



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Arnold School of Public Health

Master of Public Health in General Public Health

Student Handbook

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STUDENT GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH (GENERAL MPH)

The Master of Public Health in General Public Health (General MPH) provides a systematic approach to acquiring the academic experiences needed to understand and appreciate a broad range of public health concepts, issues and opportunities.

Because the program provides a broad understanding of public health disciplines rather than focused training in a specific area, the admissions review includes strong preference for individuals with a professional doctoral degree and post-baccalaureate health-related experience.

The MPH in General Public Health has several deliveries/audiences:

The General MPH (standalone program)

Individuals who have already earned a professional degree can choose to complete the General MPH degree allowing greater flexibility in elective course election. Typically, students who pick this option are fellows, medical residents, practicing nurses, or physicians. Successful applicants should have at least one year of public health or clinical practice experience.

PharmD/MPH and MD/MPH Dual Degree Programs

The PharmD/MPH and the MD/MPH dual degree programs allow students to complete the requirements for the MPH in General Public Health while completing a Doctor of Pharmacy or Doctor of Medicine degree respectively. The programs present opportunities for individuals to excel professionally in practice settings, such as hospitals and health systems, managed-care, community health settings and county and state health agencies.

The Palmetto Health/USC Preventive Medicine Residency Program

The Palmetto Health/USC Preventive Medicine Residency is a two-year residency in General Preventive Medicine and Public Health. The curriculum combines clinical and academic training with practice experiences in a variety of public health and preventive medicine settings. The academic component of the program includes the completion of an MPH in General Public Health at the USC Arnold School of Public Health. Completion of the MPH program can enhance a physician's ability to receive primary certification from the American Board of Preventive Medicine.

Preventive medicine residents develop skills in clinical preventive medicine as well as epidemiology, public health practice, research, quality improvement, program evaluation and health policy. In addition to the MPH coursework there are weekly residency didactic seminars, monthly journal clubs, interdisciplinary conferences and educational activities, and opportunities to attend professional conferences. Residents apply their academic training during clinical and practice rotations.

ADVISEMENT

After official notification of acceptance from The Graduate School, the student should contact the general MPH program director, Dr. Lucy Ingram (Lannang@sc.edu | 803-777-4389) to set up an advising appointment. Dr. Ingram is the academic advisor for general MPH students.

Students must be advised and complete an advisement form prior to registering for any term. The completed and signed advisement form must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Student Services for registration clearance. The form may be submitted by email (SPHSTSRV@mailbox.sc.edu) or dropped off at the Public Health Research Center (PHRC), room 204. Staff at the Office of Graduate Student Services will clear student advising holds and email the student with approval to register. The student may then register for classes in [Self Service Carolina](#).

ACADEMIC COURSE WORK

GENERAL MPH LEARNING OUTCOMES (all programs)

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of a) fundamental principles and practices in health promotion, education, and behavior; b) organization, principles, and practices in health administration; c) principles and practices in epidemiology, and tools for translating epidemiological findings into public health action; d) public health statistical applications; and e) environmental health from the perspective of the earth as a complex, dynamic system (public health core courses).
- The student will demonstrate at least three of the following: a) the ability to evaluate a given health related problem, and to identify the most appropriate statistical technique for analysis; b) understanding of and ability to discuss specific applications of environmental health sciences; c) ability to apply descriptive and analytic epidemiology methods including approaches and study designs to identify and investigate factors associated with various health conditions; d) understanding of and ability to apply proven social science, health and behavior theories in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of health education and promotion programs; and e) ability to apply the principles of program planning, development, budgeting, management and evaluation to organizational and community initiatives (courses for special interest in public health).
- Each student completing the Master of Public Health in general public health will obtain experience in a public health, community, school or worksite setting, and will demonstrate basic understanding of the philosophy of public health practice in the student's chosen area of interest (public health practice).

