Doctor of Public Health

The Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.) program at Georgia Southern University is committed to producing public health practitioners who possess the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to contribute to an effective public health workforce. The Dr.P.H. prepares professionals for broad-based practice in public health, through the integration of a community-based practice core and advanced courses in four concentration areas: Biostatistics, Community Health Behavior and Education, Epidemiology, and Public Health Leadership. The program serves both the full-time student preparing for a career in public health, as well as currently employed public health professionals seeking an advanced education to augment their existing skills and backgrounds.

Purpose

The Dr.P.H. is the terminal professional degree for those who intend to pursue or advance their professional practice career in public health. The Dr.P.H. program aims to train students for advanced science-based practice and practice-oriented research. Public health practice involves the strategic, organized and interdisciplinary application of knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to perform essential public health services necessary to improve the population’s health.

Those who earn this degree are expected to occupy leadership positions in public health and related areas. Additionally, individuals earning this degree will be positioned to exert significant influence on the development of policies and programs aimed at improving the health of populations in the region. It is anticipated that such positions will represent considerable diversity with respect to international, national, state or local levels; and in the public or private sector. In addition, those who earn the Dr.P.H. degree may also seek teaching and research positions at colleges and universities.

The Dr.P.H. is conferred in recognition of the candidate’s command of a comprehensive body of knowledge in public health, their ability to initiate, organize and pursue the investigation of significant problems in public health, and their capacity to formulate policies, strategies, and/or programs on the basis of the knowledge generated. The Dr.P.H. leads to a career in administration, teaching, or public health practice, where advanced analytical and conceptual capabilities are required.

The Dr.P.H. program expands the competencies included in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) program for all matriculating students, with increased emphasis on advanced skills in evidenced-based problem-solving. Students who have not completed one or more of the M.P.H. core public health courses must complete these courses as part of their doctoral program. In addition, those students are required to complete a minimum of 60 credits for the doctoral degree. Students with a master’s degree other than in public health may be required to take health or health-related courses in addition to the 60 minimum credits.

The Dr.P.H. program offers students the opportunity to specialize their training in five program concentration areas (Specific concentration competencies for each area are provided in the following sections.):

- Biostatistics
- Community Health Behavior and Education
- Epidemiology
- Health Policy and Management
- Public Health Leadership (Partially Online)

CEPH Dr.P.H. Competencies

At the completion of the Dr.P.H. program all students will be able to:

Data & Analysis

1. Explain qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods and policy analysis research and evaluation methods to address health issues at multiple (individual, group, organization, community and population) levels
2. Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue
3. Explain the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programs and to address a population’s health

Leadership, Management & Governance

4. Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders and other partners
5. Communicate public health science to diverse stakeholders, including individuals at all levels of health literacy, for purposes of influencing behavior and policies
6. Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values and potential contributions from multiple professions and systems in addressing public health problems
7. Create a strategic plan
8. Facilitate shared decision making through negotiation and consensus-building methods
9. Create organizational change strategies
10. Propose strategies to promote inclusion and equity within public health programs, policies and systems
11. Assess one’s own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities including cultural proficiency
12. Propose human, fiscal and other resources to achieve a strategic goal
13. Cultivate new resources and revenue streams to achieve a strategic goal

Policy & Programs

14. Design a system-level intervention to address a public health issue
15. Integrate knowledge of cultural values and practices in the design of public health policies and programs
16. Integrate scientific information, legal and regulatory approaches, ethical frameworks and varied stakeholder interests in policy development and analysis
17. Propose interprofessional team approaches to improving public health

Education & Workforce Development

18. Assess an audience’s knowledge and learning needs
19. Deliver training or educational experiences that promote learning in academic, organizational or community settings
20. Use best practice modalities in pedagogical practices

Dr.P.H. Concentration Competencies

Competencies for each concentration are outline below:

Biostatistics
1. Interpret analytic methods used in the public health and biomedical journals, as well as critique published reports of public health and biomedical experiments as to the validity of the inferential conclusions.

