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 practitioners 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. In the era of health care reform, interest in biotechnology preparedness, concerns over managed care, and other factors impacting the nation’s health care system, the need for highly trained public health practitioners is increasing. Practitioners 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 research 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 prepares graduates to assume professional leadership responsibilities in local, state, national, and international public health activities. Course work emphasizes 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 eleven undergraduate courses spanning all six departments.

The College also offers a Ph.D. program in Gerontology. For more information, visit the Web site at: www.uky.edu/publichealth/departments/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 six areas of concentration. The concentrations are biostatistics, epidemiology, gerontology, 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 Master of Health Administration degree program (M.H.A.) provides graduate level education to prepare students for leadership positions across the full range of health care organizations. The program and courses are structured to accommodate the schedules of both full-time and part-time students. The M.H.A. degree is offered in cooperation with several other academic units and includes subject matter experts 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 54 semester hours, including a field experience and an integrative capstone. Students who have not completed undergraduate microeconomics and accounting courses must do so before taking the M.H.A. courses in these areas.

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 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 the selected area of concentration.
- Fifteen hours of professional elective course work consistent with the area of concentration.
- Six hours of professional elective course work in a second area of concentration.
- 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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