

UIC School of Public Health Student Handbook 2004-2005

The Doctor of Public Health

The DrPH Program will be revised effective Fall 2005. Fall 2004 DrPH matriculants may elect to be governed by the new curricular requirements. Students who are interested in this option are encouraged to work closely with their academic advisors in planning their AY 2004-05 courses.

Learning objectives for the DrPH (Doctor of Public Health degree):

After completing the DrPH program, the DrPH student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of the core areas of public health and how the integration of these areas can lead more effectively to the resolution of public health problems.
2. Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the functioning of the public health delivery system (both public and private sectors) and its relationship to the practice of public health in order to develop the most efficacious and cost-effective interventions to resolve public health problems.
3. Apply high-level analytic skills (including the use of epidemiology and biostatistics) to the performance of the basic public health processes of surveillance and monitoring, assessment, program planning, program monitoring, program evaluation, policy development and advocacy.
4. Demonstrate the ability to lead efforts to design and implement an intervention aimed at a public health problem/issue.
5. Incorporate knowledge about cultural, social, behavioral and biological factors in the process of discovering and testing interventions to ameliorate public health issues or problems.
6. Demonstrate the ability to synthesize information from a variety of sources, including the research literature, in order to solve or intervene in public health problems/issues.
7. Demonstrate mastery of concepts and theories in his/her area of specialization in public health and be able to relate these concepts and theories to the resolution of a public health problem/issue.
8. Demonstrate the ability to communicate orally and in writing and present research/evaluation findings to peers in accordance with the professional standards of public health.

Doctor of Public Health

The University of Illinois offers an advanced program leading to the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree awarded under the authority of the School of Public Health (SPH). The faculty of the SPH has the primary responsibility for the educational and research aspects of the program, but instruction and participation in student guidance is also provided by faculty members of other colleges of The University of Illinois. The DrPH degree provides the student with the opportunity to obtain greater depth and breadth of knowledge in all five core public health areas than is possible in the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program. This degree is designed primarily for students whose purpose is to prepare for leadership roles in the professional practice of public health in governmental, private, or voluntary agencies. It is oriented toward the organization, direction, and evaluation of public health programs, and operational research in those areas, rather than toward academic research and teaching.

The educational goal of the DrPH degree program is the mastery of broad knowledge of the public health field, supplemented by education in the student's special interest area. DrPH candidates are prepared to undertake leadership roles in solving complex, multi-disciplinary public health problems. As a professional degree, the DrPH calls for a highly structured program with emphasis on course work in all five core public health areas, assurance of the candidate's mastery of knowledge and skills, and completion of a research dissertation. Formal courses may be supplemented by independent study conducted under the guidance of individual faculty members.

The DrPH degree program may be undertaken in the following Divisions: Community Health Sciences, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, and Health Policy and Administration. SPH encourages multidisciplinary DrPH programs, although each student must fulfill all of the requirements of at least one division.

Comparison of School of Public Health PhD and DrPH Degree Programs

Objective

PhD

- Provide students with specialized training in research and in one substantive area of public health.
- Degree is designed to develop scholars capable of conducting in-depth research and providing advanced instruction in health science areas. Training will also prepare students for research careers in governmental, private and voluntary organizations involved in health promotion or disease prevention.

DrPH

- Provide students with greater depth and breadth of knowledge in the core Public Health areas (Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, Health Policy and Administration, Community Health Sciences).
- Degree is designed for students whose purpose is to prepare for leadership roles in professional practice of public health in governmental, private or voluntary agencies.

Application and Admission Process

PhD

- Students are admitted to the Graduate College for a PhD in Public Health Sciences.
- Student must have obtained at least a baccalaureate and usually a master's degree. Some evidence of research experience and/or research potential is required.
- A minimum GPA of 4.0 or higher, where A=5, and a GRE score of at least 1000.

DrPH

- Students are admitted to the School of Public Health.
- Student must have obtained at least a baccalaureate and usually a master's degree in an area relevant to public health.
- A minimum GPA of 4.0 or higher, where A=5, and a GRE score of at least 1000.

Program of Study

PhD

- A minimum of two courses in biostatistics, one course in epidemiology, and nine hours of formal 500-level courses in the student's major area of concentration. In addition, for Divisions requiring a collateral area of study, 6 sh of 500-level courses in the collateral area must be taken. A third course in one of the three remaining core areas of public health is strongly recommended. Several courses in methodology are usually required as a prerequisite to dissertation work. A minimum of 32 sh of research is required.
- Preliminary examination is required which stresses the major areas of concentration and the collateral areas of concentration if the student's division requires it.
- No internship is required.
- Teaching experience is required.

