



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

Arnold School of Public Health

Department of Exercise Science

**Master of Public Health
in Physical Activity and Public Health**

Handbook

Fall 2022

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Introduction

Description of the Program

Our MPH in Physical Activity in Public Health is the first academic program in the nation designed to prepare professionals to increase physical activity and improve health in populations.

As physical inactivity becomes the norm for an increasing proportion of the population, the risk of chronic disease is at an all-time high. Physical inactivity is a risk factor for chronic diseases including coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes, and certain cancers. Only 54.2% of the adult population meets the current federal guidelines for aerobic activity, and only 23.2% of adolescents meet the physical activity guidelines ([Healthy People 2030](#)). By 2030, a goal for the United States is to increase the proportion of adults who meet the aerobic physical activity guideline to 59.2% and to increase the proportion of adolescents who meet the aerobic physical activity guideline to 30.6% ([Healthy People 2030](#)). Achieving these goals will require a coordinated public health approach. Thus, the promotion of physical activity for people of all ages has become a top priority in public health.

As the first academic program in the nation designed to prepare professionals to increase physical activity and improve health in populations, the [Master of Public Health in Physical Activity and Public Health \(MPH-PAPH\)](#) addresses this need directly. Persons who successfully acquire this degree will have the essential knowledge, skills, and experiences to play an integral role as a physical activity specialist on interdisciplinary teams whose primary focus is the promotion of physical activity and the prevention of chronic disease in public health settings. At the same time, graduates of the program will meet all accreditation requirements of a general MPH, and thus will have broad public health training, affording them future flexibility in pursuing employment.

The [Department of Exercise Science](#) in the [Arnold School of Public Health](#) offers the MPH-PAPH for health professionals who have a career interest in physical activity. The program provides students with unique opportunities to:

- Study issues germane to physical activity and public health,
- Acquire appropriate background knowledge and experience in an epidemiological approach to public health problems as they relate to physical activity, and
- Develop skills integral to the design, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs that are intended to promote increased physical activity in populations.

The MPH-PAPH is also designed for professionals working in physical activity programs within community or government settings. These settings may be city, county, or state health departments, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), health maintenance organizations, medical clinics, etc. The MPH-PAPH also offers physicians and PhD research scientists an opportunity to learn about public health applications for physical activity.

Graduates of this program will:

- Understand physical activity as it relates to core functions of public health,
- Develop research-based knowledge about relationships between physical activity and health,
- Use accepted public health methods to evaluate the impact of physical inactivity on communities and identify the benefits of participation in physical activity at community levels,
- Acquire skills needed to develop, implement, and evaluate physical activity interventions in a variety of community settings,
- Understand how social and behavioral theories are used in programs designed to promote physical activity in community settings, and

- Work with public health educators and other professionals to promote physical activity in diverse populations.

With the MPH-PAPH degree, there are many career opportunities in the areas of:

- Health and wellness
- Active transportation to school
- Corporate wellness
- Transportation and community design
- Parks and recreation
- Chronic disease prevention
- Community-based physical activity interventions
- Policy and environmental change
- Preparation for working in local and state health departments

Career Opportunities

Employment opportunities for graduates with an MPH in Physical Activity and Public Health are many and diverse. They include:

- **Health department settings** - Nearly all states in the United States have physical activity practitioners who work at local, district, and state levels.
- **Federal agencies** - The US Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC have a commitment to the promotion of physical activity in the US population. The National Institutes of Health sponsor many physical activity programs among their various Institutes.
- **Prevention research centers** - There are 25 such centers housed in universities throughout the United States. The centers provide health promotion and evaluation programs to the community, conduct research, and develop linkages between community, state health department, and university programs.
- **Professional organizations** - There are numerous professional organizations and societies with a focus on physical activity and health. Examples include the American College of Sports Medicine and the Physical Activity Alliance.
- **Commercial organizations** - Many commercial organizations, (e.g., book publishers, national strength and conditioning organizations, hospitals, nursing homes, health and fitness clubs, and employee wellness organizations), market exercise and physical activity products and may employ graduates with an MPH degree in physical activity and public health.
- **Nonprofit organizations** – Many local, state, and national nonprofit organizations implement physical activity programs, or provide technical assistance and resources to others who implement physical activity programs. These include the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, National Center for Older Adults, National Center for Biking and Walking, America Walks, National Safe Routes to School Program, and statewide or community-based physical activity coalitions.

