The College 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, relying heavily on collaboration with local, state, and national entities to improve the health status of their targeted populations. With the current interest in health care reform, interest in bioterrorism preparedness, concerns over managed care, and other factors impacting the nation’s health care system, the need for highly trained public health professionals is increasing. Professionals with the Master of Public Health (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., local and state health departments, health care facilities, universities, state and national agencies, social service 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 in initiatives for improving health care services.

The College of Public Health offers the M.P.H., M.H.A., M.S. in Clinical Research Design degrees, the Dr.P.H. degree, the Ph.D. in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and the Ph.D. in Gerontology. 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. Unique sequencing of courses, community-based program activities, and field/laboratory opportunities provide students with multiple opportunities to define their course of study. The M.P.H. also may be part of a combined degree with other professional and graduate programs such as the M.D./M.P.H. and the Pharm.D./M.P.H. The Dr.P.H. 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.

In addition, the College of Public Health offers one undergraduate course, CPH 201, Introduction to Public Health. The course provides the student with basic knowledge about the discipline of public health. After receiving a philosophical and political orientation to public health, students will begin to acquire functional knowledge of the strategies most often applied in public health practice.

The College also offers a Ph.D. program in Gerontology. For more information, visit the Web site at: www.mckentucky.edu/gerontology.

The Master of Public Health degree requires a minimum of 42 credit hours of study for completion. All students must complete 18 semester hours of required core course work and 15 hours of specialty work in one of the five areas of concentration. The concentrations are biostatistics, epidemiology, health behavior, health services management, and occupational/environmental health. In addition, three credit hours of field practicum, three credit hours of research and three credit hours of a Capstone Project are required.

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. 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 Dr.P.H. is designed as a college-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 Public Health, or an equivalent degree. Examples of equivalent degrees are programs related to public health, such as the Master of Arts in Communications, or the Master of Science in Nursing, along with course work equivalent to the five basic core courses in the M.P.H. curriculum. Those applications not meeting the preparation requirements will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Students will complete a curriculum spanning the five core discipline areas offered by the College of Public Health. Typically, a full-time student will require a minimum of three years beyond the master’s degree to complete the program. The program is designed to accommodate nontraditional, working, and part-time students.

The Master of Health Administration degree program (M.H.A.) is designed to provide graduate level education to individuals who, after appropriate managerial experience, are capable of assuming senior leadership positions in a variety of health services provider organizations. Examples include hospitals, community health centers, government and other public sector providers, the health insurance industry sector, home health agencies, hospitals, long-term care and mental health providers. The program and courses are structured so that full-time and part-time students can successfully complete the degree.

The M.H.A. degree is offered through the College of Public Health in cooperation with several other academic units within the University. This multidisciplinary approach enables the M.H.A. program to draw on highly qualified faculty in the six health care colleges, the College of Business and Economics, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Martin School of Public Policy and Administration.

The total program consists of 45 semester hours at the graduate level. This normally requires two years for a full-time student and three and one half to four years for part-time students. A final exam (oral and written) is given to all candidates for the M.H.A. degree in the form of a presentation of their Capstone Project. To be eligible to present the Capstone Project, students must have completed all of their course work or be enrolled in their last semester.

Prerequisites

Because the M.H.A. accepts students from diverse academic backgrounds, the core courses are designed so that they may be taken with a minimal amount of preparation. Students who lack previous course work in economics and accounting will be required to take preparatory courses. More specifically, before enrolling in HA 636, the undergraduate course in microeconomic principles (ECO 201) or its equivalent is required. An intermediate economics course, such as HA/PA 652, is highly recommended and may be required when performance in an intro-
ductory course was marginal. A basic course in accounting (e.g., ACC 201) is required before taking HA 635. If these courses have not been taken or are not easily obtainable, the student will be encouraged to undertake a self-study of recommended readings or to take them in their first three semesters of course work as indicated on the template that follows. Prerequisite course requirements will be discussed during first advising session.

The M.H.A. curriculum includes:
- Administrative Core .......... 18 credits
- Health Services Core .......... 21 credits
- Practicum (400 contact hours) .... 3 credits
- Capstone Course .............. 3 credits

The Dr.P.H. curriculum includes:
- Fifteen semester hours of required course work in the core curriculum, which consists of an advanced course in each of the five core public health areas of concentration (epidemiology, biostatistics, health services management, health behavior, and occupational/environmental health).
- A second level advanced course in three of the five concentration areas including the course in your area of concentration.
- Fifteen hours of professional elective course work consistent with your area of concentration.
- A one-hour integrative professional colloquium in six semesters of enrollment.
- Two supervised public health field experiences.
- An integrated capstone option of either a problem-based or research-based project paper demonstrating appropriate discipline understanding.

There is an application deadline for each program; for current information, consult the College Web site at: www.mc.uky.edu/publichealth/. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their applications are complete, and applications will not be reviewed until all materials have been received.

For further information, contact:
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