DrPH

- Advanced-level courses are required in all five core areas of public health. Sixteen semester hours in a major area of concentration are also required, including nine hours of formal 500-level courses. A dissertation is required of all DrPH students. Students must complete a minimum of 32 semester hours of research in preparing the dissertation.
- A minimum of 6 to 10 sh of internship is required of all students who have not achieved three years of relevant and significant public health work experience either prior to or during their academic career.

- Preliminary examination is required which covers all public health core areas and the major area of concentration.

Admission Requirements

See the [SPH Catalog](#) for admissions information.

Deadline for Completing Degree Requirements

Applicants prepared to make a full-time commitment to the DrPH program are given preference over part-time students, although a limited number of the latter may be admitted. The maximum time permitted to complete the degree is six years beyond the MPH or seven years if an internship is required. The maximum time may be extended in unusual circumstances, upon request in writing, subject to approval by the Committee on Academic Progress (CAP) and the Dean of SPH. The written request should detail the reasons for the extension and the timeline for completion of the degree. The progress of doctoral candidates will be reviewed periodically. If it is determined that the student is not making satisfactory progress, a recommendation may be made to the Dean for dismissal from the program.

Program of Study

After admission to the DrPH program, the student is assigned a major advisor with interests and expertise compatible with the student's experience and goals. Together, the student and advisor agree upon an overall program of study. Ideally an integrated program of study is developed which incorporates significant elements of two or more academic divisions. Accordingly, the student should seek participation in program development by faculty members from several Divisions. Approval of the program rests with the Division Director. The student's program proposal must be submitted to the Division Director during the second semester in residence.

The program must total at least 96 semester hours (including up to 32 hours from a previous public health-related master's degree) and consists of four to five components.

1. Required advanced-level courses in the five core public health disciplines. It is assumed that all DrPH students will have satisfied the basic course requirements of the MPH degree or their equivalent.
2. Courses in a major area of concentration which provide the student with in-depth knowledge and skills in a concentration area; of which at least 9 sh must be taken at the 500-level.
3. Elective courses which broaden the student's knowledge of other SPH areas.
4. The research requirement which culminates in the dissertation thesis.
5. An internship requirement for candidates with less than three years of relevant and significant public health experience achieved either prior to matriculation or during their academic career.

Minimum Semester-Hour Requirements

Required Courses 15 sh

Major Area of Concentration 16 sh (9 sh at the 500-level)*

Elective Courses and Seminars 22-32 sh

Independent Research 32 sh

** Internship 0 or 6-10 sh

Total 96 sh

* The 595 seminar series may not be counted in fulfilling this requirement.

** Internship hours may count toward electives.

Required courses constitute an advanced level overview of the tools and scope of public health. These include one course in each of the program areas as follows:

EPID 401 Quantitative Methods in Epidemiology (2 sh)

BSTT 401 Biostatistics II (4 sh)

CHSC 500 Proseminar in Community Health Sciences (3 sh)

EOHS 461 Community Health and Consumer Protection (2 sh)

HPA 511 Organization Theory Applied to Health Programs

or HPA 522 Health Evaluation Methods (3 sh)

IPHS 660 Doctoral Integrative Seminar (1 sh)*

*Offered in alternate years in the Spring Semester only

The DrPH Dissertation

All DrPH students are required to complete a research dissertation. The student is required to demonstrate competence in conducting original research and in evaluating the investigations of others. The topic should be in an applied area, directed to problem solving in a specific public health activity or interdisciplinary program.

The dissertation may be presented in the traditional thesis format or may be one or more manuscripts of publishable quality with respect to peer-reviewed journals. The specific requirements for both are to be established by the dissertation committee in accordance with Division requirements.

The Internship

For those DrPH students with less than three years of relevant and significant public health experience, either prior to matriculation or during their academic career, an internship is required in addition to the dissertation.

Where required, the student is assigned 6-10 sh of structured, supervised activity to provide in-depth mid- to upper-level public health experience. The internship is not a "field practicum," as described in the MPH curriculum. Rather, it is a specific undertaking such as would be assigned to a practicing public health professional, differing only in that it is designed to provide broad, practical and new experiences in an area relevant to the student's future career. The experience may or may not relate to the student's dissertation.

The internship is selected jointly by the student and his or her Internship Committee, a committee of 2-3 faculty members, who also supervise the intern. A salary may be accepted. The Internship Committee plays an active role in selecting the internship site and program, and ensures the quality and adequacy of both the program and its on-site supervision by local staff. An explicit agreement on the planned activities must be achieved and formalized in a letter of agreement among the student, the committee and the agency. Members of the Committee may conduct visits to the intern at work, request consultations with the intern, and/or maintain contact with the intern in other ways.