PROGRAM OF STUDY

The student and academic advisor will develop and submit a Program of Study prior to the completion of 12 semester credit hours. A student's Program of Study must be signed by the student, student's advisor and the MPH Graduate Director and filed with The Graduate School no later than one (1) year after being fully admitted. The Program of Study Form can be found in the Graduate School [forms library](#).

A total of 42 credit hours (or the equivalent in the case of the general MPH for the preventive medicine resident) is required for the completion of this degree program and includes Arnold School of Public Health core courses for a Master of Public Health degree (Epidemiology; Biostatistics; Environmental Health Sciences; Health Promotion, Education and Behavior; and Health Services Policy and Management) and satisfactory completion of a practicum project and an oral comprehensive examination.

Public Health Core Courses (15 hours)

EPID 700 Introduction to Epidemiology **OR**

EPID 701 Concepts and Methods of Epidemiology

BIOS 700 Introductory Biostatistics **OR**
BIOS 701 Concepts and Methods of Biostatistics
ENHS 660 Concepts of Environmental Health Sciences
HSPM 700 Approaches and Concepts for Public Health Administration
HPEB 700 Concepts & Methods in Health Promotion

Special Interest in Public Health (15 hours)

15 hours including courses in at least three public health core disciplines

Electives (6 hours)

Practicum in Public Health Discipline (6 hours)

PUBH 798 Public Health Practice

All students in the general MPH are required to complete a practicum and a comprehensive exam; however, these requirements are met differently for the MD/MPH, the PharmD/MPH, and the MPH for preventive medicine residency.

Program Specific Requirements

MD/MPH: Six hours of medical school course work (from Intro to Clinical Medicine sequence) are allowed as electives and three hours of practicum credit for the preventive medicine/rural health clerkship are allowed to substitute for three hours of PUBH 798. Students complete 15 hours of core course work, 15 hours of more advanced public health course work, and three hours of PUBH 798. The three hours of PUBH 798 include a practice experience of ~120-125 contact hours.

PharmD/MPH: Six hours of South Carolina College of Pharmacy course work (chosen from the list of pre-approved SCCP courses below) may be used to satisfy the MPH electives.

SCCP 650 Intro to Pharmacy Practice
SCCP 680 Intro to Drug Info
SCCP 780 Outcomes Design and Assessment
SCCP 850 Health Care Systems & Management
SCCP 880 Advanced Drug Info
SCCP 774 Pharmacy Political Advocacy
SCCP 779 Advanced Self-Care

PharmD students may obtain 3 credit hours toward the 6 hours required for PUBH 798 Public Health Practicum if the student completes an advanced pharmacy practice experiential rotation (during the 4th professional year of the PharmD program) in an approved public health discipline site (e.g., Volunteers in Medicine, The CDC, FDA, AHEC, DHEC, Indian Health Services, and other Public Health service entities). Ordinarily the PUBH 798 practicum hours must take place outside of a SCCP clinical rotation at a different site; however, in some cases the site of an SCCP

rotation might be approved for separate public health practicum project when hours and focus are distinctly different from and over and above the duties and roles in the clinical pharmacy rotation.

Preventive Medicine Residency: Residents are required to complete a General MPH as part of the residency requirements, with some specific content requirements. Recommended courses to complete the special interest in public health and elective requirements include EPID 749 Infectious Disease Epidemiology, BIOS 757 Advanced Biometrics, HSPM 774 Quality Management in Health Care, ENHS 772 Human and Ecological Risk, EPID 769 Clinical Effectiveness, EPID 749 Infectious Disease Epidemiology, and ENHS 670 Environmental Pollutants and Human Health.

Per accreditation requirements, residents in preventive medicine completing their academic year in the school may count their practicum year, accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, as the required practice experience for the MPH program. Therefore, the General MPH for preventive medicine residents program of study consists of 36 credit hours taken in the Arnold School (rather than the usual 42).

PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

WHAT IS A PRACTICUM?

