

MPH Program

Health Promotion

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION PACKET



School of Community Health
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
(503) 725-4401

Website: http://www.pdx.edu/sch/graduate_program.html
E-mail: schinfo@pdx.edu

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Program Setting

The School of Community Health is part of the College of Urban & Public Affairs. The graduate programs of the School of Community Health are designed to prepare students for professional work in the fields of community health, health education, and health promotion in a wide variety of settings. The School also offers a baccalaureate major in health studies. The faculty and programs of the Institute of Aging are also part of the School of Community Health. The Institute is a multidisciplinary research and training unit that also coordinates a graduate certification in gerontology program. The School also houses the Center for Public Health Studies. The School is located on the 4th floor of the Urban Center.

The Mission of Public Health

The mission of public health is to create the conditions in which people can be healthy, and community health education plays an important role. It blends public health and related research with a range of strategies such as community organizing, behavior change, public education, and policy development to help create healthy environments. Health educators seek both to aid in the voluntary selection of healthy behavior patterns for people and to encourage the development of environmental conditions that support good health.

The Health Promotion MPH offers students a comprehensive program of study in methods and strategies for health promotion and disease prevention. In keeping with the urban mission of Portland State University, this track offers community-based learning experiences in selected courses and an internship experience, both of which permit students to put theory into practice in an urban environment.

The school is committed to the education of public health professionals. Comprehensive education and training for practice in health promotion is provided through integrated classroom instruction including program planning and implementation, research and writing experience, and the opportunity to do an internship.

School of Community Health Mission

The mission of the Portland State University School of Community Health is to promote the public's health and well-being in sustainable communities through educational and professional preparation of our students. The School builds on the resources of the urban university by integrating individual, population, and systems perspectives with respect for cultural diversity, social justice, and global connectedness. Our mission is achieved through multi-disciplinary collaboration and partnerships among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community organizations.

Health Promotion Track Competencies

The goal of the Health Promotion track is to prepare students for advanced study or professional work in the fields of community health, health education, and health promotion in a wide variety of settings. The curriculum prepares students to utilize public health approaches to develop, administer, implement, and evaluate culturally sensitive health promotion and behavior change programs, and to mobilize community resources for planned social change.

Student completing this track will be able to:

1. Apply theory in the development, implementation, and evaluation of health promotion interventions, programs, and policies
2. Develop interventions and programs to effect change at multiple levels, including individual, community, organizations, and policy
3. Design and implement strategies to promote health
4. Solicit and integrate input from community and organization stakeholders
5. Design and deliver health communication messages
6. Evaluate and interpret results from program evaluations and other research
7. Define research problems, frame research questions, design research procedures, and outline methods of analysis
8. Apply ethical principles that govern the practice of public health
9. Enact cultural competency in diverse social and cultural communities.
10. Develop a substantive area of emphasis.

Summary of Degree Requirements

Completing the MPH degree in Health Promotion requires:

1. At least 59 credits of coursework approved by the Academic Advisor, including:
 - OMPH Core Courses (16 credits)
 - Required Health Promotion Track Courses (19 credits)
 - Internship (6 credits)
 - Area of Emphasis (15 Credits)
 - General Electives (3 Credits)
2. A minimum 3.0 (B) grade point average for all work completed in graduate standing.
3. Successful completion of 200 hours of internship experience in the form of field training. This includes development of a comprehensive field based project and written report. The internship topic must be connected to the student's chosen area of emphasis.
4. Successful completion of a comprehensive oral exam.

Description of Areas of Emphasis

Advocacy & Social Change

Students in the Advocacy and Social Change area of emphasis will gain the skills and expertise to influence policy and decision making in political, economic, and social institutions. Working in collaboration with other individuals and organizations, public health advocates can influence the power relationships between institutions and the public, shape the public discussion of health issues, and create healthier and more equitable environments.

Aging

The Aging area of emphasis is designed to provide students with a multi-disciplinary core curriculum on the board issues of adult development and aging. Of particular concern are the problems, policies, and programs that affect the health and quality of life for the elderly.

