



Bachelors of Science in Public Health (BSPH)

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

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I. Welcome

The Dean, faculty, and staff welcome you to Pitt Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh. We are pleased that you have chosen to pursue your educational goals in the exciting field of Public Health.

This handbook will provide you with information on the policies, procedures and information specific to our school. It will also give you information about other service and supports available at the university level.

Please read this handbook carefully prior to starting your studies with us. The information is a reference for most of the frequently asked questions about the BSPH and University of Pittsburgh requirements.

Information in this handbook is subject to change, so you should check the Pitt Public Health website periodically. The website will always contain the most updated policies and procedures.

If you have any questions contact:

Mara Koperwas (mkoperwas@pitt.edu) or Ada Youk (ayouk@pitt.edu)

About Pitt Public Health

Founded in 1948, Pitt Public Health is affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences. Public health is the science of protecting the health of populations and communities. Public health professionals address issues such as effects of climate change; population control of infectious disease; air, food and water safety; and health equity. This contrasts with the role of clinicians such as nurses or physicians, who focus primarily on treating individuals – generally individuals who already have a health problem. Public health professionals apply tools from almost every field, but especially the quantitative, social, and biological sciences.

Since its founding, Pitt Public Health has ranked among the country's top schools of public health. Over the years, we have successfully implemented a three- component mission of research, education, and service/practice. The school responds to today's health threats by preparing the next generation of public health leaders to use innovation as the catalyst for problem-solving. The work of public health professionals has never been more important than in today's world of emerging disease, environmental threats, changing demographics, and growing health disparities. Public health addresses broad issues that affect the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, populations, and societies-both now, and for generations to come.

II. Advising and Mentoring

Role of the advisor:

Effective academic advising is an essential component of student success. Professional academic advisors provide holistic support for students in the School of Public Health from orientation through graduation. We are committed to helping students identify and pursue their academic interests and personal goals as they create their own unique path through their undergraduate career. We want students to take full advantage of all the opportunities the School of Public Health and the University of Pittsburgh have to offer as they become the next generation of public health leaders.

Meet the Advisors:

Public Health Academic Advising Center (1100 Public Health Building)

Adrian Gonzales, Director of Undergraduate Advising
412.383.3433
adrian.gonzales@pitt.edu

Kristin Amos-Abanyie
412.648.7620
kra80@pitt.edu

Emily Snyder
412.624.6378
evsnyder@pitt.edu

Schedule of meetings (once of semester minimum and more if needed):

Students are required to meet with their assigned advisor once per term, prior to enrollment in the next terms' courses. At this meeting the student and advisor will go over current courses, academic and career goals, campus resources, and graduation requirements, and post-graduation plans.

Students can also meet with advisors before or after their required pre-enrollment appointment.

Making appointments (how to make pathways):

Advising appointments are made through [Pathways](#) which students' access through my.pitt.edu.

Pre-enrollment advising appointments are usually made through an appointment request email the student receives from their advisor during the 4th week of the term.

<https://www.pathways.pitt.edu/faqs/student-user-faqs>

Academic Advisor Change Procedure:

A student requesting a change in academic advisors should email their request to the Director of Academic Advising or the BSPH Program Director. The Director of Academic Advising or Program Director will set up a meeting with the student to go over the reason for the request to change academic advisor and inform the student of the decision. If the advisor change is granted, the student would be assigned a new advisor. If the advisor change is not granted, the student is informed of the reason the change was not granted.

Role of the Faculty Mentor:

Faculty mentors will provide public health domain knowledge as well as guidance on public health careers and advice for preparing for graduate school. All students in the program will be matched or assigned to a faculty mentor no later than the end of their sophomore year. As a student progresses through the program and completes more courses within the curriculum, they may choose an area of focus. Upon choosing an area of focus, students will then be matched with a content specific faculty mentor from one of the seven SPH departments or assigned a faculty mentor if no area of focus is chosen.

Meetings with faculty mentors are not required but students are encouraged to engage with their faculty mentor at any time.

Faculty Mentor Change Procedure:

A student requesting a change in faculty mentor should email their request to the BSPH Program Director. The Director will set up a meeting with the student to go over the reason for the request to change faculty mentor and assign the student a new faculty mentor.