The internship may be located in any of a variety of work situations--local, state, or federal government agencies, private foundations, hospitals or other operating health facilities, industries or businesses, labor unions, etc. As a general example, an internship of mid- to upper-level experience would address needs assessment, program planning, policy analysis, program management, evaluation and/or surveillance activities within a public health or medical setting.

Waiver of Internship Requirement

The Internship may be waived for students who achieve 3 years of relevant significant public health experience either prior to, or during, their academic career. Examples of "relevant significant public health experience" include: Division Director, US Environmental Protection Agency; Section Chief of Health Surveillance and Research, State Department of Public Health; Director of Childhood Health Screening Program, City Health Department; Director of Nursing, County Health Department; Associate Administrator, University Hospital.

Direct service/clinical practice is not usually sufficient to qualify for an internship waiver. Decisions concerning waiver of the internship requirement are made at the division level.

Examinations

Preliminary Examination

Once the student has completed all required courses, and a minimum of 32 credit hours, the student may take the preliminary examination. This examination is offered in the Fall and Spring. Grades of "B" or better must be achieved in all DrPH core courses before a student is permitted to sit for the exam. (Note: IPHS 660 is offered in alternate years in the Spring term only, so students should plan their course scheduling with the preliminary examination accordingly.) The preliminary examination is a rigorous test of the student's knowledge and understanding of core public health principles and the ability to apply them to the field generally and to the student's area(s) of interest.

DrPH preliminary examination preparation by the student should begin early. At least six to twelve months prior to the preliminary examination, the Major Advisor and the student should choose the Preliminary Examination Committee in order to provide guidance to the student in preparing for the examination. The student and committee should work together to develop a preliminary examination plan, identifying a cohesive, integrated program of study, specified readings for the exam, and the examination format. A signed copy of the plan should be distributed to the student, Dean's Office and committee members.

The Preliminary Examination Committee is comprised of the student's advisor who serves as chair, and at least one member from each of the following areas: biostatistics, epidemiology, EOHS, HPA, and CHS. Note, the student's advisor serves as the representative of the student's program area. Another member may be added representing an area of interest from outside the School. Thus, the committee will have five or six members. (Note that the Preliminary Examination Committee need not be the same as the Doctoral Committee.) Names of the committee should be forwarded by memo to the Committee on Academic Progress and the Office of the Dean.

Not less than three months prior to sitting for the exam, the student and the advisor should meet with the Preliminary Examination Committee to finalize the mechanics and timing of the exam, especially any portions of the exam which are not standardized. It is up to the individual committee to decide whether to write one integrated exam or an exam consisting of separate parts.

Within one month of completing the written portion of the preliminary examination, the entire Examination Committee is to meet to conduct the oral portion of the examination. All committee members reserve the option to ask questions during the oral examination. The oral examination may request clarification of the written response or may test the student on additional areas of knowledge not already covered in the written examination.

All committee members should review and evaluate all responses and vote on the entire exam (both written and oral), each committee member casting one vote for the student's complete performance across all sections of the exam. If two or more committee members have voted to fail the student on the written examination, the committee can in executive session decide that an oral examination is not justified. If any two members of the committee indicate that the candidate has failed the exam, the student is Failed. Should a failing grade be given to the student, the committee must recommend to the Dean whether the student should be permitted to retake the exam or whether the student should be advised to withdraw from the degree program. If, in the opinion of the committee, upon completion of the oral exam, the candidate has done relatively well in most areas, but is still lacking in some areas, the committee may give the candidate a "pass" with condition(s). The Pass will take effect once the conditions are met. It is critical that the conditions be explicitly spelled out and put in writing. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, additional readings, course work, writing of papers etc. Retaking only a portion of the exam is not an acceptable condition. The time frame in which these conditions must be met should also be stated. Conditions which are not stated at the time of the grading cannot be appended as conditions at some later date. Should the student fail to meet the criteria in the time allotted, the grade is automatically converted to Fail.

If the student is recommended for a second examination, all committee members should again review and evaluate all responses and vote on the entire second exam (both written and oral), each committee member casting one vote for the student's complete performance across all sections of the exam. If any two members of the committee indicate that the student has failed the exam a second time, the student is Failed, and dismissal from the degree program is mandated. (Dismissal may occur after

the oral exam, or before, if in the opinion of the committee an oral exam is not justified.)

If in the opinion of the committee, upon completion of the second oral exam, the candidate has done relatively well in most areas, but is still lacking in some areas, the committee may pass the student with conditions. The Pass will take effect once the conditions are met. Rules pertaining to the Conditions are spelled out above; except that under no circumstances is a retaking of the examination, or any part thereof, permitted as a condition.