A practicum is an academic credit course in which the student accomplishes specific tasks at a practice site. All practica are graded on a pass/fail basis.

The practicum is a three-way partnership among the student, faculty advisor, and preceptor. Each partner in this mutually beneficial relationship assumes certain responsibilities, performs specific functions, and receives benefits. The practicum is guided by a set of goals, competencies, and objectives, which are based on the needs and resources of all parties involved. A practicum is individually developed; therefore, the focus, substance, and approach of the practicum will vary, depending on a student's academic program, individual interests, and professional goals. However, the objectives of the practicum must be consistent with the vision, mission, and goals of the Arnold School and of the student's program.

From planning through completion of the practicum, a student works under the guidance of an Arnold School faculty member (practicum advisor) and the supervision of a practitioner (preceptor). Decisions on the nature, site, specific objectives, and activities of the practicum are determined through discussions and agreements among the student, preceptor, and advisor (and perhaps other faculty who have expertise in the area). More information can be found at the [practicum page](#) on the Arnold School's website.

ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR PRACTICUM

Students in the General MPH program must satisfactorily complete the equivalent of six (6) credit hours in public health practice. Practice can be taken in more than one semester, and credit hours assigned are variable depending upon the nature and extent of the work tasks undertaken. The total practicum experience should represent about 250 hours of practice work. Three credit hours of practice work require an average of 8-10 hours of actual work each week including writing the final report (16-20 hours per week for six credits).

PREREQUISITES

Generally, MPH students are expected to have completed at least three of the five public health core courses and a minimum number of 24 credit hours toward the MPH program requirements before enrolling in a practicum. Additional program-specific prerequisites are provided in the Program-Specific Practicum Information Section. **Responsibilities of a graduate assistantship or of paid employment from outside the University cannot be used to satisfy practice requirements.**

PRACTICUM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student

Practicum students are expected to take initiative and responsibility to meet all practicum requirements and to function as a professional at all times. Specifically, students are expected to:

- Select an appropriate setting for a practice activity and make arrangements to conduct the practicum.
- Register for the practicum in the semester in which the practicum begins.
- Develop a complete practicum proposal for approval by the practicum advisor and preceptor.
- Submit the full proposal through MySPH Opportunity Manager and ensure that it is electronically signed by the practicum advisor and preceptor.
- Complete work and learning tasks by the specified deadlines.
- Arrange appropriate meetings with the faculty advisor and preceptor, including the final oral presentation.
- Discuss practicum-related issues and departmental practicum requirements with the practicum advisor, preceptor and faculty advisor as needed.
- Submit all required reports, documents, and products to your academic department.
- Complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager upon conclusion of the practicum.

The Student Practicum Checklist, available on the [practicum page](#) of the school's website, provides a list of tasks that must be completed before, during, and after the practicum.

Practicum Advisor

During the practicum, the practicum advisor serves as a resource for both the student and the preceptor. The practicum advisor tracks the student's progress and consults with the preceptor when necessary. The ideal practicum advisor is someone who has an interest related to the student's practicum or someone with whom they have developed a supportive student-faculty relationship. The practicum advisor is expected to:

- Advise the student in developing practicum learning objectives.
- Review the practicum proposal and any requested revisions.
- Review and approve the practicum proposal in MySPH Opportunity Manager.
- Advise the student regarding an Ethics Review if required.
- Communicate with the student and preceptor throughout the practicum.
- Provide ongoing expert advice and guidance as needed or required.
- Attend and evaluate the student's final oral presentation.
- Review and evaluate the practicum final report.
- Assess accomplishment of learning objectives and assign pass/fail grade at appropriate times.
- Complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager.