III. Bachelor of Science in Public Health Competencies

All BSPH students must complete the Tier 1 and Tier 2 courses (25 credit hours total) as part of the degree. The courses in Tier 1 and Tier 2 have been designed to provide students with a strong foundation in the core competencies of public health as outlined by our accrediting agency, the Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH). Competencies required to be achieved within the BSPH are as follows:

1. the ability to communicate public health information, in both oral and written forms, through a variety of media and to diverse audiences
2. the ability to locate, use, evaluate and synthesize public health information

In addition to the above competencies, CEPH requires that the overall undergraduate curriculum expose students to concepts and experiences necessary for success in the workplace, further education and lifelong learning. Students are exposed to these concepts through any combination of learning experiences and co-curricular experiences. These concepts are as follows:

- advocacy for protection and promotion of the public's health at all levels of society
- community dynamics
- critical thinking and creativity

- cultural contexts in which public health professionals work
- ethical decision making as related to self and society
- independent work and a personal work ethic
- networking
- organizational dynamics
- professionalism
- research methods
- systems thinking
- teamwork and leadership

IV. Course and Credit Requirements

BSPH Program Requirements

The Undergraduate Catalog provides detailed information on University requirements: [School of Public Health - University of Pittsburgh - Acalog ACMS™](#)

The BSPH curriculum consists of 10 credits of introductory foundational courses (tier 1), including a one-credit first-year seminar. This is followed by 15 credits of core courses (tier 2) that provide students with an introduction to each of the fundamental disciplines of public health (epidemiology, behavioral and community health, biostatistics, health policy and management, and environmental health). Students are also required to take 18-credits of BSPH major electives (tier 3) which can create an area of focus. Finally, each student will complete one of five choices of course-based capstone experience as well as a service-learning requirement.

Degree Requirements	Hours
General education requirements	variable
BSPH Curriculum:	
TIER 1: BSPH Foundational Courses	25 credits
TIER 2: BSPH Core Courses	18 credits
TIER 3: BSPH Major Elective Courses	3 credits
BSPH Capstone	120 hours
Service-Learning Requirement	

Basic Core BSPH Curriculum

Foundational Courses (Tier 1) – 10 credits

PUBHLT 0100 - Fundamentals of Public Health (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0110 - Genes, Cell, and Communities: Introduction to Public Health Biology (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0120 - Essentials of Health Equity: Exploring Social and Structural Determinants of Health (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0140 - FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR (1 cr)

Core Courses (Tier 2) – 15 credits

These classes are the fundamental introductions to the public health disciplines.

PUBHLT 0300 - Introduction to Community-Based Approaches to Public Health (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0310 - Introduction to Public Health Biostatistics (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0320 - Introduction to Environmental Health Sciences (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0330 - Introduction to Epidemiology (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0340 - Introduction to Health Policy and Management (3 cr)

Major Electives (Tier 3) – 18 credits

Students must take a minimum of 18 credit hours of major elective BSPH courses. Electives can be organized into topical areas (“clusters”) to allow students to explore an area of interest in greater depth. Students are free to create their own cluster based on their area of interest in collaboration with their advisor. Public health is an interdisciplinary field by design, and our goal is to provide a degree that encourages students to take advantage of the full breadth of training in relevant disciplines that is available across the University of Pittsburgh by incorporating classes from other schools into their clusters. Therefore, students may take six credits of pre-approved non-BSPH electives to complete to fulfill this elective cluster requirement.

Public Health Electives:

If you are interested in Behavioral and Community Health Science:

PUBHLT 0400 – SOCIAL MEDIA AND HEALTH (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0401 – CAN ART HEAL? AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTS IN HEALTH RESEARCH & INTERVENTIONS (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0402 – ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA AND HEALTH (3 cr)

If you are interested in Bioethics:

PUBHLT 0500 – ETHICAL ISSUES IN PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY HEALTH (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0501 – INTERDISCIPLINARY RESOLUTION OF BIOETHICS CASES (3 cr)

If you are interested in Biostatistics:

PUBHLT 0410 – DATA FOR GOOD: BIOSTATISTICS IN ACTION (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0411 – STATISTICAL PACKAGES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH ANALYSIS (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0412 – DATA TO DECISION: MODELING IN PUBLIC HEALTH (3 cr)

If you are interested in Environmental and Occupational Health:

PUBHLT 0420 – EVIDENCE-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL AND "ONE HEALTH" (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0421 – HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION AND CLIMATE (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0422 – MOLECULES OF LIFE, SICKNESS, AND DEATH (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0423 – THE AQUEOUS ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH (3 cr)
PUBHLT 0424 – OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE: PROMOTING WORKPLACE SAFETY (3 cr)

If you are interested in Epidemiology:

- PUBHLT 0430 – GET SASsy: DATA MANAGEMENT & ANALYSIS WITH SAS (3 cr)
- PUBHLT 0431 – UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING HEALTH RESEARCH (3 cr)
- PUBHLT 0432 – EPIDEMIOLOGY IN PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE (3 cr)
- PUBHLT 0433 – THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF FIREARM INJURIES AND DEATH (3 cr)

If you are interested in Global Health:

- PUBHLT 1001 – INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL HEALTH (3 cr)

If you are interested in Health Policy and Management:

- PUBHLT 0440 – INTRODUCTION TO THE US HEALTH SYSTEM (3 cr)
- PUBHLT 0441 – IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH APPLIED IMPROVISATION TECHNIQUES (3 cr)
- PUBHLT 0442 – FUNDAMENTALS OF MANAGEMENT FOR HEALTH INDUSTRY LEADERS (3 cr)
- PUBHLT 0443 – REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN THE US: POLICY, POLITICS, AND JUSTICE (3 cr)

If you are interested in Human Genetics

- PUBHLT 0451 – HUMAN GENETICS: HEALTH AND DISEASE (3 cr)
- PUBHLT 0452 – HUMAN GENETICS: SOCIETY, HEALTHCARE, EQUITY, LAW (3 cr)
- PUBHLT 0453 – INTRODUCTION TO GENETIC COUNSELING (3 cr)

If you are interested in Infectious Diseases

- PUBHLT 0461 – VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES (3 cr)
- PUBHLT 0462 – HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETAL IMPACTS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES (3 cr)

Approved Non-Public Health Electives:

- AFRCNA 1710 – AFRICAN AMERICAN HEALTH ISSUES (3 cr)
- ANTH 1722 – CULTURE & POLITICS OF MENTAL HEALTH (3 cr)
- ANTH 1761 – PATIENTS AND HEALERS: MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY 1 (3 cr)
- FR 0088 – AILING BODIES: NARRATIVES OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS (3 cr)
- HIST 0705 – AN ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE HISTORY OF THE WORLD (3 cr)
- HIST 0791 – HEALTH CONTROVERSIES IN HISTORY: ETHICS, PUBLICS, INTERVENTIONS (3 cr)
- PUBSRV 0020 – INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC SERVICE (3 cr)
- SOC 0473 – SOCIOLOGY OF GLOBALIZATION & HEALTH (3 cr)

General Education Requirements

The general education requirements for the BSPH can be found here: [General Education Requirements: Public Health, BSPH - University of Pittsburgh - Acalog ACMS™](#)

V. Experiential Learning (120 required hours)

As part of the BSPH degree, we will incorporate service learning and experiential learning opportunities to complement the curriculum and provide students with meaningful ways to apply their coursework to real work scenarios.

The first 10 hours will be built into PUBHLT 0100, and portions of the remainder will also be course-based.

Advisors will check in with students over the course of the four years to check progress. Students can contact Adrianna Gradisek, Experiential Learning Specialist, to help identify service opportunities and to discuss tracking of hours.

Adrianna Gradisek, MPH
Experiential Learning Specialist
Phone: (412) 383-0934
adg146@pitt.edu

VI. Capstone Requirements

The BSPH Capstone provides students with the opportunity to synthesize their learning in different competency areas and apply cross-cutting skills. Students can choose from two options to complete their undergraduate training within the school. Each experience is designed to challenge students to synthesize what they have learned, apply knowledge and skills acquired, and gain new experience in public health practice. The capstone will be guided and monitored by advisors in addition to being supervised within the course context.

Each student must submit a Capstone approval form found on the Canvas forms page before proceeding with their capstone. Please note timing recommendations for each option below.

1. Option 1: BSPH Capstone Project (PUBHLT 0910)

- 3-credit semester long course
- Project-based course focusing on case-studies from local public health organizations that highlight a real-life challenge where students work in groups to design a solution.
- Final deliverable is poster presentation at BSPH Capstone Symposium
- Timing: Students cannot take this course until senior year

2. Option 2: In Person Practicum + BSPH Capstone Seminar (PUBHLT 0911)

- **In Person Practicum**
 - a. Semester-long public health related practicum completed by student. Options include: Internship, Research project with faculty member or independent study, study abroad experience, Bachelors of Philosophy in the Honors College on a public health topic.
 - b. Students must complete a minimum of 10 hours per week at their practicum. Students must complete a total of 140 hours engaged in the activity over the course of the practicum.
 - c. Students will be required to have a supervisor or preceptor for their experience. There will be midway and final check-ins with this individual to ensure successful completion of project. Forms for check-ins can be found here on the Canvas forms page.
 - d. Timing recommended: Junior or Senior year (this could include in the summer or over academic breaks).

- **BSPH Capstone Seminar PUBHLT 0911**
 - a. All students who participate in an in-person practicum to fulfill their capstone must also enroll in PUBHLT 0911
 - b. Final deliverable is poster presentation at BSPH Capstone Symposium based on analysis and synthesis of practicum experience
 - c. Timing: Students cannot take this course until senior year

VII. Study Abroad Opportunities

Some study abroad experiences that are public health related are:

Public Health Threats in Suriname (PUBHLT 0350)

Healthcare Delivery in Beijing

Himalayan Health & Wilderness First Responder

Healthcare in British Context

Pitt in Bolivia: Culture, Society and Health

Visit www.globalexperiences.pitt.edu for more information!

VIII. Registration

Generally, students enrolled in the School of Public Health are not required to have their academic advisor's approval before adding or dropping a course. However, there will be an advisor hold set for each term that will be removed by the advisor if the student is in good standing to enroll in courses. Additionally, all first-year students are strongly urged to consult their academic advisor before adding or dropping a course.

Incoming first-year students will meet with their academic advisor the summer before their first fall term. They will receive an online orientation and complete a student intake survey from the Office of Admissions before they can make their initial advising appointment. At the advising appointment, students will work with their advisor to enroll in courses.

Enrollment for the spring term begins at the end of October. Enrollment for the fall term begins at the end of February. First-Year and continuing students are given an enrollment date by the Office of Registrar based on number of credits earned. Students will receive an email invitation from their advisor to make a pre-enrollment advising appointment sometime after the third week of classes. At the end of this advising appointment, the student's advising hold will be removed and the student will be able to enroll on their enrollment date provided they do not have any other holds.

IX. Graduation

Pitt Public Health has a school-specific ceremony for both undergraduate and graduate students. This ceremony is typically held the day before the University wide undergraduate ceremony. All BSPH students are also encouraged to participate in the University wide undergraduate ceremony held at the Peterson Events where all schools are included.

Applying for graduation: Students will complete a [graduation application](#) through the Office of the Registrar. They will be eligible to apply for graduation once they enroll in the final term courses.

X. Career Services

Pitt Public Health Career Services provides a number of opportunities and resources for students.

One-on-one career counseling appointments, including resume and CV reviews, cover letter reviews, and interview preparation Access to Handshake, a career platform used by the University of Pittsburgh where students can search for job, internship, and fellowship opportunities. To learn more about Pitt Public Health Career Services, visit publichealth.pitt.edu/careers. Students can contact Mike Dolinger (mikedolinger@pitt.edu) for in-house services.

University career services: BSPH students may use the [Pitt Career Center](#) (200 William Pitt Union, careers@pitt.edu, 412.383.4473) for help with resumes, internships, and mock interviews. They also offer career fairs, internship fairs and other events BSPH students may attend.

XI. Forms

Satisfactory/No Credit Grade or Audit Option Request

To take a course Satisfactory/No Credit (aka "Pass/Fail"), students need to complete a [Grade/Option Audit Request form](#) and send it to PHUndergrad@pitt.edu by the published deadline listed in the academic calendar.

Withdrawal and Resignation

To withdraw from an individual Public Health (PUBHLT) course, please complete the [Monitored Withdrawal \(Fillable PDF\)](#) and send it to PHUndergrad@pitt.edu from your Pitt email before the published withdrawal deadline listed in the academic calendar.

If you want to withdraw from a Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences course, please complete the [Monitored Withdrawal Form \(Fillable PDF\)](#) and send it to studentrecords@as.pitt.edu from your Pitt email.

Course Repeat Form

If you have repeated a course, please complete the [Course Repeat Form](#), and send it to PHUndergrad@pitt.edu.

Best Fit Form

If you want to switch a course from what general education requirement it is currently satisfying on your advisement report to another requirement it is approved to count for, complete the following [Best Fit Form](#).

Summer Course Approval Form

If you plan to take courses over the summer at another college or university, please complete the [Summer Course Approval Form](#).