Health Behavior

The purpose of the Health Behavior area of emphasis is to help meet the increasing demand for highly qualified health educators who have the specific knowledge and skills to help individuals and communities protect, maintain, and improve their health. The area of emphasis emphasizes the behavioral, social, and cultural aspects of disease prevention and public health behavioral research and change. Students will acquire skills in the assessment and modification of health behavior at the individual, community/group, organizational/institutional, and broader levels.

Integrative Health

Courses within the Integrative Health area of emphasis introduce students to the participatory, emergent, and relational qualities characteristic of living systems and ecology-based models. From this perspective, all things are interconnected; imbalance in one area impacts the whole. Mind-body health and complementary and alternative medicine represent approaches to understanding whole systems within health care. Additional topics addressed in the area of emphasis include sustainability, adult learning, and social justice.

Physical Activity & Risk Reduction

Students in the Physical Activity & Risk Reduction area of emphasis will improve their understanding of the relationships between physical activity and health. An understanding of the physiological responses and adaptations to physical activity and exercise provides the foundation upon which students can begin to investigate the role of physical activity/exercise in the health of individuals and communities. The exploration of physical activity as it relates to chronic disease risk, aging, and nutrition provides an opportunity for students to examine the health impacts of a sedentary lifestyle from multiple perspectives.

Women's Health

Courses in Women's Health area of emphasis provide students the opportunity to study the topic from a multi-disciplinary perspective. Issues surrounding the health care of women are examined not only through conventional lenses of medical and public health research, but also through the post-modern lenses of social constructionism, feminist theory, and other critical theories.

MPH – Health Promotion Curriculum

OMPH Core (16 Credits)

PHE 512	Principles of Health Behavior (3)
PHE 535	Epidemiology Survey (3)
PHE 580	Concepts of Environmental Health (3)
PH 525	Biometry Survey (4) [Offered through OHSU]**
PA 574	Health Systems Organization (3)

Health Promotion Track Required (19 Credits)

PHE 511	Foundations of Public Health* (3)
PHE 517	Community Organizing (3)
PHE 521	Quantitative Research Design & Analysis (3)
PHE 540	Mass Communication and Health (3)
PHE 550	Health Promotion Program Planning (4)
PA 588	Program Evaluation (3)

Internship (6 credits)

PHE 504	Internship (6)
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Area of Emphasis (15 Credits)

(Applicants should indicate their area of emphasis on their application in space provided)

All students are required to select an area of emphasis and take additional coursework in that area. If a student wishes to complete a thesis, 6 of the 15 credits can be thesis credits. However, the thesis topic must relate to the student's chosen area of emphasis.

The following list of classes includes examples of courses which may be used to fulfill the area of emphasis requirements. Please check the current schedule of classes for course availability; courses may not be taught every year. Additional courses, including those offered at other OMPH institutions, may count for area of emphasis credits with advisor approval.

Advocacy & Social Change (Lead Faculty: Stephanie Farquhar, PhD)

PHE 517	Community Organizing ⁺ (3)
PHE 541	Media Advocacy and Public Health (3)
SOC 576	Theories of Social Change (4)
PA 543	Creating Collaborative Communities (3)
USP 550	Citizen Participation (4)
USP 560	Policy Process (3)
PS 517	Interest Groups (4)
SOC 536	Social Movements (4)
PSY 540	Group Process (4)

*Should be taken first quarter of enrollment

**Requires special registration—Contact School of Community Health

⁺ Represents primary course in area of emphasis that should be taken first

Aging (Lead Faculty: Margaret Neal, PhD)

- PHE 558 Perspectives on Aging⁺ (3)
- PHE 556 Health Aspects of Aging (3)
- PHE 557 National Long Term Care Policy (3)
- PHE 559 Economics of Aging (3)
- USP 510 Mental Health and Aging (3)
- USP 564 Political & Administrative Issues (3)

