GUIDE TO THE MD/MPH DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM

The University of Texas School of Public Health
And
BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Introduction

The MD/MPH Program between Baylor College of Medicine and The University of Texas School of Public Health aims to prepare a new generation of health professionals to integrate medical and public health skills in their future professional lives as practitioners, researchers or administrators. The goal is to teach students the skills to improve population health overall.

The dual degree program provides an avenue for students to concurrently enroll in both degree programs so that duplication in course content is minimized, academic interactions are more efficient, and the time and costs incurred are reduced compared to earning the degrees independently. Students in the MD/MPH dual degree program are separately enrolled in both Universities. Progress and academic standing in one program does not affect progress in the other program, although shared credit is only granted for courses satisfactorily completed. In some circumstances, students may take a year away from their studies. Alternatively, if students complete the required core courses (typically 16 hours) and are unable to complete other program requirements, they may opt to withdraw from the MPH program and earn the Certificate in Public Health.

University Acronyms and/or Links

UTHSCH— UT Health Science Center at Houston http://www.uthouston.edu/

UTSPH – UT School of Public Health http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/

SPH Office of Student Affairs http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/sservices/current.aspx

Baylor College of Medicine: http://www.bcm.edu/
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Key Contacts

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Email: gill@bcm.edu
MD/MPH Dual Degree Program Committee
Each dual degree program has a committee to provide oversight. The Program Committee consists of two faculty representatives from each institution and the respective Associate Deans of Academic Affairs (as ex officio members). Student representative(s), key faculty and program coordinators from each of the participating campuses are consulting (non-voting) members.

The Program Committee:
- Ensures that policies for the dual degree program retain the academic integrity of both degrees;
- Promotes a variety of inter-institutional exchanges, including adjunct faculty; appointments, shared teaching, collaborative research, and faculty enrichment;
- Completes an annual evaluation and prepares a report for each school.

The evaluation of the dual degree program is completed and submitted in November of each year and includes the following:
- Review of shared credit courses for any changes in course numbers, credit hours, etc.;
- Table of students in the program (name, matriculation data (mo, yr), progress (# of MPH credit hours, other milestones), graduation date (mo/yr), title of culminating experience);
- Issues that have arisen during the year and an explanation of the resolution or plan; and

Voting Members (Representatives):
Linda Piller, MD, MPH
Ann Gill, DrPH, MS
Steven Abrams, MD

Ex-officio Members:
Linda Lloyd, PhD (UTSPH, ex officio)
Mary Ann Smith, PhD (UTSPH, ex officio)

The selection and appointment is made by the voting members of the Coordinating Committee. Applicants must be in good academic standing. Recommendations of fellow students and program staff will be considered in making the appointment decision. The term of the appointment is to be determined by each Coordinating Committee. Appointment as the class Student Representative may preclude the student from election as a class officer in one or both schools. Student Representatives may resign at any time or may be removed from this position.
by the voting members of the Coordinating Committee for failure to remain in good academic standing or other reasons relevant to the student’s performance.

**Position Description**

Duties of student representatives will include the following:

- Serve as official liaison from the MD/MPH dual degree program to other Class Officers.
- Attend MD/MPH dual degree program Coordinating Committee meetings (as scheduling permits).
- Facilitate students’ communication with program staff and faculty.
- Assist in planning and scheduling MD/MPH dual degree program activities.
- Volunteer or recruit other MD/MPH dual degree students to assist at various official meetings and events.
- Assume other duties as appropriate and as the student’s time permits.

**Program Plan**

A typical program plan for dual degree students is attached. Upon completion of the five core courses, a student may receive a Certificate in Public Health. Student opting for a certificate must withdraw from the MPH program.

**Financial Aid and Scholarships**

**Financial Aid**

Students enrolled in the MPH program prior to matriculation at Baylor College of Medicine are eligible for financial aid at UTHSCH. However, students are advised to consider a loan since financial aid has an annual limit. Thus, any financial aid, including scholarships, obtained through UTHSCH is subtracted from the aid available at Baylor College of Medicine.

Availability of financial aid to cover MPH expenses prior to attending Baylor College of Medicine should be discussed with UTHSCH Student Financial Services. Eligibility requirements at UTHSCH for student financial aid include: at least half time enrollment status (3 hours in summer, 5 hours in fall and spring); US citizen or eligible noncitizen; good academic standing; satisfactory progress as defined by SPH; and not be in default on a student loan or owe a refund on a federal grant. Applications are processed on a first come, first served basis as determined by the federal compute date of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is a needs-based analysis used by the U.S. Department of Education to determine financial aid eligibility.