Recent graduates of the MPH-PAPH program are in mid-level positions, such as coordinator for the Safe Routes to School program in South Carolina, health educator for chronic disease prevention at the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and health educator of campus wellness at the University of South Carolina.

GUIDELINES FOR MPH-PAPH STUDENTS

Admission

1. Students seeking admission to the MPH-PAPH program must first meet the general requirements of the Graduate School of the University of South Carolina. Requirements for admission are:
 - A four-year baccalaureate degree or its equivalent in exercise science, kinesiology, biology, chemistry, pre-med, nutrition, health sciences, physiology, public health, physical therapy, medical doctor, from an accredited institution
 - Academic prerequisites: human anatomy and physiology
 - Grade point average of 3.00/4.00 or higher
 - GRE scores are optional
 - For international applicants, a satisfactory score on the [Test of English as a Foreign Language](#) (TOEFL) (minimum score of 80 internet-based, 230 computer-based, or 570 paper-based) or the [International English Language Testing System \(IELTS\)](#) Academic Course Type 2 Exam (minimum overall band score of 6.5). This requirement may be waived for applicants who have earned a prior degree from a US institution.
2. Application requirements are:
 - Resume or CV
 - Statement of purpose and objectives describing your academic interests, relevant work experiences, academic/professional goals and objectives which demonstrates a broad educational background that indicates public health interests and experiences in physical activity
 - At least three letters of recommendation from academic and/or professional sources
 - Official transcripts from **all** schools or colleges previously attended
 - Non-US institution transcripts must be verified by World Education Services (WES) or equivalent evaluation service.
 - GRE scores are optional
 - TOEFL or IELTS scores are required for those whose native language is not English

Application Process

- Applicant submits the application through the [Schools of Public Health Application Service](#) (SOPHAS). **We accept applications for the Fall semester only. The deadline for fall enrollment is noted on our webpage.**
- The Arnold School of Public Health [Office of Graduate Student Services](#) forwards the completed SOPHAS application to the department of exercise science.
- Members of the MPH-PAPH admissions and curriculum committee (including the graduate director) review the completed application. The committee discusses the application and determines the admission recommendation.
- The MPH-PAPH graduate director submits the recommendation to the [Graduate School](#), which makes the final admission decision and officially informs the student of his/her admission status. As indicated in the [Graduate Academic Bulletin](#), "admission is determined by the dean of the Graduate School, upon the recommendations of the department or college concerned, on the basis of an appraisal of the credentials submitted."

Only upon official notification from the Graduate School is the application process complete. Once accepted by the Graduate School, all students should follow the directions for "Getting Started"

and submit immunization and citizenship forms before being able to register for classes. SC residents will need to submit the Legal Residency form to receive in-state tuition.

[Self-Service Carolina](#) is the portal for students to handle all personal, academic, and financial interactions with the university. Students should set up their account using the ID's provided in the application status page. Once in Self-Service Carolina, students will be able to access university email, view the course schedule, register for classes, view bills and financial aid, etc.

Advisement

- After official notification of acceptance from the Graduate School, the department of exercise science will send the admitted student's information about orientation activities and the process for advisement.
- All students must be advised prior to registering for any term.
- The graduate director, Dr. Jennifer O'Neill, will advise incoming students during the summer prior to the fall semester.
- The graduate coordinator for the department of exercise science, Barbara Reager, can be reached at (803) 777-9333, breager@mailbox.sc.edu, Room 220 of the Public Health Research Center, 921 Assembly Street.
- The student's file is retained in the department of exercise science.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The following section describes the curriculum requirements and progression guidelines for the MPH-PAPH degree program. These guidelines should be used, with the advice of the student's faculty advisor, to facilitate successful progression through the graduate program.

The general progression through the program is outlined below:

- Begin course work
- Develop a [Program of Study](#) (MPOS)
- Complete course work (i.e., required courses and electives)
- Complete the applied practice experience
- Complete the capstone course
- Successfully complete a comprehensive examination as part of the capstone course.

The program can be completed in two years of full-time enrollment. Master's students must complete all degree requirements within a period of six years as specified by the Graduate School.

The student and faculty advisor develop a program of study ([MPOS](#)). This form must be filed with the Graduate School via the department of exercise science. Changes to the program of study must be completed using the [Program of Study Adjustment](#) (GS43) form and must be on file prior to application for graduation.

MPH-PAPH Curriculum

A total of 45 credit hours is required for the completion of this degree. The MPH programs in the Arnold School of Public Health include a 16-credit hour multidisciplinary, integrated core curriculum based on the [Council on Education for Public Health's \(CEPH\)](#) 12 foundational knowledge learning objectives and 22 foundational competencies (see Appendices I and II).