To complete the form, you will need to get a course description from the college or university you want to attend. You must have a 2.0 GPA or higher to take summer courses at another college or university. You can take a maximum of 2 courses up to 8 credits over the summer.

It would be best to get approval at least two weeks before your summer course begins.

Extended Drop

Please complete this [Extended Drop Form](#) to drop a course during the extended drop period which take place during the third week of classes.

Students may only drop a class during the extended drop period if they maintain their full-time status (enrolled in 12+ credits). Part-time students may not drop a course during the extended drop period.

Transfer to Another School at Pitt

The following form is for those seeking to transfer out of Public Health to another school at Pitt: [Academic Program \(School\) Change Form](#)

XII. Grievance Procedures

Students are encouraged to share concerns with any faculty or staff member at any time. The first step to resolving any dispute should be a professional discussion with the faculty member involved. The next step is a discussion with the BSPH program director. In situations in which it is uncomfortable to talk to those individuals, you can raise issues with the associate dean responsible for academic oversight. Your academic advisor and faculty mentor can also be good sources of advice.

Mike Dolinger (mikedolinger@pitt.edu) is the acting SPH ombudsperson. Students are encouraged to contact Mike to express concerns or complaints that arise that you believe have not or cannot be addressed with a faculty person or the BSPH office. The ombudsperson's role is to help mediate conflicts, facilitate conversations between individuals, and provide information about institutional policies related to the student's issues, including University policies and procedures.

Formal procedures for disputing academic censure are contained in the school's [probation and dismissal policy](#).

University-level grievance-reporting procedures are also available to all SPH students, staff, and faculty, including the following:

- [Grievance Procedure | Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion | University of Pittsburgh](#)
- [Office of Compliance, Investigation and Ethics](#)
- [Student Conduct | Student Affairs \(pitt.edu\)](#)

XIII. University Policies

The University policies related to undergraduate students can be found here: [Academic Regulations](#).

Important policies to review: [Student Rights and Responsibilities | Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\) | Harassment Policies | Student Service Indicators Policy](#)

[University Notice of Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment](#)

[Pitt Public Health - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)

[Disability Resources and Services](#)

[Veterans Benefits](#)

[International Students](#)

[Financial Information](#)

XIII. Example Schedule

EXAMPLE 4-YEAR SCHEDULE

Fall First Year (16 credits)	Spring First Year (15 credits)
PUBHLT 0100 Fundamentals of Public Health	Algebra (Fall or Spring, if required)
PUBHLT 0110 Introduction to Public Health Biology OR PUBHLT 0120 Essentials of Health Equity	PUBHLT 0110 Introduction to Public Health Biology OR PUBHLT 0120 Essentials of Health Equity
PUBHLT 0140 First-Year Public Health Seminar	General Education Requirement
Seminar in Composition (Fall or Spring)	General Education Requirement
General Education Requirement	General Education Requirement/Elective
General Education Requirement/Elective	
Fall Second Year (15 credits)	Spring Second Year (15 credits)
PUBHLT 0310 Intro. To Public Health Biostatistics AND/OR PUBHLT 0330 Fundamentals of Epidemiology	PUBHLT 0300 Comm-Based Approaches to Public Health
General Education Requirement	PUBHLT 0320 Intro. To Environ. Health Sciences AND/OR PUBHLT 0340 Fund. Of Health Policy and Management
General Education Requirement	General Education Requirement
General Education Requirement/Elective	General Education Requirement/Elective
General Education Requirement/Elective	General Education Requirement/Elective
Fall Third Year (15 credits)	Spring Third Year (15 credits)
PUBHLT 0310 Intro. To Public Health Biostatistics AND/OR PUBHLT 0330 Fundamentals of Epidemiology (If not taken Second Year)	PUBHLT 0320 Intro. To Environ. Health Sciences AND/OR PUBHLT 0340 Fund. Of Health Policy and Management (If not taken Second Year)
Public Health Major Elective Course	Public Health Major Elective Course
General Education Requirement	Public Health Major Elective Course
General Education Requirement/Elective	General Education Requirement/Elective
General Education Requirement/Elective	General Education Requirement/Elective
Fall Fourth Year (15 credits)	Spring Fourth Year (15 credits)
Public Health Major Elective Course	Public Health Capstone Course (Fall or Spring)
Public Health Major Elective Course	Public Health Major Elective Course
General Education Requirement/Elective	General Education Requirement/Elective
General Education Requirement/Elective	Elective
General Education Requirement/Elective	Elective