Students can apply to UTHSCH for emergency loans to help pay for tuition. This loan is short term and must be paid back within 90 days. For additional information, please visit [http://sfs.uth.tmc.edu](http://sfs.uth.tmc.edu).
Scholarships
Students with outstanding academic credentials will automatically compete for a limited number of scholarships during the UTSPH admissions process. The applicant does not need to do anything beyond the MD/MPH dual degree program application to be considered for this scholarship. Scholarship recipients are notified of the award along with the letter of admission. Scholarship funds ($3000) may be used to offset tuition and fees through the summer following the first year of school. The Office of Student Affairs receives the list of scholarship recipients and applies tuition and fees charges to the scholarship account.

Financial Aid Contact at UTSPH:

Wanda Williams (UTSPH/UTHSCH)
Director, Financial Services
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
7000 Fannin Street, Suite 2000 Houston, Texas 77030
Tel: (713) 500‐3871
Email: Wanda.K.Williams@uth.tmc.edu

Admissions

Applicants are reviewed independently by each school. Admission to one program does not guarantee admission to the other, and neither admission depends on the other. Admissions for dual degree students follow the deadlines and requirements of each school.

The deadline for the MD/MPH dual degree program application is March 1st.

The UTSPH application includes a one-page goal statement. It is very important that this essay specifically address the applicant’s experience and interest in combining public health and medical training. The GRE requirement may be waived for MPH applicants who are accepted to a medical school. Applicants who, at the time of their UTSPH application, have not been interviewed or received an invitation for an interview at Baylor College of Medicine must submit GRE scores in order to be considered for admission to the UTSPH. Students accepted in the program will receive two letters of admission from the UTSPH, one to the MPH program and a second to the dual degree program.

Although they are not required for all applicants, the following documents provide information that the Admissions Committee often finds helpful in evaluating an applicant's potential for success at the UTSPH:

- Curriculum Vitae or Resume, and
- Copies (not originals) of published papers, reports, etc. to serve as a writing sample.
UTSPH Application

All documents must be received by the Registrar's Office before the application deadline. To apply, students should use the following link to the dual degree application. **Dual degree students should NOT use the SOPHAS application process!** Also, both primary and secondary email accounts should be listed to ensure timely communication.

http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/Admissions/appformslist.htm#SPH

Supporting Documents

Supporting documents may include letters of recommendation and transcripts), as well as additional materials, such as CV or publications, and should be sent to the UTHSC-H Registrar’s Office.

**Important!** Applicants using express mail should use the address provided below and not the one on the application, which is only for regular mail. Using the wrong address may result in significant delays for the application and additional costs!

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
Office of the Registrar
PO Box 20036
Houston, TX 77225

Notification of Admissions Decisions

The timeline between receipt of the letter of acceptance to the dual degree program and registration for classes may be very short. Therefore, it is important to send all of the required materials to the UTSPH (see registration checklist below) as soon as possible. It is important that the applicant’s correct email addresses are provided as well as home and cell phone numbers. Students who have not registered in time for the next session may not be able to complete their SPH coursework as planned.

**MPH Program: New Student Registration**

When you enroll at the UT School of Public Health, be sure to complete all of the forms in the Registration Checklist below and return them to the appropriate offices. Specific instructions for each item are listed following the checklist.

For questions, please contact one of the following:
UTSPH Office of Student Affairs
Tel: 713-500-9032
Email: saffairs@uth.tmc.edu

UT Health Science Center at Houston
Tel: 713-500-3361
Fax: 713-500-3356
www.uthouston.edu
Registration Checklist:
- Email Response Form to SPH dual degree coordinator
- Criminal Background Check
- International student check-in (only applies to students on Visa)
- Immunization Form
- Residency Status Form (you are automatically considered a non-resident until you submit form)
- Verification of health insurance status (you are automatically billed for insurance unless you submit form)
- Register for classes (minimum 3 hours – register on UTLINK)
- Pay tuition and fees (UTLINK)
- Activate UTSPH email address
- Access classes on Blackboard

Response Form
The UTSPH response form lets the UTSPH know whether or not you wish to enroll in the School of Public Health for the MD/MPH dual degree program. This is separate from and unrelated to the Baylor College of Medicine application and acceptance. The response form is included along with the letter of admissions and verifies that the student will enroll in the school. Submit the response form to ensure your place in the degree program. Be sure to indicate when you intend to begin your MPH program coursework, so that you can receive updated information from the appropriate UTSPH campus.