Health Behavior (Lead Faculty: Mark Kaplan, DrPH & Judith Sobel, PhD)

- PHE 513 Health, Behavior & the Social Environment⁺ (3)
- PHE 510 Integrative Health & Systems Thinking (4)
- PSY 571 Health Psychology (4)
- SP 515 Problems of Intercultural Communication (4)
- SOC 559 Medical Sociology[±] (4)
- SOC 585 Proseminar[±] (3)

Integrative Health

- PHE 510 Integrative Health and Systems Thinking⁺ (4)
- PHE 507 Research in Integrative Health (3)
- PHE 510 Contemplative Practice and Social Justice (4)
- PA 573 Values/Ethics in Health (3)
- USP 510 Sustainable Development Practices (3)
- USP 510 Sustainable Food Systems (3)
- SOC 565 Environmental Sociology (4)
- EPFA 510 Global Political Ecology (4)
- EPFA 510 Leadership for Sustainability (4)
- EPFA 520 Developmental Perspectives on Adult Learning (4)

Physical Activity and Risk Reduction (Lead Faculty: Gary Brodowicz, PhD)

- PHE 573 Exercise Physiology⁺ (4)
- PHE 507 Seminar (3)
- PHE 556 Health Aspects of Aging (4)
- PHE 575 Exercise Testing Techniques (4)
- PHE 576 Physical Activity, Health, and Disease (3)
- PHE 577 Exercise, Nutrition, and Performance (3)

⁺ Represents primary course in area of emphasis that should be taken first

[±] Students with no background in sociology should take SOC 559. Students with a sociological background should take SOC 585.

Women's Health (Lead Faculty: Karen Seccombe, PhD & Siobhan Maty, PhD)

PHE 552	Women's Health ⁺ (3)
PHE 551	Women and Holistic Health (4)
PHE 553	Women's Reproductive Health (4)
SOC 525	Sociology of Women (4)
SOC 526	Women/Mental Illness (4)
SOC 585	Medicalization of Women's Bodies (3)
EC 517	Women in the Economy (4)

General Electives[◊] (3 Credits)

PHE 510	Integrative Health & Systems Thinking (4)
PHE 510	Men's Health (4)
PHE 510	Social Inequalities & Health (3)
PHE 513	Health, Behavior & the Environment (3)
PHE 520	Qualitative Research Methods (3)
PHE 541	Media Advocacy and Public Health (3)
PHE 552	Women's Health (3)
PHE 553	Women's Reproductive Health (4)
PHE 556	Health Aspects of Aging (3)
PHE 573	Exercise Physiology (3)
PA 525	Grantwriting (3)
PA 573	Values/Ethics in Health (3)
PA 576	Strategic Planning (3)

+ Represents primary course in area of emphasis that should be taken first

[◊] Courses taken as part of your area of emphasis do not count toward meeting the 3 credits of general electives

Application Checklist

To PSU Office of Admissions by February 1st

- Graduate Admission Form
- Application fee of \$50.00
- One official transcript from each college or university attended (except PSU), including junior colleges and community colleges
- Measles immunization form

Mail To:

Portland State University

Office of Admissions

P.O. Box 751

Portland, OR 97207-0751

To School of Community Health by February 1st

- Departmental Application Form
- One official transcript from each college or university attended including PSU, junior colleges and community colleges
- Three letters of recommendation (sealed w/ signature)
- A 500-word personal statement
- A personal resume
- Official GRE test scores (and TOEFL scores for International students)

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MPH Admissions Process

Application Period

New students are admitted to the MPH Health Promotion Track only once a year in the spring, to begin course work during the Fall term.

Completed Applications for Fall will be accepted until **February 1st**. Applications still incomplete after **February 1st** or any application postmarked after **February 1st** will not be reviewed.

Admissions Process

Applying to the MPH program requires two parallel, but separate, application processes.

1. Submission of the required application materials to the Portland State University Admissions Office, which handles all graduate admissions to the University.
2. Submission of all required application materials to the School of Community Health, which admits students to the MPH program.

