Master of Public Health (MPH) in Behavioral & Community Health

Program Guidelines

The University of Maryland at College Park is located eight miles from the National Capitol Building in downtown Washington, D.C., and thirty miles from Baltimore, in the midst of one of the greatest concentrations of research facilities and intellectual talent in the nation.

Area resources of particular interest to graduate students of the Department of Behavioral and Community Health include the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, the National Agricultural Library, the Health Services Research Library, specific libraries of the various National Institutes of Health, the libraries of five major Universities and three medical schools in Washington, as well as the libraries of the University of Maryland Medical School, the National Center for Health Statistics, and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Department of Behavioral and Community Health
1234 SPH Building - Valley Drive
University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742
Phone: (301) 405-2464, E-mail: ksharp1@umd.edu
Revised June 2017
I. The UMCP School of Public Health

The UMCP School of Public Health is one of 13 colleges and schools on the University of Maryland at College Park campus. The mission of the College is to promote and protect the health and well being of citizens of Maryland, the nation and the world through interdisciplinary education, research, public policy and practice. This mission is carried out through the different departments and institutes that compose the School of Public Health including: Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Family Science, Health Services Administration, Kinesiology, Behavioral and Community Health, and the Maryland Institute of Environmental Health. Additionally, the School has several centers and laboratories including the Center for Health Behavior Research, the Health Behavior Assessment and Intervention Laboratory, The Center for Health Literacy, The Center for Health Equity, and The Prevention Research Center (the full list of centers is available at www.sph.umd.edu).

II. The Department of Behavioral and Community Health

The Department of Behavioral & Community Health is an autonomous department within the UMCP School of Public Health. The Department conducts professional preparation programs at both graduate and undergraduate levels. The graduate programs are designed to prepare professional health educators with specific research skills and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical setting.

Resources within the Department include the Center for Health Behavior Research, The Center for Young Adult Health and Development, the Community Health Awareness, Messages Prevention Program, the Tobacco Center for Regulatory Science and the Health Behavior Assessment and Intervention Laboratory.

III. Admission Requirements

To be considered for admission into the Master of Public Health (MPH) program in Behavioral and Community Health, applicants are reviewed with regard to the following criteria:

1. Quality of previous undergraduate and graduate course work (GPA)
2. Strength of GRE scores (taken within the previous five years)
3. Letters of recommendation from 3 persons competent to judge probability of success in graduate school and that address and the applicant’s academic capabilities and potential
4. Congruence of professional goals with those of the program, as described in the statement of goals and interests
5. Relevance of work and research experience
How to Apply:

Submit on-line (www.sophas.org) to the Schools of Public Health Application System:
- Application for admission
- GRE scores, submitted electronically to SOPHAS (UMD SPH code = 0485)
- Official undergraduate degree transcripts, with GPA of at least 3.0
- Three letters of recommendation
- A statement of goals and interests
- A resume or CV

Complete applications must be received by December 15th for best consideration for fall admission; there is no spring admission. If spaces remain, applications will be considered up until April 15th. A completed application includes all of the bulleted items above.

IV. Course of Study

A. General Information

The Master of Public Health in Behavioral and Community Health consists of 42 credit hours of graduate work including one 3 credit-hour elective for students electing to complete a project rather than a thesis and a 6-9 credit-hour capstone experience comprised of an internship and MPH project or thesis. The program can be completed on either a full- or part-time basis with classes offered in the late afternoon and evening.

Suggested sequences for completing the MPH program as a full-time student are illustrated in Section V of these guidelines, Developing Your Program Plan. All requirements must be met and the degree awarded within five years following the date of entrance into the program.

B. Required Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Courses:</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPIB 610 Foundations of Epidemiology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIB 650 Biostatistics I</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLSA 601 Introduction to Health Systems</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 665 Health Behavior I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIEH 600 Foundations of Environmental Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cognate Area Courses:

- HLTH 606 Foundations of Public Health Education 3
- HLTH 671 Public Health Communication 3
- OR-
  - HLTH 672 Public Health Informatics 3
- HLTH 710 Methods and Techniques of Research 3
- HLTH 774 Community Health Program Planning 3
- HLTH 776\(^p\) Community Health Program Evaluation 3
- HLTH 780 Community Health 3

Electives:
Zero (Thesis option) 0
One (non-thesis option) 3

Capstone Experience Credits:

- HLTH 785 Internship in Public Health 3

**Project Option**
- HLTH 786 Capstone Project in Public Health 3

-----OR-----

**Thesis Option**
- HLTH 799 Thesis 6

**Total Credits:** 42

* The elective(s) must be public health related, and no course taken prior to enrollment in the MPH program can be used.