Criminal Background Check
The UTSPH requires that a criminal background screening process be completed and submitted by all new students admitted to a degree program prior to enrollment for their first term of study. For more information, see the Criminal Background Check webpage: http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/detail.aspx?id=13125&terms=background.

Immunization Form
Immunization records must be on file in the registrar’s office at both schools prior to matriculation. All students must complete the UT-Houston Medical School Health Service Immunization Form prior to MPH registration and fax it to UT Health Student Services at (713) 500-0605. You will also have to complete the immunization record for Baylor College of Medicine (which may be different from the UT Health Student Services Immunization Record), so completing both forms at the same time will reduce your trips to the doctor’s office.

Note: Immunization requirements for the two schools may differ.

MPH form (Houston): http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/Forms/immuform.pdf

MD form (Baylor College of Medicine): http://www.bcm.edu/ohp/index.cfm?pmid=3941

Residency Status Form
All students must complete the residency questionnaire prior to registration and fax it to UTHSCH Registrar at (713) 500-3356.
Students may waive the out-of-state tuition if they have a qualifying scholarship. This waiver is only good for one year at which time they must present another copy showing they received the scholarship again. Going to school in the state of Texas for one year does not change residency status. You must show intent to live here, i.e. buy a house, etc. Residency status at both schools (Baylor College of Medicine and UTSPH) must be the same.

**Verification of Health Insurance Status**

Health insurance is required of all Health Science Center students. The Board of Regents has authorized the assessment of a health insurance fee for each semester to each student who cannot provide evidence of continuing coverage under another approved plan. The waiver form may be obtained from the Registrar's Office, Auxiliary Enterprises, or by clicking on this link: Health Insurance Waiver form. You can obtain details on the insurance plan in the Auxiliary Enterprises office. Their phone number is 713-500-8400.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The form must be submitted no later than the 12th class day of the Spring and Fall term, and the 4th class day of the Summer term. If you do not take action by the deadline, you MUST pay the insurance assessed to you. For more information on student insurance see: [http://ae.uth.tmc.edu/info/insurance.html](http://ae.uth.tmc.edu/info/insurance.html)

**Register for Classes**

- Plan to register as early as possible – courses fill up quickly and this will allow you time to address any holds on registration that you may have. Do NOT wait until the last day to register!
- You must register for a minimum of three credit hours.
- View academic calendar and registration schedule: [http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/SOC/registration_index.html](http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/SOC/registration_index.html)
- For course selection, go to [http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/SOC/Class_Search.asp](http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/SOC/Class_Search.asp). Under “Course Search” choose School of Public Health, choose the correct term (fall, spring, summer), and choose “All Courses” (at the appropriate campus).
- Classes with a "Y" before the call number require faculty approval for registration. Students registering for a class that requires approval must contact the primary instructor of the class and obtain an approval code.
- View course descriptions for detailed information about course content.
- To register, students must use the UTLINK website. For step-by-step registration instructions: [http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/Registration/UTLINK_Instructions.pdf](http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/Registration/UTLINK_Instructions.pdf)

**Note:** If the Add/Drop option is not under the “courses” tab in UTLINK, there may be a hold on the account. Check with the registrar to find out if you have holds on your account.

**Pay Tuition and Fees**

MPH tuition varies with the number of hours taken in each semester. As stated in the agreement, some fees are waived after the student matriculates into both degree programs. However, it should be noted that no fees are waived for students taking courses at the UTSPH prior to matriculation to the Baylor College of Medicine. For the tuition and fees schedule for the UTSPH, please see: [http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/SOC/tuition_index.html](http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/SOC/tuition_index.html)
**Note:** Check to make sure the application fee is included on the tuition bill.

Tuition and fees may be paid online by credit card at UT-Link OR by check at the Bursar’s office (UCT 2240, UT Houston HSC, P.O. Box 20036, Houston, TX 77225).

Check must reach the Bursar’s Office before the deadline. **Registration will be cancelled for all students who have not paid by the 12th day of class.** For fee payment deadlines and installment payment plans, see: http://registrar.uth.tmc.edu/Registration/Acad_Reg.html#PayMethod Back to Table of Contents

**Activate UTSPH Email Address**
Although Baylor College of Medicine will provide an email account, you will also receive a UTSPH email account and will be responsible for maintaining both. Email addresses at UTSPH consist of first name, middle initial, followed by the last name, e.g., Julie Elizabeth Doe – julie.e.doe@uth.tmc.edu.

After a student pays tuition, 48 hours is needed to set up the UTSPH username and password. For assistance with problems, contact the Houston IT Help Desk at 713-500-4848.