Thus, it is possible for a student to be passed with condition(s) upon taking the exam a first or second time. Results of the exam, including any conditions attendant to the Pass grade, are to be reported to CAP and the Office of Student Affairs.

The new dates for the AY 03-04 DrPH preliminary examination are Thursday, November 6, 2003 (rather than mid-October); and Thursday, April 1, 2004 for the Spring 2004 biostatistics exam. The Biostatistics section of the Fall 2003 DrPH exam will be given on Thursday, November 6, 2003. The Spring 2003 examination will be given Thursday, April 1, 2004.

Selection of Dissertation Examining Committee

Upon successful completion of the Preliminary Examination, the student and Major Advisor will select a dissertation advisor and dissertation examining committee (Doctoral Committee). This committee consists of at least five members of the faculty of The University of Illinois, at least three of whom must be members of the faculty of the SPH. The committee must include at least one member who is not a member of the faculty of the student's Division in the SPH. The composition of the committee must be such that its members are capable of judging the student's competence in the major area of emphasis. Up to two members (in addition to the five or more University of Illinois faculty) may be selected from outside The University of Illinois.

Dissertation Proposal Examination (General Examination)

The Dissertation Proposal Examination (General Examination), given orally by the Dissertation Examining Committee, serves two primary functions:

- To ascertain whether the student is adequately prepared to pursue the dissertation topic. If deficiencies are discovered, additional course work may be required.
- To indicate to the student whether the Dissertation Examining Committee feels that the proposed research is feasible and whether the research should result in a useful, satisfactory product within the time and resources available.

The SPH Dissertation Proposal Examination should not put the student into a pass-fail situation. Rather, it should, when necessary, guide the student into a more feasible and/or fruitful research plan. The major advisor will notify the Division Director when the SPH Dissertation Proposal Examination has been passed. A "pass" constitutes a contract between the Examining Committee and the student that all major elements of the research proposal have been identified and agreed to.

A student may request the General Examination with the concurrence of his/her advisor at any time after passing the Preliminary Examination. It is strongly recommended that

not more than two semesters elapse following passage of the preliminary examination before approval of the dissertation proposal.

Final Oral Examination

When the student has completed his/her dissertation research, including the preparation of a final draft of the dissertation, the Final Oral Examination is administered by the student's Doctoral Committee who will evaluate and approve the content. The candidate presents his/her research findings at an open seminar of faculty and students. This may be followed by further examination in closed session, to identify any further research requirements or revision of the dissertation. The Doctoral Committee reports that the student has or has not passed the examination to the Dean's office. Finally, the Dean's Office reports the results of the examination and recommends to the SPH Executive Committee whether the candidate should be awarded the degree of Doctor of Public Health.

Preparation for Dissertation Approval

The following instructions are similar to those of the Graduate College for MS and PhD students, but are adapted to the SPH administrative structure. DrPH students should obtain from the SPH Office of the Dean a copy of the Graduate College brochure "Instructions for Completing Graduate Degree Requirements and Preparation of Theses" (also called "Thesis Manual"). This is available [online](#).

1. After the dissertation has been successfully defended at the final oral examination, and approved for content, it should be typed in final form. The format of the dissertation is the same as that required by the Graduate College. However, the title page is modified somewhat from that used by the Graduate College. Approval of format is initially the responsibility of the major advisor. The Director of the Office of Student Affairs will review the dissertation for final format approval.
2. An abstract of no more than 600 words must be included on a separate sheet or sheets. This must bear the title and authorship, and must be typed double-spaced on one side only.
3. The Graduate College approval forms will not be used. Instead, after the thesis and final examination have been approved, the major advisor will address a memorandum to the Chair of the Committee on Academic Progress using the form provided by the SPH Dean's Office. This memo is to be signed by all members of the Doctoral Committee, and the original or a photocopy will be delivered to the SPH Office of the Dean together with the original and two photocopies of the dissertation. After approval by CAP and the Executive Committee, the Dean will sign the title page and the student will be certified for graduation.
4. DrPH graduates have the opportunity to have their dissertation microfilmed and indexed by University Microfilms International. The Office of the Dean will provide information on this service to all prospective DrPH graduates. Optional services available (for a fee) include copyrighting and purchase of abstract reprints.
5. Of the copies delivered to the SPH Dean's Office, one is deposited in the SPH Reference Center and the original plus one copy are sent to the University's Library of the Health Sciences.

6. Finally, the student must be cleared for graduation through the University with the assistance of the SPH Office of the Dean. (See Graduation Procedures.)