* Students may a 400-level course as their elective; however, 100, 200, 300 and 500-level courses cannot be taken for graduate credit.

P = HLTH 710 is a pre-requisite for HLTH 776

**Electives for MPH in Behavioral and Community Health** can be taken in any department in any school/college on the UMCP campus or any other college/university in the U.S.

**Elective courses other students have recommended include:**

- HLTH 666 Health Behavior II (3 credits)
- EPIB 621 Infectious Disease Epidemiology (3 credits)
- EPIB 622 Social Determinants of Health (3 credits)
- EPIB 623 Epidemiology of Health Disparities (3 credits)
EPIB 624  Genetics in Public Health (3 credits)
EPIB 625  Epidemiology of Physical Activity (3 credits)
SPHL 698A  Fundamentals of Global Health (3 credits)
HLTH 698L  Health and Literacy (3 credits)

V. Completing Required Courses

Unless granted a waiver or substitution--in writing--from the Department, it is expected the student will complete all required courses. The internship must be completed during one of the final two semesters before graduation.

Students who have had previous graduate course work equivalent to a required course may request a waiver of that course by completing the REQUEST FOR WAIVER/SUBSTITUTION OF GRADUATE/PUBLIC HEALTH CORE COURSE REQUIREMENT FORM (available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section) or taking a placement exam. A maximum of six credit hours from another institution can be accepted without replacement (12 credit hours if earned at UMCP).

COURSE WAIVERS

- If you wish to waive EPIB 610 or EPIB 650, you must earn a 80% or higher on a waiver/placement exam which will be offered during the week of August 24th. Date: TBD
- If you wish to waive MIEH 600, you must have earned a MPH from an accredited SPH or taken a course that is 95% similar to the one offered at UMD. Follow the Core Course Waiver Procedures listed on the cover sheet (available on our department website under GRADUATE > Forms)
- If you wish to waive HLSA 601, follow the Core Course Waiver Procedures listed on the cover sheet (available on our department website under GRADUATE > Forms)
- If you wish to waive HLTH 665, follow the Core Course Waiver Procedures listed on the cover sheet (available on our department website under GRADUATE > Forms)
- If you wish to waive any other HLTH courses, follow the Course Waiver Procedures listed on the cover sheet (available on our department website under GRADUATE > Forms)

NOTE: If the student wishes to waive further course work (with faculty advisement), or if previous coursework was included in any other degree, it must be replaced with another graduate course of equivalent credit hours. All requests for waivers must be made within the FIRST semester in the program.

Requests to substitute another course, either within or outside the department, for a required course may also be made. Such requests will be considered when a student can demonstrate that the proposed course is equivalent to the required course in question and can provide a rationale to justify taking the alternative course. To request a substitution, submit the REQUEST FOR WAIVER/SUBSTITUTION OF GRADUATE/PUBLIC HEALTH CORE COURSE
REQUIREMENT FORM to your advisor. Requests for substitutions may be made at any time during the program.

Again, no more than six (6) credit hours of graduate work may be transferred from another institution. When moving from non-degree seeking status (i.e. Advanced Special Student) here at UMCP to MPH degree-seeking status, students may request inclusion of a maximum of twelve (12) credits earned at UMCP. Students seeking acceptance of transfer credits are urged to consult with their advisor and the Graduate Studies Director to ensure compliance with Graduate School guidelines. A REQUEST FOR TRANSFER OR INCLUSION OF CREDIT FOR THE MASTER’S DEGREE form (available on the Graduate School’s website, www.gradschool.umd.edu) must be completed during the student's FIRST semester in the program.

VI. Developing Your Program Plan

The MPH Program Plan is intended to help students work out a time line for completing the MPH degree. Blank program plan templates are available on-line (available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section). Students must meet with their advisors before each semester to update their program plan and obtain permission to register for classes. Once the program plan has been updated, an electronic or hard copy must be sent/given to the Graduate Studies Director, who will then clear the student to register for classes.