Preceptor

The preceptor is the person at the practicum site who agrees to mentor the student and oversee the day to day activities and projects in which the student is involved. The preceptor should have

expertise in the assigned project areas, experience and status within the organization, and the ability and desire to supervise and mentor a student. The preceptor is expected to do the following:

- Assist the student and the practicum advisor in defining short-term tasks for the practicum project.
- Review the student's practicum proposal for usefulness to the organization.
- Determine the scope of the preceptor's role with the student.
- Electronically sign the practicum proposal through MySPH Opportunity Manager.
- Designate appropriate tasks that meet the needs of the organization and address the learning objectives and public health competencies for the student.
- Provide on-site direction for the work component of the practicum.
- Provide the student with logistical support within the organization (e.g., arrange for space, equipment, use of phones, use of computer and/or computer software, secretarial help; make introductions in the organization; provide data or help gaining access to it; etc.).
- Provide opportunities for growth, development, and leadership for the student.
- Assist the faculty advisor with assessment of student's work and growth in competence during the practicum.
- Attend and evaluate the student's final oral presentation if possible.
- Review and evaluate the practicum final report.
- Complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager.

PRACTICUM PROPOSAL

During this stage of the process, the student works with the preceptor and practicum advisor to develop a practicum proposal that includes the components listed below. The student should communicate with the practicum advisor and preceptor via email, skype, conference call, or in a face-to-face meeting to complete the practicum proposal.

The practicum proposal includes the following:

1. Title page
2. Introduction to the public health problem
3. Problem statement and rationale; literature review
4. Setting (description of the practicum site)
5. Project-specific learning objectives. These objectives should clearly relate to the program learning outcomes and reflect synthesis of the public health core
6. Performance objectives that describe project-specific activities including any deliverables and the time line to accomplish these tasks
7. Description of each party's responsibilities; interaction among student, advisor and preceptor; what resources will be provided by each party; how student's performance will be monitored; any particular restrictions for the project identified in the agency's MOA.
8. Bibliography

Once the practicum proposal is completed and accepted by practicum advisor and preceptor, the student must upload the document to [MySPH Opportunity Manager](#) and enter specific information from the proposal into the online practicum proposal databank. The student, practicum advisor and preceptor must indicate their approval of the practicum proposal within the Opportunity Manager by electronic signature.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all information in the proposal is accurate and complete and that it is electronically approved prior to starting the practicum. The practicum proposal is for the student's protection, as it will ensure that all parties agree upon the deliverables and experience within the set time frame.

THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

During the practicum, the student is responsible for completing the activities as specified in the practicum proposal. The student should interact with the preceptor and practicum advisor to assess progress and to address any concerns, challenges or unexpected developments.

FINAL REPORT AND ORAL PRESENTATION

The purpose of the final report and oral presentation is to assess the student's learning experience and application of public health theories. The student is responsible for arranging the time and place of the oral presentation. The practicum advisor and preceptor should be present at the presentation either physically or via Skype. Announcements of this presentation must be posted throughout the Arnold School buildings and online on the MySPH calendar at least one week prior to the presentation. Practicum final report and oral presentation guidelines are located on the [practicum page](#) of the school's website.

The practicum final report begins with sections 1-5 of the practicum proposal followed by a summary of the student's practicum experience with details of specific experiences and how the practicum is important to the field of public health. The final report contributes to the student's culminating experience and should demonstrate the student's ability to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and to apply theory and principles in an experience that represents some aspect of professional practice.

The final report is designed to ensure that all MPH graduates can integrate and apply the knowledge and skills that they have gained during their academic graduate training. Students should discuss the expectations of their report carefully with their practicum advisor. The report length should be sufficient to cover the expected content carefully. The best recent reports have usually been five to ten pages in length.

In addition to the narrative report, the student should include any deliverables or products of the practicum experience, e.g., curricular material or resource material.

Specific requirements for the practicum are discussed in the Program of Study section above. Students should contact their academic advisor for additional information.