2. Demonstrate proficiency in statistical software such as SAS or R to handle complex public health and biomedical data analysis problems.

3. Develop new biostatistical methods and new ideas for applying existing biostatistical methods to applications in public health and the biomedical sciences.

4. Demonstrate the ability to flexibly apply prior information to solve a wide range of public health biomedical problems using Bayesian Analysis.

5. Demonstrate the comprehension of the underlying statistical theory that supports the biostatistical methodology.

**Community Health**

1. Analyze theories, concepts and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines in public health research and practice.

2. Develop collaborative partnerships with communities stakeholders, policy makers, and other relevant groups.

3. Assess and argue cultural, environmental, and social justice influences on the health of communities.

4. Adapt evidence-based public health programs and research to address geographic disparities.

5. Facilitate debate and discussion, with diverse groups in and outside of the traditional classroom setting that ensure inclusion of ideas and resolution of challenges.

**Epidemiology**

1. Demonstrate the ability to identify deficiencies in scientific knowledge or public health practice using existing sources of epidemiologic data.

2. Construct a public health and epidemiologic research question from ideas, conditions, or events using critical thinking skills.

3. Utilize advanced epidemiologic research methods to inform public health action.

4. Select appropriate statistical tools and methodology to analyze and summarize epidemiological data.

5. Disseminate information based on advanced epidemiologic studies to lay or professional audiences.

**Public Health Leadership**

1. Apply leadership skills for building partnerships in public health.

2. Evaluate how systems thinking can contribute to solving public health organizational issues and problems.

3. Analyze the policy development, assessment, evaluation process, and legal environment for improving the health status of populations.

4. Evaluate the process for strategic planning and marketing for public health through analysis of quality, cost benefit, and performance improvement concepts.

5. Demonstrate the ability to manage of programs within budget constraints through resource allocation, financing, and evaluation.

**Health Policy and Management**

1. Analyze the impact of legislation, judicial opinions, regulations, and policies on population health.

2. Interpret quantitative and qualitative data following current scientific standards.

3. Implement strategic planning processes.

4. Differentiate among the administrative, legal, ethical, and quality assurance dimensions of research and practice.

5. Develop collaborative partnerships with communities, policy makers, and other relevant groups.

**The Curriculum**

The Dr.P.H. program requires a minimum of 60 credits and is offered on both a full- and part-time basis. The overall curriculum model includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Public Health Core</th>
<th>Required Concentration Specific Courses</th>
<th>Electives</th>
<th>Doctoral Public Health Field Practicum</th>
<th>Dissertation</th>
<th>Total Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Dr.P.H. Public Health Sciences Core provides a grounding in the scientific basis of public health, public health professionalism and ethics, and translational research. Advanced specialty coursework develops the skills and knowledge upon which to build or enhance a career in public health. Selective courses are available in four core areas of concentration: Biostatistics, Community Health Behavior and Education, Epidemiology, and Public Health Leadership.

**The Preceptorship**

The Preceptorship is an important practical experience in a public health related setting. Dr.P.H. students will complete a 300 hour preceptorship under the joint direction of a qualified public health professional and a public health faculty member.

**The Candidacy Examination**

All Dr.P.H. students are required to complete and pass a concentration-specific candidacy examination. Students failing the concentration exam are allowed only one retake. In the event any Dr.P.H. student fails the concentration retake exam, the student will be immediately excluded from the program and all registered courses for the upcoming semester will be administratively cancelled.

**The Dissertation**

All doctoral candidates are required to prepare, complete and successfully defend a dissertation.