Incomplete application material sent to either the Admissions Office or to the School of Community Health may not allow review of the application to be completed.

The applications materials sent to the **Admissions Office** must include:

1. Application for Graduate Admission Form
2. Application fee of \$50.00
3. One official transcript from each college or university attended (except PSU), including junior colleges and community colleges
4. Measles immunization form

Mail Completed **University** packet to:

Portland State University

Office of Admissions

P.O. Box 751

Portland, OR 97207-0751

The application sent to the **School of Community Health** must include:

1. Departmental Application Form
2. One official transcript from each college or university attended including PSU, junior colleges and community colleges
3. Three letters of recommendation (sealed with signature)

Persons who are asked to write letters of recommendation must be in a position to address your academic potential for graduate work in health promotion. At a minimum the letters should address your communication skills, ability to engage in independent study and research, and to contribute to the field of community health. You are advised to request that letter writers address these issues.

4. A 500-word personal statement

It should reflect on your goals, personal values, and larger vision of public health. We are interested in what contribution you want to make to community health and why you think you will be successful.

5. Official GRE test scores (and TOEFL scores for International students)

Applicants with a master's degree or higher from an accredited U.S. college do not need to submit GRE test scores. Other degrees will need to be recognized by the Office of Admissions before we will consider waiving the GRE requirement.

For the GRE's the PSU Institution Code is 4610 and Public Health Department Code is 0616.

6. A personal resume documenting past 5-7 years work experience

7. Selection of an area of emphasis

Advocacy & Social Change, Aging, Health Behavior, Integrative Health, Physical Activity and Risk Reduction, Women's Health

Mail Completed **Departmental** packet to:

Portland State University

School of Community Health

P.O. Box 751

Portland, OR 97207-0751

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it possible to start the MPH program in the Winter or Spring quarters?

Students are admitted to begin the program in the Fall quarter only. Students are permitted to take up to 12 credits from non-core courses before admission.

What should I say in my Personal Statement?

The Personal Statement is your opportunity to convey to the Admissions Committee why you want to pursue an MPH degree. This is a very important part of your admissions application and is read closely by the committee members. There is no required format but you must limit your essay to 500 words. It is useful for you to reflect on your goals, personal values, and larger vision in developing your statement. We are interested in what contribution you want to make to community health and why you think you will be successful.

Who should write my letters of recommendation and is there a standard form?

Letters of recommendation are very important and the people you ask to provide letters should be carefully selected. These people should know you well and be able to speak to your potential to success in graduate school and ultimately contribute to the field of community health. The letters should come from people who have had the opportunity to closely observe you and be able to assess your abilities in a classroom setting or a health education work environment. There is no standard form that is used for letters of recommendation.

How are admissions decisions made?

The MPH Admissions Committee is made up of at least two faculty members and the School Director. Other faculty who serve as area of emphasis leads also participate. Each application is reviewed by at least two faculty members with a third review done if necessary. The admissions committee, after considering all applications, recommends applicants for admission to the PSU Graduate Division. It is the Graduate Division that makes the final offer of acceptance to the applicant.

When can I expect to hear the decision?

We try our best to notify all applicants by early April.

What should I include in my personal resume?

We are looking for more information on your past job experience in the field of public health and social services. We would like to see how your work experience will enhance your experience in the program.

How can I complete the prerequisite Statistics course?

All students are required to have successfully completed at least one undergraduate statistics course (200-level or higher) to be admitted to the program. Students without such a course can still be accepted but must provide proof that they are registered for such a course upon applying to the program. In this program, students are required to take courses that assume some basic knowledge of statistics and this is why we have this as a prerequisite for starting the program.

What entrance exams are required?

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is required as part of the application for admission to the School of Community Health MPH program. The test should be taken early enough to allow the results to reach the School of Community Health by January; this usually requires tests to be taken during October or November at the latest. It is the applicant's responsibility to register for the exam and make sure the scores are provided to the School of Community Health. Portland State University Testing Services has additional test information at 503-725-4428 or www.GRE.org. The PSU Institution Code is 4610 and the Public Health Department Code is 0616.