In addition to the foundational competencies, each MPH program is built around concentration-specific competencies. The MPH-PAPH competencies are as follows:

- Explain the physiological responses to an acute bout of exercise and the physiological adaptations to chronic aerobic and resistance exercise.
- Explain the health effects of physical activity and the scientific basis for current public health physical activity guidelines for persons in varying demographic groups.
- Apply evidence-based strategies to develop a physical activity intervention.
- Evaluate an evidence-based physical activity intervention.
- Differentiate among and appropriately use measurement and surveillance techniques to assess physical activity at the population level.

Academic Coursework

Public Health Core Courses (16 credit hours)

<i>Course #</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
PUBH 724	Quantitative Methods for Public Health Practice I	3
PUBH 725	Quantitative Methods for Public Health Practice II	3
PUBH 726	Qualitative Methods for Public Health Practice	3
PUBH 730	Public Health Systems, Policy, & Leadership	3
PUBH 735	Practical Applications of Public Health Planning	4

Physical Activity and Public Health Core (18 hours)

<i>Course #</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
EXSC 780	Physiology of Exercise	3
EXSC 700	Physical Activity & Health: Epidemiology, Research, & Practice	3
EXSC 710	Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity	3
EXSC 754	Community-based Physical Activity Interventions	3
HPEB 710	Evaluation of Health Promotion Programs	3
EXSC 732	Measurement of Body Composition & Associated Health Behaviors	3

Elective (3 hours)

Applied Practice Experience and Capstone Course (8 hours)

<i>Course #</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
EXSC 796	PH Capstone Course	2
EXSC 797	Public Health Practice	6

Suggested Electives (3 credit hours)

<i>Course #</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
BIOS 757	Intermediate Biometrics	3
EPID 730	Public Health Surveillance Systems	3
EPID 744	Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology	3
EPID 746	Cancer Epidemiology	3
EXSC 585	Women's Health & Physical Activity	3
EXSC 666	Cardiorespiratory Exercise Physiology	3

EXSC 787	Research Methods and Design for Exercise Science	3
HPEB 711	Applied Health Communication	3
HPEB 752	Nutrition & Public Health	3
HSPM 707	Ethical Issues in Health Care & Research	3

Recommended Course Sequence for Full-Time MPH-PAPH Students

This course sequence applies to students who matriculate fall 2022 or later. The sequence is designed to enable students to progressively build on the knowledge and skills essential for subsequent courses. Thus, courses are to be taken in the indicated sequence.

Course #	Course Name	Credit Hours	Sequence
PUBH 724	Quantitative Methods for Public Health Practice I	3	Year 1 - Fall
PUBH 725	Quantitative Methods for Public Health Practice II	3	Year 2 - Spring
PUBH 726	Qualitative Methods for Public Health Practice	3	Year 1 - Fall
PUBH 730	Public Health Systems, Policy, & Leadership	3	Year 1 - Spring
PUBH 735	Practical Applications of Public Health Planning	4	Year 2 - Fall
EXSC 780	Physiology of Exercise	3	Year 1 - Fall
EXSC 732	Measurement of Body Composition & Associated Health Behaviors	3	Year 1 - Fall
EXSC 700	Physical Activity & Health: Epidemiology, Research, & Practice	3	Year 1 - Spring
EXSC 710	Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity	3	Year 1 - Spring
EXSC 754	Community-based Physical Activity Interventions	3	Year 2 - Fall
HPEB 710	Evaluation of Health Promotion Programs	3	Year 2 - Fall
	Elective	3	Year 2 - Spring
EXSC 797	Public Health Practice	1	Year 2 - Fall
EXSC 797	Public Health Practice	5	Year 2 - Spring
EXSC 796	MPH Capstone Course	2	Year 2 - Spring
	Total	45	

MPH-PAPH Course Sequence

FIRST YEAR		
Semester	Course #	Credit Hours
FALL	PUBH 724	3
	PUBH 726	3
	EXSC 780	3
	EXSC 732	3

SPRING	PUBH 725	3
	PUBH 730	3
	EXSC 700	3
	EXSC 710	3

SECOND YEAR		
Semester	Course #	Credit Hours
FALL	PUBH 735	4
	HPEB 710	3
	EXSC 754	3
	EXSC 797	1

SPRING	EXSC 796	2
	EXSC 797	5
	Elective	3

Public Health Practice (EXSC 797)

Course Description

The focus of the applied practice experience is the performance of a limited work or service project in an approved public need setting and the demonstration of at least 5 competencies related to previously identified aspects of the student's chosen role.