**Accessing Classes on Blackboard**
After registration for an online class and after an email UTSPH address has been obtained, students can access course information via Blackboard within 24-48 hours. Blackboard login at http://bb.uth.tmc.edu/index3.html requires a UTSPH email username and password. Students should explore this website and become familiar with its links before the class begins.

**UTSPH New-Student Orientation**
Students who enroll in the SPH after starting at Baylor College of Medicine are required to attend one of the regularly scheduled UTSPH orientations before registering for classes.

**MPH Studies**

**General Information**
The MPH portion of the dual degree program consists of 45 semester credit hours from the UTSPH plus additional hours of specified shared course credits from Baylor College of Medicine. Students must complete one core course in each of the five disciplines in addition to other electives, a practicum, and culminating experience. Both schools have a student information website, (UTSPH - http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/ and Baylor College of Medicine - http://www.bcm.edu/) that provides links to the academic calendar, course schedules, graduation information, etc.

**Note:** Certain links contain information that may not apply to the dual degree program.

**Requirements**
Students should refer to the SPH Catalog in effect at the time of matriculation for a listing of core courses and other graduation requirements (http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/uploadedfiles/catalog.pdf).
Practicum
Students should review practicum requirements (www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/practica/default.aspx?id=1255) soon after matriculation. The practicum requires an online practicum orientation, identification of a faculty sponsor/advisor, and completion of a learning contract signed by the faculty sponsor and the site preceptor. Students registering for practicum hours should manually enter 3 hours because the registration program defaults to 9 hours, resulting in incorrect registration and increased tuition.

The culminating experience may also be built upon the practicum experience or a similar practice-based experience. For information on using the practicum as the culminating experience, view: www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/practica/default.aspx?id=2549.

Culminating Experience (Thesis and Other Options)
Students are required to complete a culminating experience as part of the requirements for graduation. A special information session on the culminating experience is held for students.

Concentration Information
Optional Concentrations:
- Global Health (Interdivisional)
- Health Disparities (Interdivisional)
- Leadership (Interdivisional)
- Maternal and Child Health (Interdivisional)

Concentrations consist of a curriculum designed to address a problem or area of public health concern. Concentrations may be added or discontinued to meet the needs of the public health community.

Admissions Policy
Students at any SPH campus (Houston, Dallas, Brownsville, San Antonio, El Paso or Austin) may elect to add the concentration to their degree plan. Election of the concentration requires the following:

1. Completion of the admissions request*** may require approval of the student’s advisor and or a member of a specific concentration faculty;
2. The concentration directors review the request for consideration and approval; and
3. A copy of the signed admissions request document is forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs. Copy is available in the student records.

***you need to do this very soon

Certificate Information
Non-degree programs provide students who do not wish to seek a formal degree an opportunity to take School of Public Health courses for credit. A separate application procedure is required for admission as a non-degree student. The application and a description of the process may be found on the UTHSC-H registrar’s website. Admission to a non-degree program does not assure subsequent admission to a degree program. Persons interested in applying to a degree program must follow the usual application procedure.
The non-degree student is allowed to take up to 16 semester credit hours of School of Public Health courses, including non-degree students associated with a formally-recognized educational collaboration or the Certificate of Public Health program. These courses (i.e. up to 16 semester credit hours of courses may be applied to the required credit hours of a UTSPH degree program provided that a grade of A or B was earned; the course was completed within five years of matriculation into the degree program; and the applicant meets all the requirements for admission to the graduate degree program.

Optional Certificate Programs:
- Certificate in Public Health
- Certificate in Public Health Informatics
- Certificate in Maternal and Child Health
- Certificate in Health Disparities

Course Location Availability
MPH courses may be taught at the various campuses, via ITV, and or online. See course schedule for details.

MPH Academic Advising – the Student Advisory Committee
Students newly admitted to the dual degree program are assigned two advisors from the UTSPH which make up the Student Advisory Committee.

The role of the Student Advisory Committee is to help the student select coursework, a practicum site, and a culminating experience topic. The committee also works with students in pursuit of a specific concentration and assists students in getting the most out of their MPH experience.

Student Evaluations
A student evaluation meeting (required attendance) is held at the end of the fall and spring semesters. A scheduled time is e-mailed to the student several weeks before evaluation week, and it is the student’s responsibility to reschedule well in advance if there is a conflict. Students track academic progress by adding to the MPH Competencies Form and updating the goal statement prior to the evaluation meeting. Students keep a copy of the updated form and provide a copy to the advisory committee for review and placement in the student file. For the first two years of the dual degree program, evaluation sessions are held in a group setting. The MPH Competencies Form can be downloaded from
www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/uploadedFiles/Services/sservices/Current/MPHCompetenciesForm.doc.

