



**Arnold School of Public Health
University of South Carolina**

**Master of Public Health
in General Public Health
Student Handbook**

2011-2012

It is the student's responsibility to read and be familiar with the information contained in this handbook. Final authority for all decisions remains with The Graduate School based on The Graduate School *Bulletin* and published university policy.

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Master of Public Health in General Public Health Program (MPH General)

The University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health offers a Master of Public Health in General Public Health (General MPH) that provides a systematic approach to acquiring the academic experiences needed to understand and appreciate the 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 or post-baccalaureate health-related experience.

STUDENT GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Students seeking admission to the GENERAL MPH degree program must first meet the general requirements of The Graduate School of the University of South Carolina. Admission to The Graduate School requires a degree from a college or university with regional accreditation. Academic records should indicate that the applicant has completed an undergraduate program with adequate preparation in the field in which graduate work is to be undertaken.

As indicated in the *Graduate Studies Bulletin*, “admission is determined by the Dean of The Graduate School, upon the recommendation of the department or college concerned, on the basis of an appraisal of the credentials submitted.”

2. Other requirements include:
 - Acceptable GRE, MCAT, DAT, PCAT or other equivalent test scores. USMLE score cannot be substituted for GRE, MCAT, DAT or PCAT scores.
 - Official transcript from each school or college previously attended (all prior post-secondary school study must be represented)
 - Minimum of three letters of recommendation
 - Detailed written statement reasons for wanting to complete the general MPH program and specific career goals
 - Current resume or CV
3. Applicants to the MD/MPH dual degree program must submit evidence of acceptance to the University of South Carolina School of Medicine or MUSC College of Medicine.
4. Applicants whose native language is not English must submit a satisfactory score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL, 80 or above on internet based format) or the University of Cambridge’s IELTS Academic Course Type 2 exam (overall band score on IELTS Academic Course Type 2 exam 6.5 or above).

APPLICATION PROCESS

The following is an outline of the sequence of events that leads to admission to the Master of Public Health - General degree program. Any questions regarding this sequence may be addressed to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

- Most applications to the General MPH program are made through the Schools of Public Health Application System (SOPHAS) at www.sophas.org. Applicants to the USC Preventive Medicine Residency and the MD/MPH dual degree program submit applications through the University of South Carolina Graduate School at <http://gradschool.sc.edu/gap/>.
- Student submits the completed application; **deadline for summer and fall enrollment is February 15; deadline for spring enrollment is July 15**; application for summer or fall enrollment is strongly encouraged because of course sequencing.
- Office of Student and Alumni Services imports the application and will follow up with applicants if any additional information or materials are needed. Applicants may check the status of the application online through SOPHAS.
- Office of Academic Affairs circulates the completed application among members of the General MPH Admissions Committee; the committee reviews the application and determines the admission recommendation.
- The Office of Academic Affairs forwards the recommendation to The Graduate School, which officially informs the student of his/her admission status.

Only upon official notification from The Graduate School is the application process completed.

ADVISEMENT

- After official notification of acceptance from The Graduate School, the student should contact the Office of Academic Affairs; (803) 777-5030; bentonj@mailbox.sc.edu; Room 102F of the Health Sciences Building at the corner of Green and Sumter Streets;
- The Office of Academic Affairs assigns an advisor for each the (for fall admissions, the initial advisement occurs during the school's student orientation). The student's file is retained in the Office of Academic Affairs.
- The student arranges an appointment with the designated advisor; student must be advised prior to registering for any term;
- The student and advisor develop a Program of Study (Form MPOS, <http://www.gradschool.sc.edu/doclibrary/documents/mastersprogramofstudy.pdf>). The Program of Study must be filed with The Graduate School via the Office of Academic Affairs no later than the completion of 12 semester hours.

ACADEMIC COURSE WORK

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 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

A total of 42 credit hours 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.

Changes to the program of study are submitted on the Request for Adjustment in Graduate Program form (<http://gradschool.sc.edu/doclibrary/documents/programadjustmentform.pdf>) and must be on file prior to application for graduation.

Course offerings are based on fall admission; required courses cannot be replaced with independent studies or other special offerings.

SPECIFIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- ***Public Health Core Courses*** (15 hours)

EPID 700 (3) Introduction to Epidemiology **OR**
EPID 701 (3) Concepts and Methods of Epidemiology

BIOS 700 (3) Introductory Biostatistics **OR**
BIOS 701 (3) Concepts and Methods of Biostatistics

ENHS 660 (3) Concepts of Environmental Health Sciences

HSPM 700 (3) Approaches and Concepts for Public Health Administration

HPEB 700 (3) 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 (1-6) Public Health Practice

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

PREREQUISITES

Minimum course prerequisites for the practicum experience: completion of three (3) of the core courses and three (3) special interest courses.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

Students in the General MPH program must satisfactorily complete a total 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 hours of practice work in a regular semester (fall or spring terms) requires an average of 8-10 hours of actual work each week including writing the final report, or 16-20 hours per week for six credits. In a summer term, six (6) hours of credit would require 40 hours per week.

PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

Public Health in the United States is practiced in diverse settings that include both public and private agencies. Regardless of the type of agency in which it is practiced, public health includes a philosophy of social justice, concepts of community, and population perspectives. The range of public health activities in populations include preventing epidemics and the spread of disease, protecting against environmental hazards, preventing injuries, promoting and encouraging health behaviors, responding to disasters and assisting communities in recovery and assuring quality and accessibility of health services (Public Health in America, APHA, 1995).

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

If financial resources are required for doing a Public Health Practice activity, the responsibility for negotiating these arrangements rests with the sponsoring agency and the student. These costs and responsibilities for coverage are included in the practice proposal.

Responsibilities of a graduate assistantship or of paid employment from outside the University cannot be used to satisfy practice requirements.

PRACTICUM COMMITTEE

Each student in the General MPH degree program must have a practicum committee. The practicum committee is composed of a faculty member from the Arnold School of Public Health and a mentor from the practicum site. For students in the Department of Family & Preventive Medicine Residency Program, the practicum committee is composed of one faculty member from the Arnold School of Public Health, one from the Department of Family & Preventive Medicine or other appropriate faculty, and the practicum mentor from the performance site. The practicum committee provides support for and oversees experiences included in the practicum.

Students are expected to:

- Take initiative and responsibility in defining competence to be developed, arranging or selecting an appropriate setting for practice activity, developing clear work and learning objectives and completing work and learning tasks by the dates agreed upon.
- Arrange appropriate meetings with faculty advisor and mentor, including the final oral presentation.

Faculty Advisors are expected to:

- Advise students in developing work and learning proposals.
- Advise students regarding ethics review required of the practice project.
- Participate in meetings with students and mentor and the location of student's Practice.
- Provide ongoing expert advice and guidance as needed or requested.
- Assess learning outcomes and assign pass/fail grade at appropriate time.
- Attend final oral presentation by student.

Mentors are expected to:

- Assist Arnold SPH staff and students to define short-term tasks of potential use to his or her organization.
- Review student's proposal for usefulness to organization, determine limits of mentor's role with student, and provide on-site direction to the work component of the practice.
- Provide student logistical support (arranging space, equipment, use of phones, use of computer and/or computer software, secretarial help, making introductions, providing data or helping gain access to it, and general advice within the organization.
- Attend the student's required final oral presentation.
- Assist with assessment of student's work and growth in competence during the Practice.

DEVELOPING A WORK TASK

For some students, a work task may be defined and negotiated for a practice activity prior to establishing specific learning objectives. In this case, discovering the learning potential of a given work task is required. For others who have developed and articulated learning objectives, the requirement is to locate and determine experiences which will enable the student to develop the specified skills.

There is no magic or proper way to find the "right" setting and task. The challenge is to locate something that needs to be done that some organization and persons within the organization cares about, and then determine if that task can be done in the time you have available and if it allows you to pursue your learning objectives.

Experience with organizations which have sponsored Arnold SPH students suggest that if six major conditions are present, a sound practice activity can be developed. The conditions are:

- An organization wants or needs something done, and it "controls" or "owns" the work results.
- The student has some previously developed competence or experience that indicates the potential for contributions to the organization and citizenry. This includes knowledge gained in prerequisite courses.
- The student has well thought out and communicated learning objectives which can be pursued in the framework of doing the task.
- The student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of what is to be done and is able to identify a supportive network of people.
- A mentor is identified who both wants the work done and wants to assist the student in pursuing the designated learning objectives.
- The student seeks advice and monitoring from his/her faculty advisor.

