The School of Public Health

A defining characteristic of the area of public health is its focus on population groups rather than individuals. Public health professionals are concerned with the health of communities, focusing on the health of individuals. In these positions, they can be involved directly with the development, implementation and assessment of health education programs and initiatives for improving health care services. Opportunities for employment exist in private and public facilities, universities, state and national agencies, and community-centered health education facilities. These positions involve the need for highly trained public health professionals. The M.P.H. and/or the Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.) hold important roles in a variety of public and private settings, e.g., social service agencies, local and state health departments, health care facilities, universities, state and national agencies, and community-centered health education facilities. In these positions, they can be involved directly with the development, implementation and assessment of health education/disease prevention programs, and initiatives for improving health care services.

The School of Public Health offers the M.P.H. degree and the Dr.P.H. degree. The M.P.H. is an applied professional/graduate degree designed for highly motivated students who either have a professional degree or a substantial interest in public health. The M.P.H. also may be part of a combined degree with other professional and graduate programs. The Dr.P.H. is a terminal professional degree that prepares graduates to assume professional leadership responsibilities in local, state, national, and international public health activities. Course work will emphasize the integration and application of new knowledge and theory, and analytical, critical thinking, and problem solving skills to address the public health concerns of the Commonwealth and nation.

The Master of Public Health degree requires 33 to 38 credit hours of study for completion. All students must complete 15 semester hours of required core course work and 14 to 16 hours of specialty work in one of the five concentration tracks. In addition, three to six semester hours of field practicum experience are required, depending on previous professional experience in public health or related areas. The M.P.H. core course requirements provide a broad overview of the disciplines of public health and the basic principles of public health practice. Specialty course work develops the skills and knowledge upon which to build or enhance a career in public health. Separate M.P.H. tracks are available in each of the five areas of concentration: epidemiology, environmental health, biostatistics, health behavior, and health services management. A field practicum in a community, a public health facility, a government agency or related setting will represent the culminating experience that will result in a written capstone project paper.

The Doctor of Public Health is a terminal professional degree that will prepare graduates to assume professional leadership responsibilities in local, state, national, and international public health activities. Course work will emphasize the integration and application of new knowledge and theory, and analytical, critical thinking, and problem solving skills to address the public health concerns of the Commonwealth and nation. The Dr.P.H. is designed as a school-wide advanced degree and will require a minimum of 63 semester hours of course work beyond the master’s degree. The Dr.P.H. candidate must have a Master of Public Health, a Master of Science in Nursing, along with a master’s degree in a discipline related to public health research. The Dr.P.H. curriculum includes:

- Twenty-seven semester hours of required course work in the core curriculum, which consists of two advanced courses in each of four core public health disciplines (epidemiology, biostatistics, health services management, and health behavior and disease prevention), and one course in occupational and environmental health.
- Fifteen hours of professional elective course work.
- A one-hour integrative professional seminar in each semester of enrollment.
- Two supervised public health field experiences.
- An integrated capstone option of either a problem-based or research-based project paper demonstrating appropriate disciplinary understanding.

Applications for admission to the M.P.H. degree will be accepted and considered at any time, but all application materials must be submitted no later than June 1 prior to the fall of planned entry. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their applications are complete, and applications will not be reviewed until all materials have been received.

The University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville are involved in public health education and research and have a cooperative relationship designed to benefit citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. An affiliation agreement between the two institutions outlines a plan to focus on cooperative efforts in teaching, research, and service in public health and to facilitate student matriculation and study at either institution. Discussions are ongoing with Kentucky’s regional universities to integrate and coordinate their programs with those of the School of Public Health and the Institute for Public Health Research.

For further information, contact:

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