Academic Planning

Setting the Stage for Graduate Education
Basic degree requirements, committee structure, degree planners & concentrations

UTSPH Orientation
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Welcome to the UTSPH!

We are excited to have you here as part of our community of scholars.
UTSPH—Unique among all Schools of Public Health

- Six campuses
- Two time zones
- UTSPH spans the State of Texas
  - Texas covers >268,000 square miles
- Research, Education, Community Service
Objectives

* Describe our academic philosophy, student & faculty responsibilities
* Describe the structure & requirements of your degree program (hours, core, practicum, timing, etc.)
* Describe how to use the degree-planning form
* Describe majors, minors and breadth (doctoral students)
* Describe preliminary exam (doctoral)
Our Academic Philosophy

* Students are expected to take ownership of their academic destinies
* Faculty serve as guides for students to navigate their academic programs
* All students in a degree program are assigned an advisor
  * Match made based on your admissions goals statement
  * “Go to” faculty for course selection, academic planning, and sign off on administrative processes
Evaluation & Planning

* Visualize graduation NOW.....
  * This is the first step in your academic planning process

* Evaluation Week
  * ALL students meet with their Advisors (and committees when formed) at the end of the Fall and Spring terms.
  * Academic review & planning
  * Failure to attend evaluation meeting will result in a HOLD being placed on your continued registration
As with any relationship… Communication is KEY

* All official school communication occurs via UT email
  * Required to keep it functional & check it regularly
* Evaluations meetings are scheduled centrally
  * NO travel plans before you have your meeting unless you have made prior arrangements with your advisor / committee
Plan to Graduate NOW – Practicum Experience

* Understand the Practicum Experience (MPH/DrPH)
  * When?
    * Optimally, toward the end of your coursework
  * How?
    * Work with the Office of Public Health Research to plan your experience
    * [Public Health Practice](https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/practicum/)
  * What?
    * A work experience in the community
    * Accompanied by online seminar; ~180 contact hrs
    * Paid or unpaid
    * DIFFERENT from your usual work
Plan to Graduate NOW – The Culminating Experience

- **When?**
  - Toward the end of your course of studies
- **How?**
  - Decide upon an option
    - Written CE
    - Capstone Course
- **What?**
  - An experience that requires the synthesis of your public health learning
- **It is never too early to begin planning**
Begin thinking about your research interests from day 1 of your academic career at UTSPH

- This is an important step in building your portfolio of elective courses and research experiences that will support your ultimate research interests.

- Your dissertation is not the work of your lifetime.....it is but the first step in demonstrating your ability to conceive and carry out independent research.

- We will help you get there
Academic Planning

Programs of Study
Degrees offered at UTSPH

- MPH – Master of Public Health
  - Offered as a single degree or as part of a dual degree program (e.g., MPH/MD, MPH/MSN, etc.)
- MS – Master of Science
- DrPH – Doctor of Public Health
- PhD – Doctor of Philosophy
All Degree Programs are Competency-Based

- What you will be able to do...
- A foundation for the curriculum
- Academic progress measured against program competencies
- All competencies mastered before graduation
Core Competency Model

Interdisciplinary/Cross-cutting Competencies
- Communication & Informatics
- Diversity & Culture
- Leadership
- Professionalism
- Program Planning
- Public Health Biology
- Systems Thinking
All Discipline-based MPH majors are offered in Houston

- Customized MPH only available for dual degree MPH students in Houston

All Regional Campuses offer the Customized MPH as well as a limited number of Discipline-based majors

- MPH in Health Promotion (all RC’s)
- MPH in Epidemiology (all RC’s except El Paso)

Customized MPH has greater flexibility, but requires focus in a particular area
Availability of MS Majors

- MS in Epidemiology available at all campuses, except El Paso
- MS in Biostatistics available at Houston campus only
All of the Divisional Doctoral programs (DrPH & PhD) are available at the Houston Campus.

Regional Campuses offer the following Doctoral programs:

- PhD Epidemiology – all RC’s except El Paso
- PhD Behavioral Sciences – Austin & Dallas RC
- DrPH Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences – all RC’s
- DrPH Community Health Practice – San Antonio RC
- DrPH Environmental & Occupational Health - SARC
Within degree programs, the structures are similar in terms of total credit hour requirements and other elements particular to the degree (e.g., MPH, MS, DrPH, PhD).

- Discipline-based requirements vary within the overall structure of the degree program.

- **Degree Program Information**
  - [https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/academics/degree-programs/]
Structure of the MPH Program

* MPH Degree Program Information (https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/academics/degree-programs/master-of-public-health-mph/)
* 45 credit hour minimum requirement
* Includes 6 credits combined of Practicum & Culminating Experience (3 + 3 is usual)
* MPH core:
  * Every MPH student must complete one of each of the 5 core discipline core courses
* Each discipline offers at least one Major that includes required discipline-based Major courses
Structure of the MPH Program

- MPH core includes
  - PHM2610L - Foundations of Epidemiology
  - PH1690L - Foundations of Biostatistics
  - PHM2110L - Overview of Environmental Health or PHWM2120L – Man’s Impact on the Environment
  - PHM1110L – Social & Behavioral Aspects of Community Health
  - PHM3715L – Introduction to Management & Policy Sciences
  - A “W” in the prefix indicates an online course – available for all MPH core courses listed above
Each MPH major has a specific set of discipline-based major core requirements.