Practice Experience Process

The total practice experience is 6 credit hours. The practice experience and credit hours are divided across two semesters. Students will divide the 6 credit hours of EXSC 797 over 2 consecutive semesters: 1 credit hour in semester 1 and 5 credit hours in semester 2. The total field work experience over the course of the semester(s) is a minimum of 250 contact hours. During the field work, students produce at least 2 products (using a portfolio approach). After the field work is completed, students prepare to give an oral presentation.

The practice experience **cannot** be part of a student's existing job or graduate assistantship (GA). It is possible to carry out a practice experience at an existing job or GA if it is **above and beyond** the job or GA requirements and results in the appropriate amount of contact hours. This exception should be carefully negotiated with the practice experience advisor. Faculty research projects are generally not appropriate for the practice experience. The [Council on Education in Public Health \(CEPH\)](#) states that the applied learning experience setting may include "governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial and for-profit settings or appropriate university-affiliated settings." For university settings they "must be primarily focused on community engagement, typically with external partners" (e.g., university health promotion or wellness centers).

Practice Experience Prerequisites for MPH-PAPH Students:

- PUBH 724, PUBH 725, PUBH 726, PUBH 730, PUBH 735 and
- Successful completion ("B" or better) of EXSC 700, EXSC 710, and EXSC 780. This is a department of exercise science policy for the MPH-PAPH program.

Competencies

The [Council on Education in Public Health \(CEPH\)](#) requires MPH students to demonstrate at least 5 competencies during the applied practice experience, of which at least 3 must be foundational competencies. Competencies are selected with an emphasis on areas personally selected for professional growth.

Students will select at least 3 of these MPH foundational competencies:

- Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice (#1).
- Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate (#3).
- Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice (#4).
- Discuss how structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels (#6).
- Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health (#7).
- Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs (#8).

- Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes (#13).
- Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations (#14).
- Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity (#15).
- Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors (#18).
- Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation (#19).

Depending on the number of foundational competencies selected (above), students will select 1 or 2 of these MPH-PAPH concentration-specific competencies:

- Explain the physiological responses to an acute bout of exercise and the physiological adaptations to chronic aerobic and resistance exercise.
- Explain the health effects of physical activity and the scientific basis for current public health physical activity guidelines for persons in varying demographic groups.
- Apply evidence-based strategies to develop a physical activity intervention.
- Evaluate an evidence-based physical activity intervention.
- Differentiate among and appropriately use measurement and surveillance techniques to assess physical activity at the population level.

For example, if 3 foundational competencies are selected, select 2 MPH-PAPH concentration-specific competencies. If 4 foundational competencies are selected, select 1 MPH-PAPH concentration-specific competencies.

Practice Experience Process

Students will divide the 6 credit hours of EXSC 797 over two consecutive semesters: 1 credit hour in semester 1 and 5 credit hours in semester 2.

In semester 1, students will register for the course section of the practice director (MPH-PAPH graduate director). This course is designed to help students prepare for a successful practice experience. Semester 1 (1 credit hour) includes writing a professional development plan, selecting a site, identifying competencies, writing the practice agreement, and obtaining approval of the practice agreement.

The practice agreement must be approved by the practice director, practice faculty advisor, preceptor, and student. Once the practice agreement is approved, the student will submit the agreement on APEX. The practice agreement will be signed by the practice faculty advisor, preceptor, and student. Once the agreement is signed, the “content” for this course is in the applied setting in which the student is conducting fieldwork. The student is expected to update the practice faculty advisor weekly regarding fieldwork progress, and the practice faculty advisor is expected to respond to those updates. Students may initiate fieldwork during semester 1, if applicable. Hours completed in semester 1 will count toward the total 250-hour requirement.

In semester 2, students will register for the course section associated with their practice faculty advisor. Semester 2 (five credit hours) includes 250 hours of fieldwork and completion of at least 2 products (i.e., deliverables), and an oral presentation.

The exercise science practice agreement must be completed and signed by all parties prior to beginning fieldwork.