Leave of Absence
Students must complete the MPH within five years of matriculation. Students may, however, apply for a leave of absence from the MPH program for one year, and, in exceptional cases, a second year of leave may be granted. Students continue to earn shared credits toward the MPH for their satisfactorily completed MD coursework, but extend the amount of time to complete the MPH. This may allow some students to “take a break” from the MPH if their medical school coursework or schedule is too demanding. Planning ahead is crucial because the SPH does not grant retroactive Leave of Absences. To take a leave of absence, you will need to:
1) Notify Kay Bartholomew, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

2) Write a letter indicating your plans, sign it, scan it, and email to your advisor for their signature. An example of what you need to state is as follows:

“I would like to formally request a leave of absence from the School of Public Health for _______ semesters. The primary reason for my request is to __________________ (or for medical reasons).

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

__________________

Advisor’s Signature ______________________________

(1) Fax or scan and email the signed letter to Dr. Bartholomew, Leona.K.Bartholomew@uth.tmc.edu a week before this semester begins (for the one you are starting the LOA).

*Please do not send a regular email with this note. The hand-written signatures are required.

MD/MPH Degree plan and shared credit courses

Shared Credit Hours
Admission to a dual degree program confers eligibility for shared credits. The UTSPH will count up to ten semester credit hours in approved shared credit courses taken in another school’s curriculum. The following courses have been approved as shared credit courses.

Graduation
Graduation is separate for each school. Students who are within one semester of graduation (preferably sooner) should refer to http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/tabDetail.aspx?id=13221&terms=graduation for important deadlines and step-by-step instructions. Contact Student Affairs at (713) 500-9032 or saffairs@uth.tmc.edu for questions concerning graduation.

A sample degree plan follows:
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Approximate Date</th>
<th>Medical School Semester</th>
<th>Shared Credit</th>
<th>Baylor Milestones</th>
<th>MPH Academic Plan</th>
<th>UTSPH Credit</th>
<th>Total Credits</th>
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<tr>
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<td>May-August (exams mid August)</td>
<td>Summer before Medical School</td>
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<td>Biostatistics (online) PH1610</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>MSI</td>
<td>Mid July</td>
<td>Medical School Orientation (retreat)</td>
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<td>August-December</td>
<td>Fall I (Blocks 1-3) IPS, PPS</td>
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<td>January-June</td>
<td>Spring I (Blocks 4-6) IPS, PPS</td>
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<td>May-August (exams mid August)</td>
<td>Summer Courses</td>
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<td>Intro to Epidemiology (online) PH 2610</td>
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<td>MSII</td>
<td>August-December</td>
<td>Fall 2 (Block 7, 8) IPS, PPS</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Clerkships Rotations, CABS</strong></td>
<td><strong>PH 2120 Man's Impact on the Environment (online)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>May-August (exams mid August)</td>
<td><strong>Summer Courses</strong></td>
<td><strong>PH 1110 Social and Behavioral Aspects of Community Health (online)</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>MSIII</strong></td>
<td>July-December</td>
<td><strong>Fall Clerkship Rotations, LACE Pathway</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MSIII</strong></td>
<td>January-June</td>
<td><strong>Spring Clerkship Rotations, LACE Pathway</strong></td>
<td>Step 1, CPX</td>
<td>No Courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>May-August (exams mid August)</td>
<td><strong>LACE Public Health Elective (fulfills practicum requirement)</strong></td>
<td>Must enroll in PH Practicum when taking LACE Public Health Elective</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>August-May</td>
<td><strong>Attend year at UTSPH</strong></td>
<td>Course work at UTSPH according to discipline degree plan. May include make-up for missed courses from above or practicum if not in a LACE pathway.</td>
<td>13+</td>
<td>13+</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>MSIV</strong></td>
<td>July-December</td>
<td><strong>Fall Clerkship Rotations</strong></td>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td><strong>PH 9998 Culminating Experience if not completed in Year 4</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSIV</td>
<td>Jan-May</td>
<td><strong>Spring Clerkship/Courses/Apex</strong></td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td><strong>PH 9998 Culminating Experience if not completed in year 4</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13**</td>
<td>35+</td>
<td>45 to 48</td>
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*Elective Course** **Note, only 12 hours of shared credit are awarded to the UTSPH MPH degree**