Students and their advisors are responsible for keeping the student’s program plan up to date. If it is not up-to-date, students risk not graduating when planned or expected.

Recommended Sequence - Full-Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Fall (12 credits)</th>
<th>Spring (9-12 credits)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 606</td>
<td>HLTH 774</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 710</td>
<td>HLTH 671*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 665</td>
<td>HLTH 780</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Core course</td>
<td>Core course</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Fall (9-12 credits)</th>
<th>Spring (9 credits)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 776</td>
<td>HLTH 785</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 672*</td>
<td>HLTH 786 or 799</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core course</td>
<td>Elective (project option only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core course</td>
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</table>

Recommended Sequence - Part Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Fall (6 credits)</th>
<th>Spring (6 credits)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 606</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 710</td>
<td>Core course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Fall (6 credits)</td>
<td>Spring (6 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Core course</td>
<td>HLTH 780</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core course</td>
<td>HLTH 774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Fall (6 credits)</td>
<td>Spring (6-9 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HLTH 672*</td>
<td>Core course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HLTH 776</td>
<td>Elective or HLTH 799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Fall (6-9 credits)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HLTH 785</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HLTH 786 or 799</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Core courses include: MIEH 600, HLSA 601, HLTH 665, EPIB 610 and EPIB 650

*Students must take either HLTH 671 or HLTH 672

VII. Independent Study (HLTH 688)

Some students elect to take independent study (IS) credits in order to fulfill an elective or to get additional research or other types of professional experience. IS credits are variable meaning they vary from 1-6 credits depending on the amount of work and time involved. IS work is designed to be led by the student with minimal guidance from the faculty sponsor. If you wish to register for IS credits, you must submit an IS Contract (available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch >GRADUATE > Important Forms) and obtain all required signatures. When submitting an IS contract, you must include an updated, approved program plan with IS credits entered in the appropriate place or simply in the notes filed if the IS credits are not fulfilling a program requirement.

VIII. Requesting Graduate School Approval of Your Degree Program and Applying for Graduation

Early in the final semester, students must submit to the Graduate School an APPROVED PROGRAM FOR THE MASTER OF [Public Health in Behavioral and Community Health] form, available on the Graduate School’s website (www.gradschool.umd.edu). The Approved Program Form will require departmental approval including signatures from the student's advisor and the Graduate Studies Director.

The Program Approval should be submitted to the Graduate School after filling out an APPLICATION FOR DIPLOMA (available on-line at www.testudo.umd.edu) early in the semester the student expects to graduate. There is a specific deadline for the diploma application. Consult DEADLINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS available on-line at www.gradschool.umd.edu, look under General Information.

VIII. Capstone Field-Based Experience and Project Requirements: General Information
In addition to an internship experience, HLTH 785 (3 credits), all Master of Public Health in Behavioral and Community Health degree students are required to complete either a field-based project (HLTH 786 MPH Project, 3 credits) or a thesis (HLTH 799, 6 credits). Please refer to the MPH Project and Thesis Guidelines for a complete description of requirements for both the MPH Project and the Thesis (these are available on-line at www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section). IMPORTANT: The project and/or thesis are capstone experiences and must be completed after all core and cognate courses have been completed. Students may begin formulating ideas for their project or thesis and meeting with their committee members while taking core and cognate courses, but the project or thesis must be completed during the final semester.

NOTE: Students who choose to complete a thesis rather than a project will likely need to allow for more than one semester to complete the thesis. It is important for students to consult with their academic advisors EARLY in their course of study and discuss the requirements and details of both options so the student may plan accordingly.

The MPH project option provides for one 3-credit-hour elective during the program. Students enroll for HLTH 786 under the section number of their faculty advisor. If you are doing an MPH project, remember you must work with your advisor/mentor and/or other committee members EARLY on in your program to select a topic and identify a second faculty member who will agree to be a part of your committee. Normally, your faculty advisor is the default chair of your project committee; however, if it is more appropriate to have another faculty member who is a better fit, be sure to notify your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies that you made this change. This new faculty member/chair will become your faculty advisor and you will register for project credits under his/her section number. The MPH Project Proposal is due at the end of the 3rd week in the semester. If the MPH project (HLTH 786) is not completed in the semester for which the student registered, an incomplete contract must be processed and students must register for at least 1 credit of Independent Study (HLTH 688) until the project is completed.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students may register for a maximum of two semesters of independent study. If the project is not complete after two semesters (in addition to the semester the student registered for the project credits), the student will be dismissed from the university without fulfilling all the degree requirements and will not earn a MPH degree.

The thesis option replaces both the HLTH 786 project and the elective with 6 credit hours of HLTH 799. The student may register for all credits of the thesis during the semester in which it is to be finished, or register for portions of the total credit hours in each semester while working on it. Again, note that a thesis is likely to require more time to complete and should therefore be started at least a year before the final semester. Normally, your faculty advisor is the default chair of your thesis committee; however, if it is more appropriate to have another faculty member who is a better fit, be sure to notify your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies that you made this change. This new faculty member/chair will become your faculty advisor and you will register for thesis credits under his/her section number.
If the thesis (HLTH 799) is not completed in the semester for which the student registered for the final portion of their thesis credits, an incomplete contract must be processed and students must register for at least 1 credit of Independent Study (HLTH 688) until the thesis is completed.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Students may register for a maximum of two semesters of independent study. If the thesis is not complete after two semesters (in addition to the semester the student registered for the thesis credits), the student will be dismissed from the university without fulfilling all the degree requirements and will not earn a MPH degree.

All independent study credits (HLTH 688) require an INDEPENDENT STUDY CONTRACT form be completed and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies. This form is available at [www.sph.umd.edu/bch](http://www.sph.umd.edu/bch) - look under the GRADUATE section.

**IX. Travel Funding**

The Department of Behavioral and Community Health is committed to assisting students who need travel funds to present their scholarship at scientific conferences. The amount of funds in the account will vary year to year with lesser amounts during lean years and greater amounts during robust years. The past three years the total amount in the fund has been $5000.00

**POLICY:**

Travel Support will only be provided for graduate students who:

- Are presenting a paper/poster (first author is preferable) at a scientific/scholarly conference and/or
- Are attending a scientific/scholarly training that is essential to their professional development and/or
- Have defended their project/thesis/dissertation proposal, are in the job market, and want to use the conference’s employment services/networking opportunities

**Eligibility for Travel Support:**

- All BCH graduate students currently enrolled and in good standing
- Approval of travel by the student’s faculty advisor
- Filing of a travel fund application that includes a copy of the paper’s abstract and proof of acceptance (if appropriate) statement of why travel is required (or verification) and completed the Graduate School’s Goldhaber Travel Award Form (if applying)

**Trip Maximums:**

- Domestic travel = $400
- International travel = $600

**Duration of Program Maximums:**

- MPH students, over the duration of their degree, a total allocation of $500
- PhD students, over the duration of their degree, a total allocation of $2,500
We **strongly encourage** that students plan carefully to use their travel funds so that they can travel throughout their duration as a graduate student.

Travel awards are constrained to cover ONLY:
- Conference registrations (Early bird is preferred)
- Cost of abstract submission
- Flights (booked sufficiently in advance to achieve good rates)
- Hotel costs
- Mileage if driving to out-of-state conference
- Poster production

All funds must be approved by the faculty advisor and the department as “appropriate and reasonable.”

**X. Capstone Project/Thesis Funding**

The Department of Behavioral and Community Health is committed to assisting students who need matching funds to complete their projects/theses/dissertations (P/T/D). The departmental project/thesis/dissertation fund will vary year to year with lesser amounts during lean years and greater amounts during robust years.

**POLICY:**

Project/thesis/dissertation (P/T/D) support will only be provided for graduate students who:
- Have matching funds from their advisor or another faculty member or significant merit as determined by the Graduate Program Committee (GPC); and
- Have successfully defended their project/thesis/dissertation proposal

Eligibility for P/T/D Support:
- All BCH graduate students currently enrolled and in good standing
- Approval of fund request by the student’s faculty advisor
- Filing of a P/T/D fund application that includes a copy of the P/T/D’s abstract, proof of matching funds, statement of why funds are requested and what specifically the funds will be spent on

P/T/D Maximums:
- MPH students = $250.00
- PhD students = $500.00

Students may apply **only once** for funds even if they receive multiple fund infusions from their advisor or another faculty member.

Examples of how P/T/D awards can be spent:
- Participants/subject incentives
• Travel costs related to data collection (e.g., gas to get to/from Baltimore for interviews with participants)
• Survey copying/production
• Undergraduate assistant

All funds must be approved by the faculty advisor and the department as “appropriate and reasonable.”