The practice agreement must include:

- a. Title page,
- b. 1-page summary of the practicum site and population served,

- c. Purpose of the practicum,
- d. Competencies (at least 5; 3 must be foundational competencies),
- e. Strategies for achieving each of the competencies,
- f. Products to develop during the practicum (at least 2),
- g. Timeline for the development of products (deliverables),
- h. Description of how the student, preceptor, and practicum faculty advisor will monitor the student's progress toward the established competencies, and
- i. Special conditions or circumstances that are unique to your practicum (e.g., reimbursement for travel, security issues, training, orientation, stipends, holiday work schedule, etc.).

Students are required to create and submit two products from the practice experience. Examples of products include written documents (e.g., evaluation reports, surveys, fact sheets), multi-media presentations, spreadsheets, websites, posters, or other digital artifacts of learning.

Each student is required to provide a presentation (utilizing PowerPoint or similar software) of their practice fieldwork. Students are encouraged to set the date for the presentation early in the semester by coordinating with the preceptor, practice faculty advisor, and practice director.

Practice Experience Roles and Responsibilities

Student

Students are expected to take initiative and responsibility to meet all requirements and to always function as a professional. Specifically, students are expected to:

- Select an appropriate setting for a practice activity together with a member of the MPH-PAPH admissions and curriculum committee,
- Develop a complete practice agreement for approval by the practice faculty advisor and preceptor,
- Submit the practice agreement and ensure that it is approved by the faculty practice experience advisor and preceptor,
- Complete work and learning tasks by the specified deadlines,
- Arrange appropriate meetings with the practice faculty advisor and preceptor, including the final oral presentation,
- Discuss practice experience-related issues and departmental requirements with the faculty practice experience advisor and preceptor as needed,
- Submit all required reports, documents, and products to the department of exercise science and in APEX, and
- Complete the evaluation through APEX upon conclusion of the practice experience.

Faculty Practice Advisor

During the practice experience, the faculty practice advisor serves as a resource for both the student and the preceptor. The advisor tracks the student's progress and consults with the preceptor when necessary. The ideal advisor is someone who has an interest related to the student's practice experience or someone with whom they have developed a supportive student-faculty relationship. The advisor is expected to:

- Advise the student in selecting competencies,
- Review the practice experience agreement and any requested revisions,
- Review and approve the practice experience agreement,
- Advise the student regarding an ethics review if needed,
- Provide ongoing expert advice and guidance as needed or required,
- Attend and evaluate the student's final oral presentation,
- Review and evaluate the products of the practice experience,

- Assess accomplishment of competencies and assign pass/fail grade at the appropriate time, and
- Complete the evaluation through APEX.

Preceptor

The preceptor is the person at the organization who agrees to mentor the student and oversee the day-to-day activities and projects in which the student is involved. The preceptor should have expertise in the assigned project areas, experience and status within the organization, and the ability and desire to supervise and mentor a student. The preceptor is expected to do the following:

- Assist the student and the practice faculty advisor in defining short-term tasks for the practice experience,
- Review the student's practice experience agreement for usefulness to the organization,
- Provide on-site direction for the work component of the practice experience,
- Provide the student with logistical support within the organization (e.g., arrange or space, equipment, use of phones, use of computer and/or computer software, secretarial help, making introductions in the organization, provide data or help gaining access to it, etc.),
- Provide opportunities for growth, development, and leadership for the student,
- Assist the practice faculty advisor with assessment of student's work and growth in competence during the practice experience,
- Attend and evaluate the student's final oral presentation,
- Review and evaluate the products of the practice experience, and
- Complete the evaluation through APEX.

Financial Support

If financial resources are required for doing a practice experience, the responsibility for negotiating these arrangements rests with the practicum site and the student. These costs and responsibilities for coverage are included in the practice agreement.

Ethics and Professional Standards

Students are expected to act in an ethical, responsible, and professional manner. These ethical principles benefit and protect the students, as well as clients, placement agencies, preceptors, and the university. Students are also expected to learn and adhere to guidelines specific to the practice experience site. If, at any time, a student has questions about responsible conduct, they should immediately contact the practice faculty advisor or preceptor. Commitment to ethical principles and the capacity to engage in ethical decision-making processes are hallmarks of professionalism. At a minimum, students must adhere to the following ethical principles:

- All information related to clients of the practice experience site is to remain confidential.
- Students must follow standards of academic integrity as described by the office of [Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](#). Any student identified as having engaged in any acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, copying information available through the worksite, and presenting it as the student's own work to either representatives of the host organization or the practice faculty advisor) while engaged in practice activities will be subject to the standards and review process outlined in the bulletin, including the possibility of dismissal.
- Students should be guided by codes of ethics most closely associated with the profession and organization of their practice experience site.
- Students are encouraged to discuss either the preceptor or the practice experience advisor any activities they believe may potentially compromise legal or ethical standards.
- Students may undertake only those program activities explicitly outlined in the practicum agreement or assigned by the preceptor or practice faculty advisor.