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) can be considered in lieu of GRE scores. Please contact the School of Community Health if you will be submitting MCAT scores.

What happens if I have a low GPA?

The School of Community Health requires a cumulative GPA of 3.00. Students with a GPA above 2.75 (required for admission to the University) but below 3.00 may still be considered, provided all other conditions have been met.

What is an area of emphasis?

We currently have six areas of emphasis. Each student must select one area as a part of the admissions process. You are required to complete 15 credits in your chosen area. Please see the descriptions above for more detail on the areas.

Can I switch my Area of Emphasis after I have been admitted?

Yes, students can change their area of emphasis but they must do so with the approval of their academic advisor.

Are there required scores on the GRE?

GRE scores are one of several factors weighed in the admission process. The OMPH Program requires a minimum score of 1000, split between 500 on the verbal section and 500 on the quantitative section.

Do all international students have to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)?

No. All applicants from any country in which the official language is not English are required to take the TOEFL. International students with a bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited U.S. institution, or an English speaking college/university in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain or Ireland are exempt from taking the TOEFL.

Is there a minimal TOEFL score?

Yes we require a 550 on the paper based test and 213 on the computer based test.

Are there any graduate or undergraduate courses that may help my application process?

The only required undergraduate course is statistics. However, the admissions committee does look for some background in the social sciences. If you are looking for some courses to take, you should consider something from Sociology, Anthropology, Social Psychology and related fields.

Can I defer my admission?

Admission can be deferred for one year. Your request to defer must be made in writing to the Director of the School of Community Health.

Can I take classes prior to being admitted to the program?

We allow students to take a total of twelve credits of electives prior to being admitted. These units may not be from any of the five OMPH core courses or PHE 511: Foundations of Public Health.

How much will it cost?

The Oregon State Board of Higher Education determines the tuition and fee rates each year. For the most current listing students should consult the PSU *Schedule of Classes* or the website: <http://www.pdx.edu/registration/tuition.html>.

What kind of financial aid is offered to MPH students?

Students should check with the university office of financial aid for a complete listing of available sources and grant and loan requirements (<http://www.pdx.edu/finaid/>). Following is a partial list of scholarship opportunities available to MPH students. Financial aid is available primarily for full time graduate students although some loans and grants are open to part-time students. This aid is of three general types: (1) graduate assistantships available through the College of Urban and Public Affairs and School of Community Health; (2) loans and work study available through the University's Office of Financial Aid, and (3) awards, grants, and scholarships available through PSU.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistant (GA) positions provide teaching or research services working with faculty. Levels of appointment are between .15 and .49 FTE, granted for either one term, nine-month, or 12-month basis. The typical full time assistantship is .15 FTE, which is equivalent to 7½ hours or .30 FTE, which is equal to 15 hours per week. These positions provide services such as teaching lab sections of courses, facilitating discussion sessions, grading papers, providing research assistance, etc. In all cases, the assistantship is regarded as a contribution to the graduate student's learning experience.

Students interested in applying for graduate assistantships must have regular admission status and maintain good standing in the graduate program. GA positions also require that students be registered for and satisfactorily complete a minimum of nine graduate credits each term with the exception of summer term.

Graduate assistants usually receive tuition remission and a small monthly stipend. Graduate assistants usually receive tuition remission and a small monthly stipend. Students interested in applying for GA positions must email a resume and cover letter to Elizabeth Bull in the School of Community Health: bulle@pdx.edu.

Financial Assistance Available Through the University: Loans and Work Study

Graduate students may receive consideration for financial assistance through the Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Work Study, and Federal Direct Stafford Loan programs. The Office of Financial Aid is located in Neuberger Hall, Room 174, 503 725-3461, or <http://www.pdx.edu/finaid/>.

Federal Perkins Loans

This federally funded loan program is available to graduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need. This is a long term, low interest rate loan for which repayment commences nine months after the student is no longer enrolled, on at least a part-time basis.