**Admission Requirements**

Admission into the graduate programs within the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health is competitive and decisions are based on the application as a whole. The Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.) admission requirements apply to the following Dr.P.H. degrees in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University:

- Public Health Dr.P.H. (Concentration in Biostatistics)
- Public Health Dr.P.H. (Concentration in Community Health Behavior and Education)
- Public Health Dr.P.H. (Concentration in Epidemiology)
• Public Health Dr.P.H. (Concentration in Health Pol
• Public Health Dr.P.H. (Concentration in Public Health Leadership)

Degree Admission Requirements

Regular Admission

1. Application - Completion of an application in Schools of Public Health Application Service (SOPHAS).
2. Degree - Completion of a Master’s or terminal degree from a regionally accredited institution. Applicants who do not have a graduate degree in Public Health will be required to complete prerequisite Public Health coursework.
3. Transcripts - Official transcript(s) from each college or university previously attended. A transcript is required even if the courses from one school appear on the transcript of another school. (NOTE: SOPHAS will NOT process your application without receiving all official transcripts. Please refer to the SOPHAS FAQs page for instructions on HOW TO SEND TRANSCRIPTS.)
   • All foreign transcripts must be evaluated by World Education Services (WES). Visit http://www.wes.org/ to view which documents are required for your country and to request an International Credential Advantage Package (ICAP) Course-by-Course Report.
   • Transcript(s) should show completion of at least one (1) graduate-level core course in each of the following five (5) areas: biostatistics, epidemiology, social and behavioral sciences in public health, health policy and management, and environmental health. ( Applicant may be asked to provide syllabi for courses taken.)
   • Courses must have been completed in the last five (5) years and each must have been passed with a grade of “B” or better. Applicants who have not completed these courses, but whose applications show exceptional potential for success in the Dr. P.H. program, may be admitted to the Dr.P.H. program, but will be required to complete the courses (as presented in the JPHCOPH M.P.H. core course requirements) with grades of “B” or better before progressing to the Public Health Core and Concentration Courses of the Dr.P.H. program. If the applicant has completed a Master’s degree in a field other than public health, professional public health work experience in one or more of the five core areas may be substituted for the corresponding M.P.H. level courses at the discretion of the College. Applicants who took these courses more than five years ago but who work in the Public Health field may request a waiver. Requests for this waiver must be submitted in writing to jphcoh-admissions@georgiasouthern.edu.
4. Grade Point Average (GPA) - Preferred minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0/4.0 scale in upper division graduate courses.
5. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) - Official scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), taken within the last five (5) years sent to school code 8560. The requirement for completion of a standardized test will be waived for those applicants who hold a terminal degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
6. English Language Proficiency - International applicants and U.S. Citizens whose native language is not English must demonstrate English proficiency. Prior to consideration for admission, international applicants whose native language is not English must take and pass acceptable scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (http://www.ets.org/toefl) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (http://www.ielts.org) unless they have received a degree from an accredited college or university in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada (except Quebec), Australia, or New Zealand. The TOEFL and IELTS examinations are administered at various times of the year and in many centers throughout the world.
   • A score of at least 75 (internet-based test, IBT) or 537 (paper-based test) on the TOEFL and 6.0 on the IELTS is normally required to be considered for regular admission. The official TOEFL and the official IELTS scores may not be more than two (2) years old. Those who do not meet the minimum proficiency standard may be recommended for enrollment in University English courses or for English courses offered by the English Language Program (ELP) on campus. Successful completion of Intensive English Programs (IEPs) at other English Language Program (ELP) providers will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Request that your official TOEFL scores be sent directly to SOPHAS.