These requirements provide depth of knowledge in their respective fields.

Each MPH major has a set of recommended electives based upon the intended focus of your studies.

All students are allowed to take any available electives, provided they meet course prerequisites.

Degree planners can assist in academic planning.
MPH Culminating Experience

* Designed to synthesize and integrate your core MPH experience
  * MPH Culminating Experience Options (https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/academics/culminating-experience/)
  * Written culminating experience
  * Capstone course
    * Offered face-to-face / ITV or online*
      * *online offering varies by term
* All incoming students assigned an Academic Advisor upon admission
* Single Academic Advisor if choosing the Capstone culminating experience option
* 2\textsuperscript{nd} committee member if choosing Written culminating experience option (within or outside of school – requires approval)
* 2\textsuperscript{nd} committee member if choosing Concentration & advisor is not a member of a specified Concentration
Structure of M.S. Program (Epidemiology or Biostatistics)

- **MS Degree Program Information** (https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/academics/degree-programs/master-of-science-ms/)
- Minimum 36 credit hour requirement
- Major courses in the discipline
- M.S. in Biostatistics requires at least 1 epidemiology course if not covered in the minor
- One minor in one of the 5 public health disciplines
- Culminating experience (Thesis)
Structure of the DrPH Program

- Minimum 48 credit hour requirement
- Maximum of 9 combined credit hours of practicum & dissertation count toward the 48 credit hours requirement (minimum 39 credit hours coursework)
- Two discipline-based minors or one minor & one breadth area are required
- Satisfactory completion of at least one Epidemiology course if not already covered in the minor or breadth
Structure of the DrPH Program

- DrPH Program Information (https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/academics/degree-programs/doctor-of-public-health-drph/)
- Satisfactory completion of a preliminary examination following completion of specified courses in the major
- Satisfactory defense of the dissertation proposal
- Satisfactory completion of an original research dissertation
Structure of the PhD Program

- Minimum 48 credit hour requirement (72 credit hour requirement for direct admit to PhD available in Biostatistics & Epidemiology only)
- Maximum of 9 combined credit hours of dissertation count toward the 48 credit hour requirement (39 credit hours minimum coursework)
- Two discipline-based minors or one minor & one breadth area are required
- Satisfactory completion of at least one Epidemiology course if not already covered in the minor or breadth
Structure of the PhD Program

- PhD Program Information (https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/academics/degree-programs/doctor-of-philosophy-phd/)
- Satisfactory completion of a preliminary examination following completion of specified courses in the major
- Satisfactory defense of the dissertation proposal
- Satisfactory completion of an original research dissertation
Concentrations

- Concentrations are available to all degree-seeking students
- These options allow students to focus their elective course selections on an interdisciplinary public health field
- Consist of 9 to 14 credit hours of coursework
- Requires approval prior to adding a concentration
- Requires a committee member from the respective concentration
- Requires concentration focus in culminating experience
- Concentrations
Each degree program has a sample degree planner that is intended to facilitate your ability to plan your academic course selection & timing.

Going back to the beginning of this presentation…… talk to your Advisor.
Where to find information for academic planning

- The School & Division web pages include all of the important information regarding your program requirements
- Academics
- Other sources of information:
  - Current catalog (Fall 2012)
  - SPH Student Affairs Staff & Associate Dean
  - Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Academic Affairs Staff
Academic Integrity
Objectives

- Participate as part of the SPH community by not cheating & by reporting cheating / academic dishonesty
- Sign the honor code
- Sign the acknowledgement regarding catalog & HOOP
To cultivate a culture of honesty, integrity & respect among and between students & faculty at the UTSPH

Summary materials can be found here: Academic Integrity (https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/content/uploads/2011/12/Academic-Integrity.pdf)
The HOOP

* Handbook of Operating Procedures
* Is the source of all UTHSC policy & procedures
* Governs student, faculty & staff responsibilities and actions
* [HOOP](http://www.uthouston.edu/hoop/)
Unacceptable conduct that would subject a student to disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to the following: engaging in scholastic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting another person's work or materials for credit, taking an exam for another person, acting in a manner that would give unfair advantage to him- or herself or another student, or attempting to commit such acts;”
Mandatory Ethics Course

* PH5010 – Ethics in Public Health & Healthcare
The values for the UTSPH are based upon honesty, integrity, and mutual respect between all students, faculty, and staff. These values are applied to all endeavors that are related to activities that are carried out as members & representatives of the UTSPH. This paper, project, or exam is a reflection of my individual work, and to this end, I affirm that on my honor, I have not received nor given any aid on this submitted work. If you are unsure/unclear of how this pertains to your current assignment, please consult your professor regarding the situation-specific information before signing.
Students are bound by the requirements of the catalog in effect at the time of matriculation

UTSPH Catalog (https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/academics/course-information/catalogs/)

Responsibility for knowing applicable rules and requirements is a student responsibility

Sign form
Last but not least….

* Enjoy yourselves!
* Learn from one another
* Experience as much as you can while you are at the UTSPH
* Closing the loop…..you are responsible for getting as much out of your experience here as you can
  * Our job is to help you accomplish this task