- Students may not correspond with or for clients regarding matters of a professional nature without explicit approval of the preceptor.
- Students may not visit clients socially without explicit approval of the preceptor.

One of the most important components of the practice experience is practicing appropriate professional workplace behavior. Practice students are expected to demonstrate the standard of behavior expected of other employees in the organization, including compliance with the organization's policies and procedures. Thus, students are expected to always act in a professional manner. The behavior of students should reflect favorably upon the worksite and the university. Students are expected to dress professionally and to arrive and depart at agreed upon hours. They also should promptly inform their preceptor of any anticipated absences or delays in their arrival times. They are expected to complete all agreed upon activities and work in a timely and professional manner. Professional expectations for behavior and conduct include the following:

- Appearance: The student exhibits personal cleanliness, grooming, and dress appropriate for the organization and position.
- Attendance: The student reports regularly, consistently and on time as described in the practice agreement or agreed upon with the preceptor.
- Accuracy: The student displays accuracy in his or her work (thorough and efficient).
- Responsibility: The student follows directions, is a self-starter and stays on task without close supervision.
- Relationships: The student exhibits respect and appropriate relationships with other employees, clients, and students (tact, courtesy, cooperation).

It is very important that students maintain an open line of communication with their preceptor. If they encounter any problems which they cannot resolve on their own, they should discuss the matter with their preceptor. If the student feels the problem has not been resolved after speaking with their preceptor, then they should contact their faculty practice advisor or the MPH graduate director for assistance. Zach Jenkins, MPH, in ASPH Practice and Workforce Development, is available to assist and support faculty, preceptors and students.

Although MPH practice experiences typically do not require institutional review board (IRB) approval from UofSC [Office of Research Compliance](#), it is still important for each student to be familiar with the IRB requirements at the University of South Carolina. However, some projects may need to be approved by the agency review committee at the practicum site. Certain categories of research have been designated as exempt from federal regulations related to the use of human subjects. Institutions may choose to recognize these categories of exemption and waive the requirement for review by an IRB. The University of South Carolina requires review of all research involving human subjects but imposes different requirements for research meeting the criteria for exemption. Visit the [Office of Research Compliance](#) to learn more about the IRB process. Any necessary approvals must be obtained prior to beginning work on the defined practice experience tasks. Some practice experience activities related to an ongoing research project may be covered under that project's IRB approval. Such approval should be discussed with the project principal investigator and/or faculty practice advisor. In most situations, notification to the IRB of a change in protocol is sufficient.

EXSC 796 MPH Capstone Course

The [MPH Capstone Course](#) will be taken during the second spring/final semester and will provide students with a culminating seminar focused on the synthesis of foundational and MPH-PAPH competencies in preparing a high-quality grant proposal to address a public health problem. Students, in consultation with the instructor, will select a public health topic and MPH competencies to address which are appropriate to the student's educational and professional goals.

Prerequisites for EXSC 796:

- PUBH 724, PUBH 725, PUBH 726, PUBH 730, PUBH 735 and
- Successful completion (“B” or better) of EXSC 700, EXSC 710, and EXSC 780. This is a Department of Exercise Science policy for the MPH-PAPH program.

Comprehensive Examination

The Graduate School requires a comprehensive examination for all master’s students. The purpose of the exam is to evaluate the knowledge acquired by the student in the core and major courses, and to evaluate mastery of the major concepts and methodologies in the discipline. The comprehensive exam will consist of a question-and-answer portion of the oral presentation for the EXSC 796 MPH capstone course. The exam will be conducted by graduate faculty in the department of exercise science.

To pass the comprehensive exam, a student must adequately answer all questions on the exam. If a student does not pass the comprehensive exam on the first attempt, the MPH-PAPH admissions and curriculum committee will administer a second oral examination on the topic or topics not passed. **A second failure of the comprehensive exam will result in the student’s release from the graduate program.**

The determination of the outcome of the comprehensive examination is forwarded to the student and to the Graduate School by the department of exercise science.

Graduation/Hooding Ceremony

The University of South Carolina holds commencement ceremonies in May and December of each year. In addition, the Arnold School of Public Health hosts a hooding ceremony each May for students who graduated in the current calendar year.