The draft work task proposal contains a minimal checklist of items which are considered important in preparing a work task proposal for Public Health Practice. Complete this draft first and discuss it with your practice faculty advisor. **The Public Health Practice Agreement form should be completed before the start of the practicum.** See Appendix for Practice Agreement template.

Sessions should be arranged by the student, as needed, with the faculty advisor or mentor. It is recommended that the student schedule regular conferences with faculty advisors.

FINAL REPORT AND ORAL PRESENTATION

The student must write a final report on his/her practice experience and give a 30-45 minute oral presentation based on this report. The report should address the objectives set down in the student's practice plan.

The student is responsible for arranging the time and place of the oral presentation and ensure availability of his/her faculty advisor, practicum mentor and program graduate director (or another member of the GENERAL MPH Coordinating Committee) to attend the presentation. Announcements of this presentation should be posted throughout the Arnold School of Public Health building two weeks prior to the presentation so that anyone who wishes can attend.

The student must pass an oral comprehensive examination which shall be administered immediately following the presentation and evaluated by the Comprehensive Exam Committee. After completion of the comprehensive examination, a copy of the Public Health Practice experience must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs.

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 by the Office of Academic Affairs.

GRADUATION/HOODING CEREMONY

The University holds commencement ceremonies in May, August and December of each year. In addition, the Arnold School of Public Health hosts a Hooding Ceremony each May for students who graduated in December of the previous year or anticipate graduating in May or August of the current year.

During the final semester of study, the student applies for graduation; the deadline for application for graduation is set by the Registrar's Office each semester. For fall and spring semesters, this deadline is within the first three weeks of classes; for August graduation, the deadline is within days of the first summer term classes.

- The graduation application form is available at <http://registrar.sc.edu/pdf/DegreeApp.pdf>;
- The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs verifies the completion of all degree requirements and submits clearance for graduation to The Graduate School after commencement for the requested term;
- The Graduate School notifies the Registrar's Office that all degree requirements have been completed; this notification usually does not occur until several weeks after the actual commencement ceremony; diplomas are distributed via mail;
- Clearance for graduation also requires that the student complete and submit the SPH exit questionnaire. This questionnaire is distributed to the students by the Office of Academic Affairs;
- The student is responsible for purchasing caps, gowns, hoods and announcements for graduation and should be mindful that these purchases are made in a timely fashion.

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 *Graduate Studies Bulletin* is the official manual of regulations and guidelines for graduate study at the University of South Carolina. It is available on the University website: <http://bulletin.sc.edu/index.php>.

The *Graduate Studies Bulletin* states, “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.

CAROLINA COMMUNITY STUDENT HANDBOOK AND POLICY GUIDE AND CAROLINIAN CREED

Please refer to the *Carolina Community Student Handbook and Policy Guide* for policies on the student code of conduct, student grievance, sexual harassment, and other areas. The *Carolina Community Student Handbook and Policy Guide* is available on the University website: <http://www.sa.sc.edu/carolinacommunity/>.

It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina at Columbia 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*, which is available online at <http://www.sa.sc.edu/creed/>.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

All charges 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 <http://www.sph.sc.edu/currentstudents/fees.htm>.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available for full-time students. These assistantships provide a stipend and possible tuition supplement in return for 10-20 hours of work per week under the direction of Arnold School of Public Health faculty.

Currently, to qualify for an assistantship, a student must be fully admitted to a degree program, maintain a 3.0 average, and enroll in at least six (6) credit hours. Tuition and fees for graduate students with a graduate assistantship will be the same as tuition and fees for in-state graduate students in the Health Sciences. Students appointed on Graduate Assistantships will receive a subsidy in the amount of \$100 in the Fall and \$100 in the Spring toward the premium on the University health insurance plan.

GRANTS, LOANS AND OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The University of South Carolina 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 of Student Financial Aid website: <http://web.csd.edu/financialaid/>. The Office of Student Financial Aid may be contacted at (803) 777-8134 or uscfaid@sc.edu.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES & COMPUTER RESOURCES

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

The Office of Academic Affairs is located in room 102 in the Arnold School of Public Health/Health Sciences Building. This is the 'home' of the General MPH degree program; the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs serves as the graduate director for the program. Since student files are maintained in this office, all student academic transactions must be approved by the office.

