the VA Pittsburgh at its H.J. Heinz Division in Aspinwall, VA. The periodontics residents provide service by educating the veterans about periodontal disease and the relationship between periodontal inflammation and systemic health, teaching patients about the prevention of periodontal disease by treatment and subsequent diligent self-care at home, providing treatment for veterans with active periodontal disease and then follow-up care for those same patients, to reinforce self-care as an effective home routine to maintain established good oral health. This practicum experience may serve as one option for the master's essay required for the MMPH degree.

Residents should register for one credit of MMPH practicum during each semester they are in rotation at the Aspinwall, VA.

#### *F. School of Medicine Requirements*

The MMPH degree provides a foundation of public health training for a medical student. A master's degree could be conferred from either the MMPH program or a comparable departmental master's program within the Graduate School of Public Health. The student would work closely with Pitt Public Health faculty and staff to determine when and in what department the Pitt Public Health application would be reviewed and the student matriculated so as to be blended seamlessly with the MD degree. Planning to obtain both degrees should begin as early as possible after matriculation into the Medical School. The schools of Public Health and Medicine will work closely together to ensure the integration of the two programs. The student would be able to join the program any time after completion of year one of medical school or after graduation but before residency training. The program targets, but cannot guarantee, fulfilling all degree requirements within an approximate one-year time span.

The educational systems used in the Medical School differs from the rest of the university as many courses in our school utilize an online learning management system. Currently, the majority of courses are Pitt are on CourseWeb (or BlackBoard). However, a new system will be rolled out in academic year 2020-21 and some courses are already on the platform (called Canvas). It will be helpful for medical students to become familiar with CourseWeb to optimize their experience in Public Health. Access to the learning systems is through the my.pitt.edu web portal. All other requirements are those of an MMPH student in the program as above.

## **II. Policies and Procedures of Pitt Public Health**

### *A. Forms and Deadlines*

Registration for each term must be done with the advice of the student's academic advisor and the academic advisor must sign the registration form. There are posted registration deadlines. Course schedules for the Pitt Public Health which must be observed are available online at: [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/academics/courses/printable-course-schedules](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/academics/courses/printable-course-schedules) or at the Pitt Public Health Office of Student Affairs (G009 Public Health).

Registration and other forms related to enrollment are available in the Office of Student Affairs. Most forms require a faculty or administrator's signature.

Students who have any problems in accessing these forms should contact the MMPH Office, and we will be happy to make accommodations for them. Please return all registration forms to the MMPH Administrator who will then register you for class. Enrollment forms can be found here: [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/forms](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/forms).

Please note that a student can add or drop classes without penalty during the first ten days of each semester, but if they do not complete an initial registration by the deadline (noted on the University Academic Calendar, available online through the University's Calendar site, [www.provost.pitt.edu/students/academic-calendar](http://www.provost.pitt.edu/students/academic-calendar)), they will be assessed a late fee.

### *B. Application for Graduation*

Each candidate for graduation must file an official Application for Graduation in the Pitt Public Health Office of Student Affairs. Deadlines, posted on the school's online calendar, are usually three months before the date of graduation. The timetable for submission of documents pertaining to graduation must be strictly observed. There is a penalty for late filing.

Students must be registered for at least one credit in the term in which they graduate. Degree requirements must be completed in the semester the student

applied for graduation. If not, the student must re-apply for graduation in the term in which they complete these requirements. Before the degree can be posted, I and/or G grades must be changed.

There are four graduations per year: December, April, June and August. However, the University holds one ceremony per year, in late April or early May. Pitt Public Health holds a separate ceremony on the weekend of the University commencement event. Graduates of the previous June, August, and December are invited to participate in the spring ceremony. Diplomas are mailed to graduates. Diplomas are not ordered until after graduation and usually are received several months after graduation. The graduation website contains information on forms, logistics and important dates for graduation. Familiarize yourself with this material before your last semester. Deadlines for graduation applications are also listed.

### **III. Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook**

The school maintains an academic handbook that covers and lists many requirements for the MPH degree program, school and/or university policies and procedures. The handbook is accessible on the school's website at [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/academic-handbook](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/academic-handbook).

### **IV. Departmental Contact Information**

If you are seeking information about departmental courses, faculty, or other opportunities please refer to the listing of departmental student services staff available at [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/admissions-aid/how-to-apply/contact-admissions](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/home/admissions-aid/how-to-apply/contact-admissions).

## V. Appendix

### A. Plan of Study (example)

#### MULTIDISCIPLINARY MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH DEGREE PROGRAM

##### Required Courses

Public Health Core Course	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADE
BCHS 2509	Social & Behavioral Aspects of Public Health	3		
BIOST 2011 Or BIOST 2041	Principles of Statistical Reasoning  Intro to Statistical Methods I	3  3		
EOH 2013	Environmental Health and Disease	2		
EPIDEM 2110	Principles of Epidemiology	3		
HPM 2001	Health Policy and Management in Public Health	3		
PUBHLT 2015	Public Health Biology	2		
PUBHLT 2022	The Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds	0		
PUBHLT 2022	The Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds	0		
PUBHLT 2033	Foundations in Public Health	1		
PUBHLT 2034	Public Health Communications	2		
PUBHLT 2035	Applications in Public Health	2		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>		

##### Electives

Courses to fulfill elective credits will be identified through meetings with the MMPH program director.

COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADE
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>		

##### Transfer Credits

	Transfer Credits: Block or SCOPE	6		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>		

##### Essay/ Thesis Requirement

COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADE
PUBHLT 2002 or 2012	MMPH Essay/Thesis - see guidelines	1 or 2		
PUBHLT 2029	MMPH Practicum	1-3		
	<b>Total</b>			
	<b>Total Overall</b>	<b>42</b>		

Waivers of program requirements, transfer credits, core courses, and electives must be made with the consent of the MMPH Program Director.

**B. MMPH Advanced Competencies Tracking Sheet (example)**

The MMPH program rests on the CEPH foundational competencies that all public health master students develop through their specific programs. Additionally, all MMPH candidates should identify specific advanced competencies that directly relate to the goals of their individual educational plans as noted in the student handbook. These competencies must be developed in concert with the MMPH program director and other faculty with expertise related to these advanced competencies.

These advanced competencies must be completed and submitted within the first six weeks of entering the MMPH program. They may be modified as specific goals within the context of the program in consultation with the program director. *Students need five (5) or more advanced competencies.*

**Assessment of Competencies for Multidisciplinary Master of Public Health**

Competency	Course number(s) and name(s)	Describe specific assessment opportunity*
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Program Director signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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