Work Study

Graduate students are eligible for Federal Work Study funds. Federal Work Study is a need-based program in which the Federal government pays from 70-90 percent of student wages and the institution or agency pays the remainder. This program assists students who demonstrate a need for part-time employment to pursue a college education. Sources of work include metropolitan non-profit agencies and/or campus employment. For other student employment opportunities contact the Student Employment Office at (503) 725-4958, University Services Building, Room 402F.

Federal Direct Stafford Loans

These loans are available to PSU graduate students through the cooperation of the University and the U.S. Department of Education. Both interest subsidized and unsubsidized loans are available. Repayment begins six months after the student drops *below half-time* status, or leaves the University. The federal government pays interest on the subsidized loans while the student is in school. Unsubsidized loan eligibility is based on the difference between the student's cost of attendance and the financial aid awarded. Repayment begins while the student is still enrolled. The federal government *does not* make interest payments. Annual loan maximums for graduate students receiving either subsidized or unsubsidized Perkins loans are \$10,000.

Awards Available Through the University

A Scholarship Guide available through the Office of Academic Affairs, Cramer Hall, Room 349, (503) 725-3422.

Helen Oliver Memorial Fellowship Award

An annual cash award given to a graduating student with an official degree who demonstrates the promise of being a responsible and mature civic leader. The award is not based on need or scholastic achievement (although good scholarship is assumed), but rather on good character and dedicated spirit. Students may apply through the Office of Academic Affairs, Cramer Hall, Room 349, (503) 725-5251.

Robert and Rosemary Low Memorial Award

One award, given in years when funds are available. This scholarship gives special recognition to academically qualified graduate students with physical handicaps. Eligible students must be admitted to PSU as regular graduate students. Selection will be based on scholarship and academic potential. Financial need may be considered, but is not a requirement. The deadline for application is April 15 for the following academic year. Information is available after March 1, at the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, Cramer Hall, Room 111, (503) 725-8410.

Oregon Laurels Tuition Remission Program

These are annual awards of tuition credit equivalent to the instructional portion of graduate fees for *full and part time* PSU graduate students. Awards are merit-based. Financial need is a consideration for some of these awards. Deadline for application is April 15 for the following academic year. For further information contact the Office of Graduate Studies after March 1st of the year in which you wish to apply (Office of

Graduate Studies, Cramer Hall, Room 111, (503) 725-8410, or Beth Bull in the SCH office.)

Frank Roberts Community Service Scholarship

Awarded to a PSU graduate student who exemplifies a spirit of public service and commitment to community, applicants must be admitted to a PSU graduate program, in good academic standing, and enrolled for at least *6 credit hours per term*. They must also have excellent undergraduate portfolios and demonstrate financial need. For information contact the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, Cramer Hall, Room 111, (503) 725-8410.

Underrepresented Minorities Achievement Scholarship Program – Graduate - Level

A limited number of UMAS awards are available to PSU graduate students who are Oregon residents and of African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, or Hispanic American heritage. Awards are made in the amount of instructional fees. For information contact Educational Equity Programs and Services, Smith Memorial Center, Room 120, (503) 725-4457.

Is the School of Community Health MPH program accredited?

Yes, it is accredited by the Council on Education in Public Health (www.ceph.org).

How long does it take to complete the program?

It is necessary to complete at least 59 credits and full-time students usually complete their degree over a two year or six quarter period. Part-time students take longer to complete the degree.

If I work, are there evening classes available in the MPH program?

Courses are offered throughout the day. Many of the core MPH courses are offered in time slots beginning at 4 p.m. or 6:40 p.m. However, it will not be possible to complete the degree by solely taking courses offered in the late afternoon or evening.

Do I need to own a computer?

A personal computer is recommended but not required for the MPH program. All applicants must be computer literate and have a working e-mail address. Computer labs are available in the College of Urban and Public Affairs and at the Portland State University Library for student use. After admission students can request an e-mail account from the Office of Information Technology.