Student mailboxes for GENERAL MPH students are located on the first floor of the Arnold School of Public Health building (HESC) between classrooms 104 and 105.

A Listserv is maintained for all General MPH students. If you are interested in subscribing, see the following website for instructions: <http://www.sph.sc.edu/currentstudents/listserv.htm>.

OFFICE OF STUDENT AND ALUMNI SERVICES

The Office of Student and Alumni Services (OSAS) is housed in the Arnold School of Public Health/Health Sciences Building (HESC), room 112. The office provides information to students about the school to prospective students, as well as support services to current students. Services provided to current students include: orientation, registration information, workshops, and providing information regarding the hooding ceremony.

The Office of Student and Alumni Services also encourages interaction among students through the Dean's Student Advisory Council (DSAC). In addition, the office serves as a liaison between students and faculty within the Arnold School of Public Health and provides information on opportunities offered by the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), among others.

Students are encouraged to read newsletters, Listserv information and the bulletin boards sponsored by the Office of Student and Alumni Services to keep posted on workshops, internships and career information, as well as other relevant issues related to Arnold School of Public Health students.

DEAN'S STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DSAC)

The Office of Student and Alumni Services sponsors the Dean's Student Advisory Council (DSAC). This is an active Arnold School of Public Health (SPH) student organization.

The purpose of this council is two-fold: (1) to provide a means for students to have dialogue with the dean and (2) to inform student about important events that are happening within the SPH and the university.

DSAC also assists the SPH in recruiting students to participate in a variety of school-wide events

including: seminars, activities associated with Public Health Week, and USC Graduate Student Day.

DSAC coordinates many aspects of the annual SPH orientation for new students. All six departments and the General MPH program have student representation, with representatives including students at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels. Membership is selected annually by departmental elections.

If you have questions or would like to get involved, contact the Office of Student and Alumni Services.

COMPUTER LABORATORY

A computer lab is available to all Arnold School of Public Health students. The lab is located on the second floor of the HESC building, room 203. Hours of operation are posted in the lab.

The computers in this lab have Internet access, Microsoft Office applications and various specialized applications such as SAS statistical software.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

ACADEMIC CENTERS FOR EXCELLENCE

The Academic Centers for Excellence (ACE) 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. For more information, visit: <http://www.housing.sc.edu/ace/services.html>.

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: <http://www.sa.sc.edu/sds/about.htm> or call 777-6142.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

International Student Services provides support to international students studying at the University of South Carolina at Columbia. For more information, visit: http://www.ip.sc.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=131&Itemid=171.

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. Visit the website at: <http://www.sc.edu/career/>.

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. Visit the website at: <http://www.sc.edu/library/>.

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. Visit the website at: <http://www.sa.sc.edu/shs/>.

APPENDIX

PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE AGREEMENT

**Arnold School of Public Health
PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE AGREEMENT
CONTRACT FOR PRACTICUM**

Student's Name _____

Department _____ Degree _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Project Title _____

Agency/Organization _____

Location (City/State/Country) _____

Beginning Date _____ Ending Date _____

Please complete the following information on a separate sheet and attach. Student, faculty practicum advisor, and mentor sign below:

- Specify specific learning objectives/outcomes.
- State work tasks to be performed by the student.
- Specify the experiences to be undertaken (including strategy, methods, resources, settings).
- Specify the criteria for assessment of learning results and work performance.
- Describe in detail any special conditions, arrangements, or restrictions.
- Give time sequence for achieving the desired results and how progress will be monitored. (Specify dates on which Student, Faculty Advisor and Mentor will consult).

Faculty Advisor:

Signed _____ Date _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Student:

Signed _____ Date _____

Mentor Statement: The above statements represent my understanding of what the student has agreed to do with the organization and I am hereby agreeing to provide the necessary supervision and support expected of a Mentor in carrying out this work. I will monitor this student to ensure that policies and legal restraints of this organization, such as those governing confidentiality of records or trade secrets are not violated.

Signed _____ Date _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Title _____