Official IELTS scores should be sent to:
Georgia Southern University
Office of Graduate Admissions
P.O. Box 8113
Statesboro, GA 30460-8113.
7. Letters of Recommendation - Three (3) letters of recommendation. It is strongly advised that two letters be from individuals who can address your past academic performance and it is encouraged that the third letter is from a work or internship supervisor.
8. Curriculum Vitae/Resume - A CV/Resume that includes the following: a) educational experiences, b) professional goals and objectives, c) work history, d) professional experiences, memberships and/or participation in professional organizations, and e) experiences in public health programs. For the Public Health Leadership concentration, a minimum of 3 years of experience in public health, healthcare, or a closely related area are required. Work experience is not required for applicants to the Biostatistics, Community Health Behavior and Education, Epidemiology, or Health Policy and Management concentrations.
9. Statement of Purpose - A Statement of Purpose (700-1,000 words) that conveys the applicant’s reasons for pursuing a Dr.P.H. in Public Health and how admission into the program relates to the applicant’s professional aspirations.
10. Applicants demonstrating potential for success in the Dr.P.H. program are required to participate in an in-person or telephone interview prior to a final decision by the admissions committee.

Non-degree Admission Requirements

An applicant may be admitted as a Non-Degree (Doctorate) student to earn credit hours in DOCTORAL-LEVEL Public Health courses without working towards a degree or certificate program. Applying to a graduate degree or certificate program is a separate process and different criteria must be met.

1. Application - Completion of an application in Schools of Public Health Application Service (SOPHAS) Express.
2. Degree - Completion of a Master’s or terminal degree from a regionally accredited institution.
3. Transcripts - Official transcript(s) from each college or university previously attended. A transcript is required even if the courses from one school appear on the transcript of another school.¹
   • All foreign transcripts must be evaluated by World Education Services (WES). Visit http://www.wes.org/ to view which documents are required for your country and to request an International Credential Advantage Package (ICAP) Course-by-Course Report.¹
   • Upload transcript(s) from all institutions attended. (Do NOT send transcripts to SOPHAS Express)¹
4. Grade Point Average (GPA) - Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75/4.0 scale in either:
• Upper division undergraduate courses; OR
• Upper division graduate courses

5. **Statement of Purpose** - A Statement of Purpose (500-1000 words)
   that conveys the applicant’s reasons for pursuing graduate study
   in public health and how admission into the program relates to the
   applicant’s professional aspirations.

   **NOTE**: Unofficial documents must be uploaded for review purposes.
   **Official transcripts are only required if you are offered admission.**
   Following notification of admission, official transcripts mailed in sealed
   envelopes directly from each university attended (or directly from
   WES) are required **PRIOR** to the first day of classes of the original
   semester of acceptance. **Failure to provide the official transcripts**
   **following notification of admission will result in revocation of the**
   **admission offer.**
   Official documents must be mailed to:
   Georgia Southern University
   Office of Graduate Admissions
   P.O. Box 8113
   Statesboro, GA 30460-8113

**Grades**
Dr.P.H. level degree seeking students are required to maintain a
cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 to remain in good academic standing and
to be eligible to graduate. In the event the cumulative GPA falls below 3.0,
the student will be placed on academic probation. Students have nine (9)
credits to elevate the cumulative GPA to at least 3.0 or will be excluded
from the program. Also, students earning grades of “D” or below will be
excluded from the program.

**Transfer Credit Hours**
Students may request that up to, but no more than, six (6) graduate credits
be applied toward the 60 credits required for the Dr.P.H. Transfer credit
must also satisfy the same requirements as courses taught for doctoral
training within the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (e.g., minimum
grade of “B”), be consistent with the student’s approved program of study,
and have been received from a regionally accredited college or university.
Thesis and dissertation credit cannot be transferred. The student must
provide documentation in support of equivalence, such as a course
syllabus, transcript, term paper, and/or instructor testimony. Equivalence is
determined by the JPHCOPH faculty responsible for teaching the specific
class. Credit reductions do not influence the residency and enrollment
requirements or comprehensive examination procedures.

**Course Time Limit**
All requirements for the Dr.P.H. must be completed within seven academic
years from the date of the first enrollment for study following admission
to the doctoral program. For transfer students, the seven-year time limit
commences with the semester during which transfer credit was earned.

**Faculty Advisor**
Graduate students are advised by the Academic Services Coordinator and
mentored by a faculty member from the Student’s concentration area.