PRACTICUM EVALUATION

Three weeks prior to the practicum's end date, the practicum advisor, preceptor and student will receive email asking them to complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager. The evaluation is designed to provide feedback on job performance and related issues to assist the Arnold School in monitoring practice and academic preparation for the MPH.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

A comprehensive examination is required for all master's students. The purpose of the exam is to evaluate the knowledge acquired by the student in the core and major courses, and to evaluate mastery of the major concepts and methodologies in the discipline.

The procedures for the comprehensive examination are as follows:

- The comprehensive exam will consist of two parts: (a) a formal presentation of the Public Health Practice project/experience and (b) a follow-up oral examination that covers wide ranging aspects of the program of study.
- The determination of the outcome of the comprehensive examination, pass or fail, is forwarded to the student and to The Graduate School.

In cases when an approved equivalent practice experience satisfies any part of the General MPH public health practice requirement, students are required to write a reflection paper that includes a synthesis of the MPH course work and their clinical or population health practice opportunities. In particular, this reflection paper must a) incorporate any clinical rotation used to satisfy part or all of the practicum credit, b) address how the student recognizes public health concepts in their clinical work, and c) demonstrate that the student is able to apply public health knowledge and concepts in the clinical setting. In the cases of the dual PharmD/MPH and MD/MPH when practice courses/rotations are accepted for PUBH 798 credit, there will be an oral comprehensive examination as part of the practicum presentation.

APPLICATION FOR DEGREE

Students expecting to graduate should apply early in the semester of their anticipated graduation. All students must complete the online graduation and degree application in [Self Service Carolina](#). Students in dual degree programs must apply for both degrees. During the application process students will be asked to verify their program, name, and diploma mailing address. For more information about the graduation and degree application process visit, visit the [Registrar's graduation web page](#).

The Graduate School will review your submitted application and determine eligibility for degree candidacy. Students are required to complete a Program of Study in addition to the other steps that must be taken as part of their degree program. **It is the student's responsibility to see that all requirements are met.** All necessary forms may be accessed at the [Graduate School forms library](#).

In order to graduate, students must be enrolled in at least one credit hour in the semester in which they plan to graduate.

For application deadlines and information about the Arnold School of Public Health Hooding ceremony visit the [school's graduation web page](#).

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND STANDARDS

THE GRADUATE STUDIES BULLETIN

It is the right and responsibility of every graduate student in the General MPH program to be familiar with a current copy of the [Graduate Studies Bulletin](#). The bulletin is the official manual of regulations and guidelines for graduate study at the University of South Carolina.

GRADES

As stated in the *Graduate Studies Bulletin*:

Graduate courses may be passed for degree credit with a grade as low as C, but a student's cumulative grade point average must be at least **B** (3.00 on a 4.00 scale). Additionally, the student's average on all courses numbered 700 or above must be no less than 3.00 at the time of graduation. Grades earned on credits transferred from other universities do not count in the grade point average.

Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average drops below 3.00 (**B**) will be placed on academic probation and allowed one calendar year in which to raise the grade point average to at least 3.00. Students who do not reach a cumulative 3.00 grade point average during the grace period will not be permitted to enroll for further graduate course work in that degree program.

This rule applies to all graduate courses taken at the University of South Carolina whether or not they are included on the student's program of study; it also applies to courses taken in two or more degree programs. A grade of "U" earned in any course will be treated as a grade below "B" for the suspension policy.

CAROLINIAN CREED

It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic program. Any student who violates this rule or who knowingly assists another to violate this rule shall be subject to discipline. Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the [Carolinian Creed](#).

TUITION AND FEES

All tuition and fees are due and payable on the date that they are incurred, or the due date indicated on the ticket, invoice, or statement. Checks or credit cards for the exact amount of the total charges should be made payable to the University of South Carolina. Any student who has failed to pay all required registration fees on or before the last date to change course schedule (as indicated in the university calendar) may be dropped from class rolls. Any student who fails to relieve any other indebtedness to the university or to any of its auxiliary agencies on the date such obligations become due may not be permitted to remain in university residence halls or be

issued a transcript, diploma, or degree. For more information on tuition and fees, visit the [Bursar's Office](#) website.

