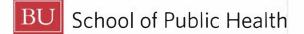
# BOSTON UNIVERSITY School of Public Health

# MASTER OF SCIENCE



# PROGRAM ADVISING GUIDE 2024-2025



Program Director: Dr. Andrew Stokes Academic Program Administrator : Kashia Point Du Jour

# Master of Science Program Advising Guide

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# Introduction

This guide is meant to serve as a resource for faculty, staff, and students in the Master of Science programs at BUSPH (excluding the MS in Applied Biostatistics). The resources and information compiled in this guide will help to answer many student questions around school and academic resources, program timelines, and degree requirements. Students should feel free to approach their advisor and support staff with concerns about academic performance, career pathways, registration, questions about progress towards their degree, and much more.

	Office & Contact Info
Drogram Contacto	
Program Contacts	Program Director: <u>Andrew Stokes, PhD</u> Academic Program Administratory Kashia Boint Du Jour, MBH
	Academic Program Administrator: Kashia Point Du Jour, MPH
Career Services	Office of Career Services: www.bu.edu/sph/careers/
	Talbot Building 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor East
Financial Assistance	Office of Student Financial Services: www.bumc.bu.edu/osfs/contact-us/
	Email: <u>osfs-sph@bu.edu</u>
	Phone: 617-358-6550
Library Resources	Alumni Medical Library: medlib.bu.edu
	L Building, 12 <sup>th</sup> Floor
	Phone: 617-358-4810
	Boston University Library Network: <u>www.bu.edu/library</u>
SPH Registrar's Office	Registrar's Office: www.bu.edu/sph/students/advising-and-registration/
	Talbot 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Central
	Email: <u>sphregr@bu.edu</u>
	Phone: 617-358-3434
	Compliance, Registration and Unofficial transcripts are available on the MyBU Student
	Portal
Student Health	Student Health Services: <u>www.bu.edu/shs/</u>
Behavioral Medicine	881 Commonwealth Avenue
	Phone: 617-353-3575
Student Services	Office of Graduate Student Life: www.bu.edu/sph/students/student-services/
	Talbot 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor East
	Email: <u>sphgsl@bu.edu</u>
Disability and Access	Office of Disability and Access Services: <u>bu.edu/disability</u>
Services	Email: access@bu.edu
	Phone: 617-353-3658
International Students	Contact Information: //www.bu.edu/isso/
And Scholars Office	888 Commonwealth Avenue, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor
(ISSO)	Boston, MA 02215
	Email: <u>isso@bu.edu</u>
	Advisor-on-Call: <u>https://www.bu.edu/isso/contact/isso-advisor-on-call-for-student/</u>
Additional Student	Academic Support: https://www.bu.edu/sph/students/student-services/student-
Resources	resources/academic-support/
	SPH Courses and Bulletin: https://www.bu.edu/academics/sph/courses/

#### **Contact Information**

# Advising

#### Role of Students

Students are ultimately responsible for their educational and professional development. While advisors provide guidance, students are expected to drive the advising process to ensure that their particular needs are met. Students are largely responsible for contacting and scheduling appointments with their advisor when in need of specific assistance or support, preparing for advising sessions with appropriate resources or materials, and staying up to date on BUSPH and departmental communications. Students are encouraged to reach out to their faculty advisor, other faculty, or program staff, as needed.

#### Advisor Assignments

Students will be assigned to Dr. Andrew Stokes as their program academic advisor at entrance to the program in July. When they select their mentored research project, their mentored research advisor will become their faculty academic advisor. These faculty will be added to the Student Link, with Dr. Stokes remaining as a co-advisor.

#### Role of Faculty Advisors

Faculty advisors serve primarily in a mentoring role, providing guidance regarding career pathways, professional development, and options to complete degree requirements. Faculty advising sessions are intended to support students to:

- learn more about the field of public health, including research and career paths;
- understand how their interests and skills fit in the field of public health research and practice; and
- design an educational program that will facilitate academic success and achievement of career goals.

Faculty advisors meet or correspond with their advisees each semester to help plan their course of study and to assure that their academic needs are well-met. Students' advising needs are variable as are their desired modes of communication. Some students may only require e-mail check-ins, while others may need in-person or phone communication. Many faculty members find group advising sessions and set office hours to be best practices for relaying general information and individual appointments for specific questions and concerns.

Faculty advisors also serve as the primary mentor on students' mentored research experiences. Regarding the student's mentored research, faculty advisors are expected to do the following:

- Meet on a recurring basis, recommended amount: 30 minutes every other week during the duration of the mentored research experience
- Assist with the conceptualization of the research project
- Meet to discuss and provide feedback on the analytic plan
- Assist students in identifying and gaining access to data
- Review and provide input on preliminary qualitative and/or quantitative analyses
- Review student work and provide written feedback on manuscript drafts

# Overview

The Master of Science programs are designed for students with a strong interest in population health research and empirical analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data. Students can align their interests with a specialized public health degree, which includes Climate and Health, Epidemiology, Global Health Research, Translation and Implementation Science, and Public Health Data Science. Students may also choose to design their own course of study through the Master of Science in Population Health Research.

The 34-credit degree programs establishe a foundation in the theory and practice of public health research while offering the opportunity to specialize in a unique area of interest. MS students develop knowledge in quantitative and qualitative research methods, receive comprehensive training in analytical methods for decision-making, and gain practical experience in their real-world application.

The MS programs also equip students with specific skills and training in hypothesis development, data collection and management, statistical computing techniques, and appropriate interpretation and presentation of research results.

Foundational	Specialization	Research
Foundations of Public Health (online)	Required coursework in one of the following specializations:	Research Skills Seminar
Essentials of Population Health Research (online) Statistical Computing (on-campus, intensive)	<ul> <li>Climate and Health</li> <li>Epidemiology</li> <li>Global Health</li> <li>Public Health Data Science</li> <li>Translation and Implementation Science</li> <li>Population Health Research (Custom Specialization)</li> </ul>	Mentored Research Experience (400-hour experience with a SPH faculty or an approved partner) A Guided Epidemiologic Study & Research Dissemination Seminar

The program components are outlined below, and then each is described in detail.

### **MS Degrees**

MS degree options include Climate and Health, Epidemiology, Global Health Research, Public Health Data Science, Translation and Implementation Science, and Population Health Research. *When reviewing your course bulletin, be sure to review the bulletin for the year you were admitted, using the Bulletin Archive*.

#### MS in Climate and Health

The program provides students with a fundamental grounding in understanding the health impacts of climate change, and emphasizes the development and application of quantitative research methods necessary to evaluate the benefits of climate mitigation and adaptation measures, including analytical methods for decision making, statistical computing, geographical information systems (GIS), and large spatial data processing related to climate.

Graduates of the program are prepared for research positions in academic settings, government, consulting firms, policy think tanks, or private industries. They are also well positioned for doctoral

education in climate and health, environmental health, and related fields. Full curriculum and program competencies can be found on the <u>MS in Climate and Health Bulletin page</u>.

#### MS in Epidemiology

The program provides students with a fundamental grounding in both the theory and practice of epidemiology, and emphasizes the development and application of quantitative research skills to real-world research in public health with the acquisition of skills in hypothesis formation; data collection and management; statistical computing and interpretation and presentation of results.

Graduates of the program are prepared for research positions in academic settings, government, hospitals, or private industries. They are also well-positioned for doctoral education in epidemiology and related fields. Full curriculum and program competencies can be found on the <u>MS in Epidemiology Bulletin page</u>.

#### MS in Global Health Research

The program is designed to provide a practical and versatile tool kit of analytic skills relevant in the field of Global Health Research. Global Health Research is often multidisciplinary and successful work in this area requires a broad understanding of the processes by which policy initiatives are developed.

Accordingly, the training provides graduate students with capacity in epidemiology, biostatistics, health finance and economics, qualitative research, and statistical programming. Students will receive close one-to-one mentorship and/or team-based mentoring on an original and publishable scientific project. The program prepares students for careers in domestic or international research organizations, NGOs, universities, foundations and private industry, while also generating future doctoral candidates seeking to pursue DSc, PhD, DrPH, and other advanced degrees. Full curriculum and program competencies can be found on the <u>MS in Global Health Research Bulletin page</u>.

#### MS in Public Health Data Science

The program provides students with a solid foundation in quantitative methods. Students will learn how to make data-driven recommendations to improve public health research and interventions.

The curriculum will provide graduates with a skill set in data management and analysis, and application of these methods in a health-related focus area of choice. The program will prepare students for hands-on careers in health data analytics or further study in quantitative and applied fields in public health. Full curriculum and program competencies can be found on the <u>MS in Public Health Data Science Bulletin page</u>.

#### MS in Translation and Implementation Science

The program establishes a solid foundation in qualitative and quantitative methods. As part of this program, students will learn how to design evidence-based interventions that generate sustainable results and improve health overall.

Graduates of the program gain a vast skill set in implementation science research, organizational change theory, and community-engaged research. The rigorous MS curriculum examines systemic application of research findings and solutions to the barriers that prevent widespread implementation. Full curriculum and program competencies can be found on the <u>MS in Translation and Implementation Science Bulletin page</u>.

#### MS in Population Health Research

Students work closely with a faculty mentor to design a program of study that aligns with their academic and professional goals. The curriculum provides students with a fundamental grounding in both the theory and practice of public health research, emphasizing the development and application of qualitative and quantitative research methods with specific skills and training in hypothesis development; data collection and management skills; statistical computing techniques and appropriate interpretation and presentation of results.

Graduates of the program are prepared for research positions in academic settings, government, hospitals, or private industries. They are also well-positioned for doctoral education in related fields and disciplines. Full curriculum and program competencies can be found on the <u>MS in Population Health Research Bulletin page</u>.

# EP816: A Guided Epidemiologic Study

This seminar course guides students through the development of a hypothesis-based study using a dataset that is currently available to the instructors. Through a combination of didactic lectures, workshops, written assignments, and oral presentations, students develop hypotheses, conduct literature reviews, perform data analyses, and write each section of a scientific manuscript. The final project requires the student to integrate all sections into a complete paper for journal submission. This course prepares students to write thesis proposals and manuscripts.*Please note this course is part of a two- semester sequence with PH880*.

# PH870: Research Skills Seminar

Researchers are routinely called upon to ensure research project success through the application of many professional skills beyond data collection and analysis. In PH870 Research Skill Seminar, students learn and apply concepts and tools relevant to research project management, leading research teams, managing stakeholders, developing budgets, and effective communication of research results for diverse audiences and sectors.

# **PH880 Research Dissemination Seminar**

PH880 Research Dissemination Seminar an upper-level applied seminar course, in which students are mentored through the development of a manuscript suitable for publication in a peer- reviewed journal. Through a combination of workshops, written assignments, and oral presentations, students will develop research questions and/or hypotheses, conduct literature reviews, perform data analyses, and summarize results in a manuscript. All MS students must successfully complete EP816 A Guided Epidemiologic Study before taking PH880.

# **PH890: Mentored Research Experience**

As part of the 400-hour research requirement, students conduct applied population health research under the mentorship of a faculty member. PH890 Mentored Research Experience is a zero-credit, pass/fail requirement which may include data collection, analysis, and preparation of a manuscript for scientific audiences. The goal of the course is to provide students with hands-on training in the development and implementation of a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods research study. Each student will be assigned to a primary project mentor who will serve as their faculty advisor on the research project. Students may propose an independent project for faculty mentorship or work on an existing faculty project to which they are matched based on mutual interest. Given the substantial commitment of time built into the program, students are expected to develop a major deliverable at the end of the program (e.g., research manuscript) and contribute to various aspects of the project, such as project conceptualization, questionnaire development, data collection, cleaning, analysis, manuscript preparation, and dissemination. The Mentored Research Experience may be completed over the course of a single semester or across multiple semesters. Students who do not complete their Mentored Research in the course of a semester, will be required to re-register for the following semester.

#### Connecting With A Mentor

The Program Director, and the Academic Program Administrator will circulate a list of available mentored research projects. Students are also welcome to pursue research projects with SPH faculty they are already connected to.

**Research Proposal** 

Following selection and coordination with their research mentor, students will complete a mentored research proposal, in conjunction with their mentor, to determine the specific project, objective, and timeline they plan to follow. This proposal should follow the outline in the form at the end of this guide and requires the mentor's signature. The proposal is due to the Program Director by **October 1**<sup>st</sup> for final signature and approval.

#### **Ongoing Research**

Once the project is confirmed, students should maintain progress and track their hours. Students will complete a midpoint review when they are halfway through their research (approx. 200 hours completed), and address any challenges, obstacles, or changes to the original proposal. This will be done through a Qualtrics form.

#### Research Poster Summit

At the completion of the mentored research semester, students are highly encouraged to present a poster of their research to the broader SPH community. This is a public event, held each April, with the purpose for students to share their experience and outcomes from their research.

Students are required to summarize their research in a poster format, which will be printed for them by the program. Students are expected to submit their poster to the Academic Program Administrator by the date provided. Students unable to submit their poster by the date provided will be responsible for printing their poster. Students that print their own poster are also responsible for submitting a request for reimbursement to the Academic Program Administrator. During the event, students are expected to give a short presentation of their work, followed by question & answer from their peers, faculty, and staff in attendance. Feedback from this event should be reflected into the final manuscript.

Poster requirements:

- Components include Background, Objectives, Methods, Results, and Discussion
- Include figures and tables as needed to highlight key results
- The dimensions of the poster should be 24x36
- Font type should be Times New Roman or Calibri fonts. Font sizes should be 64pt for the title, 48pt for headings, and 24pt for body text. Within the poster's text, the font size should never be smaller than 24pt.

#### **Final Deliverables**

At the completion of 400 hours, students should have a completed major deliverable (i.e., research manuscript) to reflect the progress and outcomes of their work.

Requirements:

- While there are no strict word count limits for the final deliverable, the main text of the manuscript should generally be within the range of 3000-5000 words.
- Please use Times New Roman 12pt font with double-spaced text and normal margins.
- While there is no required citation style, please choose one style and use it consistently throughout the text. Citations should be entered using a bibliographic referencing tool such as Zotero.
- The manuscript should be organized into the following major sections:
  - Title page
  - o Abstract

- o Main Text including Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion
- References
- Tables/Figures
- Supplementary Material

#### Mentored Research Final Review

At the end of the mentored research, two reviews will be completed. Both of these must be submitted prior to the last day of the semester in order to meet graduation requirements.

- 1. Mentor final evaluation
- 2. Student end of experience survey This is a final survey, sent to the students via Qualtrics, which capture's the student's mastery of program competencies, and collects feedback on their experience with the mentored research

#### Timeline Summary for Full-time Students

- July through August:
  - Students begin looking for mentored research advisors and brainstorming projects
- September:
  - o Select research mentor
- October:
  - Complete Research Proposal
  - Register for PH890 for the Spring
  - Begin research hours
- November through April:
  - Continue 400 hours of research
  - o Complete the Midpoint Review after 200 hours are completed
- April:
  - Present at Research Poster Summit
- May:
  - Submit final deliverables (i.e., research manuscript)
  - Complete end of experience survey

# Sample Schedule

Below is an example of a schedule for students completing the MS program in one year. Each degree has specific requirements, which can be found on the <u>SPH Program Requirements</u>

Semester	Course	Format/Notes	Credits
	PH700: Foundations of Public Health*	Online; Self-Guided	0
Summer	PH750: Essentials of Population	Online	4
	Health Research		
	PH760: Accelerated Training in	In Person	2
	Statistical Computing		
	TOTAL:		6
	PH870: Research Skills Seminar	In Person	2
	PH 890: Mentored Research	400 hours over Fall and	0
		Spring with Faculty	
5-11		Mentor	
Fall	EP816: Guided Epidemiology	In Person	2
	Degree-specific Courses	See bulletin	14
			0
	TOTAL:		18
	PH880: Research Dissemination	In Person	2
	Seminar		
Carries	PH890: Mentored Research	Continuation and	0
Spring	Experience	completion of 400 hours	
	Degree-specific Courses	See bulletin	8
	TOTAL:		10

\*Must be completed before the first day of the semester. Required for all degree students.

#### Graduation

Students must apply to graduate. The deadline for graduations can be found below and <u>on</u> the <u>SPH</u> <u>Registrar Graduation</u> page. The <u>Graduation Application FAQs</u> page has additional resources.

Graduation Award Date	Deadline to Apply for Graduation
<mark>May 2025</mark>	November 10, 2024
August 2025	March 10, 2024
<mark>January 2026</mark>	<mark>June 10, 2024</mark>

# **School and Community Participation**

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in program-specific, and school-wide community events, some of which are outlined below.

#### MS Program Luncheon

Monthly, the MS program will host a luncheon, where students are encouraged to attend and connect with guest speakers and their classmates over a catered lunch. These will be published on the SPH calendar, and will focus on various topics such as:

- Introduction to Careers in Population Health with the Career and Practicum Office
- An Introduction to Public Health Writing
- A discussion of the PhD process and things to consider when deciding on whether to apply to PhD programs in the public and population health sciences

#### Additional Opportunities

- Activist Lab
- Graduate Student Organizations
- <u>Center for Anti-Racist Research</u>
- <u>Center for Innovation in Social Science</u>
- <u>Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases</u>
- Public Health Conversations
- SPH Calendar

# Registration

Students are sent <u>detailed instructions</u> explaining how to register through the <u>MyBU Student Portal</u> each semester before registration opens. The <u>Registration FAQ</u> section of the website answers the most common questions regarding the registration process

#### Course schedule

Each semester's course listing is viewable on the <u>MyBU Student Portal</u>; use the "<u>Class Search</u>" function to view classes in a particular semester.

#### Planner

Review the class schedule and use the "<u>Schedule Builder</u>" function on the MyBU Student portal to construct your schedule. If the Schedule Builder tool is not available this indicates a possible issue with your account, and you should contact the SPH Registrar's Office immediately to resolve the issue before registration.

#### Compliance

All Boston University students are required to be in compliance before they can register for classes. Students receive periodic emails from both the University and SPH Registrar's Office about non-compliance in the weeks leading up to registration. Compliance status is based on five <u>requirements for registration</u> and students can check their status on their <u>MyBU Student Portal</u> page under "Holds".

#### Waitlists

In the event that a student is closed out of a course, they should complete a <u>waitlist form</u> immediately. If a student is registered for a class that they no longer intend to take, please encourage them to release the seat to make it available to others.

Waitlist priority is calculated based on course requirements, expected graduation date and the time and date of the waitlist form submission. The Registrar's Office uses the waitlist data to work with faculty to increase the course enrollment cap or offer another section of popular courses.

If the Registrar's Office is able to offer a seat, they will send an offer to the student's BU email account. The student typically has 48 hours to respond to the offer—the timeline may be different in special cases. If the student does not accept the offer within the specified timeframe, they will be removed from the waitlist and the offer will go to the next student on the list.

The <u>Waitlist FAQs</u> section of the website answers the most common questions regarding the waitlist process. Any additional questions should be directed to the <u>Registrar's Office</u>.

#### Bulletin

Boston University's <u>Bulletin</u> is a handbook of academic programs, courses, and policies that serves as a University-wide reference and archive. As the document of authority for all BU students, the Bulletin is a guide for criteria leading to successful program completion. As such, requirements listed in the Bulletin supersede information found elsewhere.

The Bulletin is subject to yearly curricular revisions. Students and faculty should check the <u>archive</u> for specific program requirements based on the student's matriculation year.

The Bulletin includes:

- Descriptions and criteria for degree and non-degree programs offered
- Department information
- Courses offered each year
- Policies
- An <u>archive</u> of programs, departments, and courses from previous years

## **Academic Support Resources**

SPH offers a variety of academic support resources both inside and outside of the classroom to promote academic success. The Office for Graduate Student Life (GSL) centralizes support for current SPH Students. The Office acts as a liaison between students and faculty, advocating for student needs and concerns. GSL supports students in need of academic accommodations and <u>Disability & Access Services</u>, to ensure that all students have equal access to educational and professional opportunities on campus. GSL also works with students who are in distress and those who are looking to access <u>health and wellness</u> resources.

#### