

# Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2017-18

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## **Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook**

### **Part II: Course and credit requirements**

#### ***School-level required (core) courses***

**Required Courses:** The courses **currently** required at the school level are listed in *part IV* of this handbook. See notes below each list for information on requirements for earlier cohorts. [More detailed information on the biostatistics requirements is available [here](#).] Students should consult with their departments about these requirements, as some departments may have additional stipulations.

**Exemption from required courses:** Exemptions from school-level required courses are made on a case-by-case basis. These are based on prior coursework, may or may not be accompanied by advanced standing credits (see below) and whether the courses were completed at an accredited school of public health. A [School Core Course Exemption form](#) should be filled out, explicitly listing the coursework on which the exemption is based. The form must be signed by the student's advisor and the instructor of the course from which the exemption is desired, before submitting to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#). If advanced standing credit is being requested, that form must also be filed.

DrPH students who have previously received an MPH from an [accredited school of public health](#) may be exempted from all requirements, *except* Public Health Grand Rounds, but a [School Core Course Exemption form](#) still has to be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs.

MS and PhD students with an MPH from an [accredited school of public health](#) can be exempted from Essentials of Public Health by submitting the [School Core Course Exemption form](#) to the Office of Student Affairs.

**Scheduling:** [Advance scheduling information for the school-wide required courses is available.](#) Most are offered twice per year. Students should plan their schedules carefully with their advisors to ensure completion of that it will be possible to complete the necessary courses.

**Grade Requirements:** A grade of B or better is required for all core courses.

***If a student earns a grade below a B,*** the student and his/her advisor should meet to discuss the grade. In these cases, the student is strongly encouraged to re-take the course. However, the final decision will be left to the advisor and the student.

***If a student receives a grade below a C,*** that student must repeat the course. This policy is effective for all students beginning in August 2009 for courses taken in the fall term 2009 and thereafter. Students have a maximum of two attempts to achieve a grade of C or better in a core course.

See the [Pitt Public Health probation and dismissal policy](#) for further details on minimum grade requirements.

**Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds course:** PUBHLT 2022, the Dean's Public Health Grand Rounds, is a required, non-credit course for all Pitt Public Health students. Two terms are required for graduation. Note that the course is offered only in the fall and spring terms; it is not offered in the summer. Students are strongly encouraged to register for Grand Rounds in the first two consecutive terms they are enrolled.

Students are exempt from this course if they:

1. are only in a certificate program.
2. are in a formal joint degree program.
3. have completed a degree program and successfully completed two semesters of Grand Rounds as a requirement for that degree, then enrolled in a second degree program immediately thereafter. Note that the summer term does not count towards continuous enrollment. If there is a break in enrollment, then the student will need to complete two successful semesters of Grand Rounds to meet graduation requirements.

**Non-credit requirements:** In addition to required courses, all students must complete the online module on [academic integrity](#) during their first semester of study.

All students who are employed by the University of Pittsburgh, including as TAs, GSRs, etc., are required to complete the [University of Pittsburgh Human Resources Sexual Harassment Prevention Module](#). Questions, concerns, or technical issues on the sexual harassment module should be brought to the attention of Employee Relations staff at the University of Pittsburgh Human Resources office at 412-624-8150.

Most students are also required to complete various research ethics modules. A list of other modules required for research and practice at the University of Pittsburgh are outlined on the [Resources for Research and Practice Web page](#).

## ***Departmental and elective coursework***

**Requirements and exemptions:** Course requirements other than those stated above are established and enforced by individual departments and/or programs. Exemptions are handled at the departmental level. Departmental procedures for exemptions should include a written (paper or electronic) record that clearly states the justification for the exemption.

**Electives:** Departments may restrict or suggest choices for elective course credits. Refer to your program handbook and get advice from faculty and students.

**Courses at other Pitt schools:** Pitt Public Health students may take courses in other schools within the university. Course schedules at other schools are available in the complete [university time schedule of classes](#) or in the Student Center of [My Pitt](#). Whether or not these credits can be applied to their degree in Pitt Public Health depends on several factors.

In general, graduate-level credits taken at the University of Pittsburgh outside of Pitt Public Health may be applied to degrees as long as they are relevant to the degree being pursued. Check with your advisor.

Upper-level undergraduate credits may be applied to a Pitt Public Health degree with the permission of the advisor, with a limit of 6 total credits. It must be clear that these credits are being taken by a graduate student enrolled in a degree program at Pitt Public Health in a degree program. Credits taken as an undergraduate or as a non-degree student cannot be considered.

**Courses at other colleges and universities:** Pitt Public Health students may register for courses as part of the [Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education \(PCHE\) program](#). Registration for these courses must often be done earlier than standard University of Pittsburgh registration deadlines. The student must be registered full-time at Pitt Public Health (FTDR or 9 credits minimum) before they request cross-registration at another school. Cross-registration is allowed in the fall and spring terms only. The PCHE registration form is [available online; however, a hard copy with all the necessary signatures must](#) be taken to the Office of the Registrar, in G-3 Thackeray.

**Total credit requirements:** In addition to required courses, each degree or certificate also has a minimum number of credits required. These should be clearly stated in the program handbook. Advanced standing credits (see below) can count toward this total credit requirement. Credit sharing for students in two or more programs is also possible (see below). Both advanced standing credit and credit sharing are limited.

## ***Grades and academic standing***

**Minimum grade point average:** Students who fail to make satisfactory progress may be subject to academic probation and/or suspension and dismissal. Students who have completed at least 9 quality point credits and whose GPA falls below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation. Full time students have 2 semesters and part time students have 18 credit hours to bring their GPA to at least a 3.0. Students on probation are not eligible to take the PhD preliminary evaluation, the MS or PhD comprehensive examination, or to graduate.

**Grades:** Letter grades A, B, C, and D are considered to be passing grades. A letter grade of F is a failing grade.

**G and I grades:** G grades indicate that a course has not been completed because of extenuating circumstances. G grades must be resolved within one year. Students may not accumulate more than 15 credits of G grades. Special studies courses, thesis or dissertation credits and other courses that are normally not graded at the end of one term receive I grades. See the [probation and dismissal policy](#) for details.

### ***Enrollment requirements***

**Full-time registration:** Full-time registration is 9-15 credits. More than 15 credits is an overload which will incur additional tuition charges.

**Registration in the term of graduation:** All degree-seeking students must be registered for at least one credit or FTDR in the term of graduation. See the [graduation Web page](#) for details.

**Lapses in registration:** Students who do not register for three consecutive terms are considered inactive and [must re-apply via SOPHAS](#) if they wish to re-register.

**Requirements for international students:** Students with visas should contact the [Office of International Services \(OIS\)](#) and be sure to follow the enrollment requirements. Generally, full-time registration (9 credits or FTDR) is required. International students who have completed most course requirements can petition OIS for permission to take a reduced load.

### ***Course scheduling preference for veteran students***

Students who have served in the military and have registered with the Office of Veterans Services at the university are granted a priority enrollment appointment to enroll in classes prior to the standard enrollment appointment period. See [registrar's Web page](#) for complete details.

### ***Academic integrity and plagiarism***

All individuals (students, faculty, post-doctoral researchers, and staff) at Pitt Public Health abide by the [University's policy on academic integrity](#) as well as the [Pitt Public Health academic integrity procedures](#).

All students are required to complete the online academic integrity module in the first semester of enrollment at Pitt Public Health by the deadline established by the Office of Student Affairs. See the [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Web page](#) for further details and instructions.

*Policy revised June 8, 2010 and submitted to EPCC for a vote, approved by EPCC on June 14, 2010 with revisions | approved by GSPH Council July 2010*

Pitt Public Health Policy for Student Completion of Student Academic Integrity Module Effective August 30, 2010, all enrolled students at the Graduate School of Public Health are required to complete the *Student Academic Integrity Module* by the last day of the month of September. This is to ensure that GSPH students are familiar with the University of Pittsburgh's academic integrity policy, and to prevent violations of academic integrity.

Students will be deemed to have completed the module satisfactorily by scoring 80% or higher on the module assessment. Those who have not successfully complete the module assessment with a qualifying score of 80% or higher by the first business day of October will not have the advising hold removed from their student registration account. This hold does prevent registration for the subsequent semester's classes. The hold will be removed only after the student demonstrates satisfactory completion of the module.

All new students enrolled in a program (certificate, degree, or non-degree) will be required to complete the *Student Academic Integrity Module* during their first semester. All continuing students, enrolled in the fall term 2010 will also be required to complete the module by September 30, 2010. Students who enter with non-degree status, and are later admitted into a certificate or degree program within one academic year of having completed this instruction will not be required to repeat it. In summary, students will be required to complete this module only once unless significant changes in University or School policy require recertification.

The Office of Student Affairs will establish a deadline for completion of the module for each subsequent semester so as not to disadvantage students in the registration process. Students will be notified of this date through Office of Student Affairs communications and their respective department liaisons.

The student's department liaison will be required to monitor student completion of the module and ensure that the certificate of completion is filed in the student's academic file housed in the department. Department liaisons will notify the Office of Student Affairs if students do not complete the module by the deadline.