During the final semester of study, the student applies for graduation. The [deadline](#) for application for graduation is set by the registrar’s office each semester. For fall and spring semesters, this deadline is within the first three weeks of classes. For August graduation, the deadline is within days of the first summer term.

- Students apply for graduation on Self-Service Carolina.
- The department of exercise science verifies the completion of all degree requirements and submits clearance for graduation to the Graduate School.
- Clearance for graduation also requires that the student complete and submit the exit questionnaire. This questionnaire is distributed by the Office of Academic Affairs.
- The Graduate School notifies the registrar’s office that all degree requirements have been completed. This notification usually does not occur until several weeks after the actual commencement ceremony. The diploma is distributed via mail.
- The student is responsible for purchasing caps, gowns, hoods, and announcements for graduation and should be mindful that these purchases are made in a timely fashion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Honor Code Statement: *As a Carolinian... I will practice personal and academic integrity.*

The University of South Carolina expects high standards in all areas from its students. The University, as well as the faculty, staff, alumni, and students, believe strongly in the honor code. This code requires acceptance of certain responsibilities and agreement by all students to abide by the spirit of the Honor code upon entering the University of South Carolina. In order that you may better understand the required responsibilities, the general university community codes are outlined below.

1. It shall be the responsibility of every faculty member, student, administrator, and staff member of the university community to uphold and maintain the academic standards and integrity of the University of South Carolina.
2. Any member of the university community, who has reasonable grounds to believe that an infraction of the honor code has occurred, has an obligation to report the alleged violation. Violation of any of the following standards subjects the student to disciplinary action: improper collaboration, cheating, lying, bribery, and plagiarism.

Please review the honor code via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrOKG0nnYyE>. Students are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in a minimum academic penalty of your failing the assignment and will result in additional disciplinary measures including referring you to the office of [Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](#). Violations of the university's honor code include, but are not limited to improper citation of sources, using another student's work, and any other form of academic misrepresentation.

Academic Standards

For purposes of academic standards, cumulative GPA is defined as the grade point average of all graduate-credit courses recorded on the official USC academic transcript. The [Graduate Academic Bulletin](#) states, "Graduate courses may be passed for degree credit with a grade as low as C, but a degree-seeking student's cumulative grade point average must be at least **B** (3.00 on a 4.00 scale). At the time of graduation, the student's cumulative grade point average must be at least 3.00. Additionally, the student's average on all grades recorded on the program of study must be 3.00 and the student's grade point average for courses numbered 700 or above, recorded on the program of study, must be at least 3.00. Grades earned on graduate credits transferred from other universities are not included in the grade point average."

"Graduate degree-seeking students whose cumulative grade point average drops below 3.00 (**B**) will be placed on academic probation and allowed one calendar year in which to raise the grade point average to at least 3.00. In case of conversion of grades of incomplete that cause a cumulative GPA to drop below 3.0, a degree-seeking student will be placed on academic probation at the end of the semester in which the grade is posted. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below the required minimum of 3.0 by receiving a grade for a course in which they received an Incomplete will, instead of a one-year probationary period, be granted only one major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the grade is received by the registrar in which to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.0 or above. Students who do not reach a cumulative 3.00 grade point average during the probationary period will not be permitted to enroll for further graduate course work as a degree or non-degree student."

This rule applies to all in-date graduate courses taken at the University of South Carolina (within 6 years) whether they are included on the student's program of study. This rule also applies to courses taken in two or more-degree programs. A grade of "U" earned in any course will be treated as a grade below "B" for the suspension policy.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition and Fees

All charges are due and payable on the date that they are incurred, or the due date indicated on the ticket, invoice, or statement. The bursar's office online payment system is available at my.sc.edu. Any student who has failed to pay all required registration fees on or before the last date to change course schedule (as indicated in the university calendar) may be dropped from class rolls. Any student who fails to relieve any other indebtedness to the university or to any of its auxiliary agencies on the date such obligations become due may not be permitted to remain in university residence halls or be issued a transcript, diploma, or degree. For information about fees schedules, visit the [bursar's office website](#). Our graduate students may receive funding through graduate assistantships and fellowships.

Fellowships

Public health fellowship information is distributed via student email listservs and posted with the [MySPH Opportunity Manager](#). In addition, since the Arnold School of Public Health is a member of the [Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health](#) (ASPPH), graduate students are eligible for fellowships offered through ASPPH. The [Graduate School](#) also has a listing of available fellowships and awards.