GRANTS, LOANS AND OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The University of South Carolina's [Office of Student Financial Aid](#) provides access to a variety of grants and loans for students in graduate programs of study. For further information and application forms for all types of financial aid, see the office's website or contact the office at (803)777-8134 or uscfaid@sc.edu.

STUDENT GRIEVANCES, APPEALS AND PETITIONS

The policies and regulations of the University of South Carolina serve as purposeful guidelines and standards for students as they pursue degree objectives. Occasionally, individual students may feel they have grounds to seek exception from the uniform application of such regulations and policies.

A graduate student who wishes to submit a grievance, petition or appeal within the Arnold School should first seek resolution with the faculty or staff member in question. If no satisfactory resolution is achieved, the student may pursue the matter further with the department chair. The student must follow any additional procedures established by the program or department for this level of review; these procedures are not specified in this school policy and may require a written statement or other documentation from the student.

If not satisfied with the resolution at the program/department level, the student may seek resolution through the Arnold School Office of Faculty Affairs and Curriculum. The designated associate dean will meet with the student and try to facilitate an informal resolution, if appropriate.

If not satisfied with the informal resolution at the school level, the student may submit the grievance, appeal or petition in writing to the Office of Faculty Affairs and Curriculum. Grievances, petitions and appeals are heard by the Scholastic Standards and Petitions Committee. This committee will hear the complaint only after the procedures outlined above have been exhausted and upon request of the student or faculty member concerned.

For more information about the process and for an explanation of the types of grievances, appeals, and petitions, please go the Arnold School webpage on [student grievances](#).

STUDENT RESOURCES

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES

In addition to recruitment and processing of admissions, the office also offers support for current students enrolled in the Arnold School. Below are some of the services provided by the office:

- Coordinating Orientation for new students each fall
- Coordinating the Hooding Ceremony each spring
- Approving graduate students to register for classes each semester
- Serving as the advisor for the Dean's Student Advisory Council
- Coordinating all student awards at the school level
- Coordinating the Delta Omega Honor Society membership and annual dinner

Office of Graduate Student Services

921 Assembly Street, PHRC 204

Columbia, SC 29208

Phone: 803-77-5031

Fax: 803-777-3588

Email: sphstsr@mailbox.sc.edu

ARNOLD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH COMPUTER LAB

A computer lab is available to all Arnold School of Public Health students. The lab is located in Discovery Room 431. Hours of operation are posted in the lab and on the website. The computers in this lab have Internet access, Microsoft Office applications, and various specialized applications such as SAS statistical software. Arnold School students may print a limited number of pages at no charge.

Student Success Center

The [Student Success Center](#) offers variety of resources to help all students at the University of South Carolina reach their academic goals. Services include study skill development, writing development, self-assessments, and more.

Student Disability Services

[Student Disability Services](#) serves students with learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and other disabilities. For more information or to register with Student Disability Services, visit their website or call 777-6142.

International Student Services

[International Student Services](#) provides support to international students studying at the University of South Carolina at Columbia.

Career Center

The [Career Center](#) offers services to all enrolled students, as well as faculty, staff, employers, and alumni. The Career Center helps students make informed decisions about majors and/or careers through individual counseling, career assessments, and workshops. In addition, assistance with finding hands-on experience, locating full and part-time employment opportunities, and developing solid job search skills is available.

University Libraries

The [University Libraries](#) contain more than 3 million volumes, 1 million government documents, 400,000 maps and aerial photographs, over 150,000 rare books and over 15 million manuscripts. Services available to students through the libraries include library tours, library instruction sessions, research/teaching assistant training, research guides, and much more. Graduate study spaces as well as group study spaces are available to students.

Student Health Services

[Student Health Services](#) are available to all full time students and include general medicine, women's health, counseling, pharmacy, immunizations, allergy clinic, lab, x-ray, physical therapy, and more.