### ***Transfer credit for prior graduate work***

**General:** Transfer or advanced standing credits must be based on specific prior graduate-level coursework relevant to the degree the student is pursuing. Advanced standing credit will be awarded only for graduate courses in which a grade of B or better (or equivalent) was earned. Other restrictions also apply. (Note: only block credits, not course equivalency, can be awarded.) The advanced standing request forms ([Course Credits Accepted Form](#)) should be signed by your advisor and submitted to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#).

Credits for degrees earned outside the US are considered based on a [WES evaluation](#) and may depend on country and institution within the country.

**Credit toward doctoral degrees:** In general, a maximum of 24 credits can be applied from a prior-earned master's degree in a relevant field toward a doctoral degree. Up to 12 additional post-master's graduate credits can be applied if those credits were not previously used toward a degree. Approval of the department granting the doctoral degree is always required.

**Credit toward master's degrees:** In general, 6 credits of prior-earned graduate coursework (degree or non-degree) can be applied towards a master's degree. If graduate credits are taken at another institution but were not and will not be applied to another degree. As many as 1/3 of the number of credits required for a professional Pitt Public Health master's degree can be transferred. Approval of the department granting the degree is always required.

**Credit awarded on the basis of prior clinical degrees:** The credit limits stated above are for academic degrees. Credits earned for clinical degrees (e.g. MD, DDS, nursing) may be subject to stricter limits. In particular, clinical degrees that are earned without a prior college degree (e.g. nursing bachelor's degrees, many non-US medical degrees) may be deemed non-graduate credits.

### ***Adding a second degree, or a certificate, or changing departments/ or degrees***

**Combined degree programs:** Pitt Public Health participates in several formal [combined degree programs](#). Requirements for these programs include all or most of the requirements of the two separate programs.

- **Dual programs** exist within a single school.
- **Joint programs** exist between two or more schools.
- **Cooperative programs** are administered by two or more institutions.

Before registering for courses in pursuit of a cooperative, dual-degree, or joint-degree program, a student must be admitted to both programs.

**Pursuing two independent degree programs simultaneously:** In addition to the formal combined programs, students may pursue two independent graduate degrees simultaneously.

Rules for credit sharing must be followed.

**Current Students - How to Apply to a New Program:** Current student must send an email of intent to the Admissions Manager, [Karrie Lukin](#), in order to transfer programs or add an academic program or certificate to their study plan. The email of intent should include:

1. [Your name](#)
2. [Your current program](#)
3. [Details on the changes you would like to make](#)
4. [The term in which you like the change to occur](#)

Further instruction will be forwarded to you once the Admissions Manager receives your e-mail of intent, depending on department requirements.

Current students submitting official GRE scores must send them to University of Pittsburgh code **2927**, with no department code.

### ***Credit sharing among two or more degrees and/or certificates earned simultaneously***

**General:** Students wishing to pursue two or more programs simultaneously should consult with all programs and with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#), about credit requirements. Complex credit-sharing arrangements may require special approval from the Provost. This does not apply to students enrolled in formal University of Pittsburgh joint or dual programs.

**Master's degree and doctoral degree:** Students simultaneously pursuing a master's and doctoral degree at the University of Pittsburgh may generally share up to 24 credits between the two programs. There may be limitations to this rule if the doctoral program is completed first. If the two degrees are in the same department, it may be possible to apply all master's degree credits toward the doctoral degree (see specific departmental requirements).

**Two masters' degrees:** Students pursuing two masters' degrees at the University of Pittsburgh simultaneously (not joint or dual degrees) may generally share up to 6 credits between the two programs.

**Degree and Certificate:** Students pursuing both a degree and a certificate should consult with both programs about credit sharing. University and school rules allow all certificate credits to be applied toward the degree, but individual programs may limit sharing. There may be exceptions if the certificate is started before the degree or if the certificate and degree are awarded by different schools.

**More than two programs:** Any student pursuing more than two programs (degrees or certificates) should consult with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#), about credit sharing.

**Combining credit-sharing with advanced standing:** In general, it is not possible to both share credits among simultaneous degrees and also receive advanced standing credit for prior work. Students who are pursuing simultaneous degrees and also seeking advanced standing credits for prior work should consult with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#).

### ***Statute of Limitations***

The following are the statutes of limitations for the degree programs offered in Pitt Public Health:

- Doctoral programs: 10 years

- MPH programs: 5 years
- MHA program: 5 years
- MS programs: 4 years

To request an extension to the statute of limitations, students must first talk to their program director or advisor. They will advance the request to the department chair who will submit a written request to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Students with questions about this process should consult with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [Mary Derkach](#).