Grants, Loans, and Other Financial Assistance

The office of [Financial Aid and Scholarships](#) provides access to a variety of grants and loans for students in graduate programs of study. Financial aid inquiries should be made to:

Financial Aid and Scholarships
University of South Carolina
1244 Blossom Street, Suite 200
Columbia, SC 29208
Phone: 803-777-8134

Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of Graduate Assistantships funded by the Department of Exercise Science are available for full-time students. These assistantships provide the in-state tuition rate, tuition assistance, and a stipend in return for 10-20 hours of work per week under the direction of Arnold School of Public Health faculty. To qualify for an assistantship, a student must be fully admitted to a degree program, maintain a 3.0 average, and enroll in at least six (6) credit hours during fall and spring semester.

Opportunities Outside of the Department of Exercise Science

The [MySPH Opportunity Manager](#) provides a centralized location for posting, searching, and applying for graduate assistantships, public health practice opportunities, and internships.

Travel Grants

Travel grants are designed to provide opportunities and support for student research presentations at professional scientific conferences. Visit these links to find travel grant applications from the [department of exercise science](#), the [Arnold School of Public Health](#), and the [Graduate School](#). Each require a separate application. Academic advisors may also provide additional financial support.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES & COMPUTER RESOURCES

Department of Exercise Science

The department of exercise science is located suite 212 in the Public Health Research Center, 921 Assembly Street. All student academic transactions must be approved by the graduate director of the MPH-PAPH program in the department of exercise science.

A listserv is maintained for all MPH-PAPH students. Incoming students will be added to the listserv by the program coordinator. A [Blackboard](#) group is maintained for MPH-PAPH students. This is where students can access forms and receive announcements about the program.

Office of Graduate Student Services

The office of [Graduate Student Services](#) is housed in the Public Health Research Center, Room 108. This office provides information to students about the school to prospective students, as well as support services to current students. Services provided to current students include orientation, registration information, workshops, and providing information regarding the hooding ceremony. The office's contact information is as follows:

Office of Graduate Student Services
Arnold School of Public Health
University of South Carolina
921 Assembly Street, Room 108
Columbia, SC 29208
Phone : 803-777-5031
Email : sphstsr@mailbox.sc.edu

The office of Graduate Student Services also encourages interaction among students through the Arnold School of Public Health student association. In addition, the office serves as a liaison between students and faculty within the Arnold School of Public Health and provides information on opportunities offered by the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), among others.

Students are encouraged to read newsletters, listserv information and the bulletin boards sponsored by the office of Graduate Student Services to keep posted on workshops, internships, and career information, as well as other relevant issues related to Arnold School of Public Health students.

Arnold School of Public Health Student Association (ASPHSA)

The office of Graduate Student Services sponsors the Arnold School of Public Health Student Association (ASPHSA). This is an active Arnold School of Public Health student organization. The Executive Council of the ASPHA is the [Dean's Student Advisory Council](#) (DSAC).

The purpose of this council is two-fold: (1) to provide a means for students to have dialogue with the dean and (2) to inform students about important events that are happening within the school and the university. DSAC also assists the ASPH in recruiting students to participate in a variety of school-wide events including seminars, activities associated with Public Health Week, and UofSC Graduate Student Day.

ASPHSA coordinates many aspects of the annual graduate student orientation for new students. All six departments have student representation and representatives include students at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels.

If you have questions or would like to get involved, contact the Office of Graduate Student Services.

Computer Laboratory

A [computer lab](#) is available to all Arnold School students. The lab is located on the fourth floor of the Discovery building, Room 431, 915 Greene Street. The computers in this lab have internet access, Microsoft Office applications and various specialized applications such as SAS statistical software.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. *MPH Foundational Competencies (CEPH)*

Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health

1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice

Public Health & Health Care Systems

5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health, and regulatory systems across national and international settings
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels

Planning & Management to Promote Health

7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs

Policy in Public Health

12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes
14. Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity

Leadership

16. Apply principles of leadership, governance, and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration, and guiding decision making
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges

Communication

18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content

Interprofessional Practice

21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams

Systems Thinking

22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

Appendix II. *MPH Foundational Public Health Knowledge Learning Objectives (CEPH)*

Profession & Science of Public Health

1. Explain public health history, philosophy, and values
2. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services
3. Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health
4. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other community relevant to the school
5. Discuss the science of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.
6. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge

Factors Related to Human Health

7. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population's health
8. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population's health
9. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health
10. Explain the social, political, and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities
11. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease
12. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health and ecosystem health (e.g., One Health)