XI. MPH Program Checklist

___1. Attend NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION in August for an overview of degree requirements, academic policies, regulations, and procedures for completing the program. Review these Guidelines. Review these Guidelines. Review these Guidelines. Review these Guidelines.

___2. After consultation with advisor, if eligible, submit to the Department Director of Graduate Studies a written REQUEST FOR WAIVER/SUBSTITUTION OF GRADUATE/PUBLIC HEALTH CORE COURSE REQUIREMENT FORM for any required course and/or complete a REQUEST FOR TRANSFER OR INCLUSION OF CREDIT FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE form. Be sure these forms are submitted PRIOR to your first semester in the program.

___3. Consult with your advisor to develop your Program Plan of Study. Meet with your advisor regularly throughout your program to help you keep on track and up to date with the most recent deadlines and policies.

___4. At each pre-registration advising meeting, consult and update your Program Plan.

___5. Complete all coursework (See Recommended Sequence). NOTE: Students are required to meet with the Internship Coordinator during the semester before enrolling in HLTH785 MPH Internship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPIB 610</td>
<td>Foundations of Epidemiology</td>
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<td>HLTH 606</td>
<td>Foundations of Public Health Education</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 671</td>
<td>Public Health Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>-or-</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 672</td>
<td>Public Health Informatics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 710</td>
<td>Methods and Techniques of Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 774</td>
<td>Community Health Program Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 776</td>
<td>Community Health Program Evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HLTH 780  Community Health  3  
One (project option)  3-credit elective  3  
HLTH 785  Internship in Public Health  3  

**Project Option**  
HLTH 786  Capstone Project in Public Health  3  

-----OR-----  

**Thesis Option**  
HLTH 799  Thesis  6  

Total Credits:  42  

___6. Consult the *MPH Internship Manual* and the *MPH Project and Thesis Guidelines* (available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the Graduate Link) to plan and complete the MPH Internship and Project/Thesis capstone experience.  

DURING FINAL SEMESTER  

___7. Apply for diploma (Online application at www.testudo.umd.edu). There is a specific deadline EARLY in the semester. Consult **DEADLINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS** at www.gradschool.umd.edu, look under General Information.  

___8. Submit to the Graduate School the **APPROVED PROGRAM FOR THE MASTER OF [Public Health in Behavioral and Community Health]**. Again, there is a specific deadline early in the semester!  

___9. Three working days before final oral defense of project (5 working days for thesis); submit final version for review to Examining Committee.  

___10. Schedule and post notice of project/thesis oral defense, 3 or 5 working days in advance, depending on option chosen (project or thesis). Email announcement to Graduate Studies Director for distribution to all graduate students and faculty.  

___11. Orally defend the project or thesis and make changes if required. If the project option is chosen, please email an electronic copy of your project to the Graduate Studies Director. If the thesis option is chosen, submit thesis electronically to the Registrar’s Office.  

___12. After the student has filled out and collected the required signatures, the student shall submit to the Graduate School either the **CERTIFICATION OF MASTER'S DEGREE WITHOUT THESIS** (for MPH project – available at www.gradschool.umd.edu) or the **REPORT OF EXAMINING COMMITTEE** and the **ELECTRONIC THESIS AND DISSERTATION PUBLICATION FORM** (for Thesis – the publication form is available at www.gradschool.umd.edu) authorizing final clearance to graduate. If the student has completed the project, he/she must also submit
the MPH PROJECT EVALUATION FORM to the Director of Graduate Studies after all requested revisions have been made.

13. Students are responsible for ensuring that their thesis/project committee chair has submitted the following forms to the Director of Graduate Studies. The forms are available at www.sph.umd.edu/bch > GRADUATE > Important Forms and are due the SAME DAY as the CERTIFICATION OF MASTER'S DEGREE WITHOUT THESIS (for MPH project – available at www.gradschool.umd.edu) or the REPORT OF EXAMINING COMMITTEE and the ELECTRONIC THESIS AND DISSERTATION PUBLICATION FORM.

(a) Thesis or Project Proposal Evaluation Rubric Form

(b) Thesis or Project Final Defense Evaluation Rubric Form

(c) Capstone Competency Evaluation for Faculty Form