Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships
Frequently Asked Questions for BU MPH Students

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This document is intended to provide suggestions to MPH students looking to navigate both MPH and FLAS program requirements, which generally require some flexibility within the standard MPH program. Please note that SPH requirements may change without the African Studies Center’s knowledge. If you have further questions or suggestions for additions to this list, please contact the FLAS Coordinator, Eric Schmidt, at ericjs@bu.edu.

1. Can I take a full course load AND the required language class?

   Yes. However, full time tuition covers up to 18 credits. Taking four 4-credit classes plus a language class would be 20 credits. You may need to pay for additional credits, take a 2-credit class, or drop a course.

2. As a first year MPH student I am required to take the 4 CORE classes. Can I count one of those towards my area studies requirements?

   It is possible to count one of your required SPH classes towards the Africa area studies requirement. However, it’s a good idea to talk to your advisor and explain your situation before registration. Together, you can reach out to your professors and inquire about in-course assignments that may satisfy the African area requirement. (At least 25% of the course or its assignments must focus on Africa). This can sometimes be achieved through a final project or a semester research paper. Many courses at BUSPH have a global focus, and others allow freedom for the student to study a topic of their choice.

3. If I drop one of the CORE classes during the first semester, can I make it up over the summer?

   No. The registrar’s office requires that you complete all four CORE classes before registering for additional courses at SPH. However, you can take CORE classes in the spring during your second semester concurrently with other courses.

4. How will this affect my practicum?

   It’s required that all four CORE classes are completed before starting your practicum. This means you need to finish (not be enrolled in) all four classes before you can start accumulating hours towards the 240-hour practicum. If you are completing your CORE classes in the spring, you will not be able to start your practicum until the summer. If you choose to take all four CORE classes in the fall, you will be able to start your practicum during your second semester.
5. My African language class conflicts with the CORE class schedules at SPH. What do I do?

You might consider joining the evening cohort (Cohort E) to avoid scheduling conflicts during the day. You may also consider reaching out to the professor of the language class to see if the class time is flexible, though this will depend on the professor and the size of the class. You can write a petition to the registrar’s office explaining your situation and request to join a separate cohort for one of your classes; however, since the FLAS is not affiliated with BUSPH, they are not obligated to accommodate your schedule.

6. If I finish my CORE requirements over the first two semesters, will I still graduate on time?

The flexible MPH program allows students to study part-time during their second year. FLAS fellows may choose to take additional classes during their 3rd and 4th semester to make up any credits and still graduate in May. There are also summer courses available at BUSPH, and students can choose to take classes during the summer if they want to graduate by December.