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 November 2019
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 45 credit hours of graduate work including 14 credits of shared cohort based courses, three (3-credit) electives, a 4-credit internship and a 3-credit integrated learning experience (capstone project). 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 Cohort Based Courses (14 credits)</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPHL 601 Core Concepts in Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPHL 602 Foundations of Epidemiology &amp; Biostatistics</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPHL 603 Public Health Data Laboratory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPHL 610 Health Program Planning, Development, Evaluation &amp; Resources</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPHL 611 Public Health Ethics</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPHL 612 Leadership, Teams &amp; Coalitions: Policy to Advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<th>BCH Cognate Courses (15 credits)</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 625 Community Assessment Through Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 665 Health Behavior I</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 672 Public Health Informatics</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 710 Methods and Techniques of Research</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLTH 780 Community Health</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Electives (9 credits)
Three 3-credit electives

Internship (4 credits)

HLTH 788 MPH Internship 4

Capstone Project (3 credits)

HLTH 786 MPH Capstone Project 3

TOTAL Credits 45

* Students may take up to two 400-level courses for their electives; however, 100, 200, 300 and 500-level courses cannot be taken for graduate credit.

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 460 Minority Health
HLTH 624 LGBT Health
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 688L Health and Literacy (3 credits)
HLTH 671 Public Health Communication (3 credits)

V. Completing Required Courses

Unless granted a waiver for substitution—in writing—from the Department, it is expected the student will complete all required courses.

Students who have had previous graduate course work equivalent to a required course may request a waiver and substitution of that course by completing the REQUEST FOR WAIVER/SUBSTITUTION OF GRADUATE/PUBLIC HEALTH 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
Course specific waiver processes:

- HLTH 665 and HLTH 625 – Waiver packet (include cover sheet, syllabus of previous course and how all UMD course competencies have been met). Submit to advisor for review. If approved, then submit to course instructor and then submit to Director of Graduate Studies.
- HLTH 710 – Waiver exam (must score 80% or higher) administered in August the week before classes begin.
- HLTH 780 – Waiver packet (include cover sheet and documentation of “community engagement” experience [e.g., Peace Corps member, previous job as community organizer]). Submit to Director of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Program Committee will review the packet.
- SPHL 611 or 612 – Waiver packet (include cover sheet, syllabus of previous course and how all UMD SPHL competencies have been met). Submit to advisor for review. If approved, then submit to course instructor and then submit to Director of Graduate Studies.
- SPHL 602 and SPHL 603 – MPH/MS/PhD students who have earned at least a “B” in both a graduate level introductory epidemiology course and an introductory biostatistics course at an accredited school of public health or other accredited program of public health within the 24 months prior to matriculating may waive out of SPHL 602. Students who have taken graduate level introductory courses in both epidemiology and biostatistics from a non-accredited program, taken the courses more than 24 months prior to matriculating, or who will serve as TA’s for SPHL 602/603, are required to pass a waiver examination for SPHL602 (70% or better) or take SPHL602*. There will be no exceptions. The waiver exam is offered twice a year. One is offered during the week (in the fall semester) before classes start to allow students to register in the event they do not pass the placement exam. The second one is given at the end of the spring semester. Students are permitted to take it once. Students will be provided a list of topics in order to prepare for the exam. SPHL602 and SPHL603 are integrated, what students learn in SPHL602 will be applied in SPHL603 using the SAS Point-and-Click program. It is recommended that PhD and MS students who must take SPHL602 also enroll in SPHL603. Course waivers may be requested using the SPH Course Waiver request form.

- If you wish to waive and substitute other required courses, see the Director of Graduate Studies for further information.

- Masters students may take a maximum of two 400-level courses in program. All electives must be taken subsequent to admission.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If the student wishes to waive any coursework, it must be replaced with another graduate course of equivalent credit hours. You must graduate with 45 credits taken/earned at the UMCP. All requests for waivers/substitutions must be made within the FIRST semester in the program.
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 timeline 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 Director of Graduate Studies, 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.

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<th>Recommended Sequence - Full-Time</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Yr 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fall (12 credits)</strong></td>
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<td>SPHL 601</td>
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<td>HLTH 672</td>
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<td>Elective and/or Internship</td>
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<td><strong>Yr 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fall (9-13 credits)</strong></td>
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<td>SPHL 620</td>
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<td>HLTH 780</td>
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<td>Elective and/or Internship</td>
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<td>SPHL 610</td>
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<td>HLTH 786</td>
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<td>Elective and/or Internship</td>
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<th>Recommended Sequence - Part Time</th>
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<td>SPHL 610</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPHL 611</td>
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<td>1-2 electives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Yr 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fall (8 credits)</strong></td>
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<td>SPHL 601</td>
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<td>SPHL 610</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPHL 611</td>
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<td>1-2 electives</td>
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6
Yr 3  
**Fall (6-10 credits)**
- HLTH 780
- HLTH 786
- Elective and/or Internship

**Spring (3-7 credits)**
- Elective and/or Internship

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.

BCH Independent Study Policy:

1. We recognize that students vary in the amount of time required to complete work;
2. We feel that the estimated number of hours of total student effort required to complete a 1-credit independent study should be 25 hours; for a 2-credit hour independent study 50 hours; for a 3-credit hour independent study 75 hours; and for a 4-credit hour independent study 100 hours;
3. These are estimated levels of effort and the **required work and deliverables for the course should be consistent with these estimates**; and these must be agreed upon by both the faculty member and the student prior to taking on the independent study.
4. These estimates notwithstanding, we recognize that individual work time varies among students assigned the same task.
5. These hour estimates are for the semester in which the course is taken. For example, a 3-credit independent study taken over Winter Term's 3 weeks should produce a weekly estimate of student hours dedicated to the course of 75 hours / 3 weeks or 25 hours per week. The same course, taken over a fifteen week semester should require 75 hours / 15 weeks or 5 hours per week.

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 788 (4 credits), all Master of Public Health in Behavioral and Community Health degree students are required to complete an integrated learning experience (ILE)/capstone project (HLTH 786, 3 credits). Please refer to the MPH Integrated Learning Experience (MPH Capstone Project) Guidelines for a complete description of the requirement (these are available on-line at www.sph.umd.edu/bch - look under the GRADUATE section).

Students enroll for HLTH 786 under the section number of their faculty advisor. You must work with your advisor/mentor and/or other committee members EARLY 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.

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 - 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 Funding

The Department of Behavioral and Community Health is committed to assisting students who need matching funds to complete their projects. The departmental fund will vary year to year with lesser amounts during lean years and greater amounts during robust years.
POLICY:

Project 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 proposal

Eligibility for Project Support:

- All BCH graduate students currently enrolled and in good standing
- Approval of fund request by the student’s faculty advisor
- Filing of a project fund application that includes a copy of the project’s abstract, proof of matching funds, statement of why funds are requested and what specifically the funds will be spent on

Project Maximums:

- MPH students = $250.00

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

Examples of how 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 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 HLTH 788 MPH Internship.

6. Consult the *MPH Internship Manual* and the *MPH Project Guidelines* (available at [www.sph.umd.edu/bch](http://www.sph.umd.edu/bch) - look under the Graduate Link) to plan and complete the MPH internship and capstone project.

**DURING FINAL SEMESTER**

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

8. Orally defend the capstone project and make changes if required. Please email an electronic copy of your project to the Director of Graduate Studies.

12. After the student has filled out and collected the required signatures, the student shall submit to the APPROVED PROGRAM FORM (available at [www.gradschool.umd.edu](http://www.gradschool.umd.edu)), U.Achieve Audit and the MPH PROJECT EVALUATION FORM (available at [www.sph.umd.edu/bch](http://www.sph.umd.edu/bch) > GRADUATE > Important Forms) to the Director of Graduate Studies after all requested revisions have been made.

13. Students are responsible for ensuring that their project committee chair has submitted the following forms to the Director of Graduate Studies within two weeks of defending the proposal and the project. The forms are available at [www.sph.umd.edu/bch](http://www.sph.umd.edu/bch) > GRADUATE > Important Forms:

   (a) Capstone Project Proposal Evaluation Rubric Form
   
   (b) Capstone Project Final Defense Evaluation Rubric Form
   
   (c) Capstone Competency Requirement Form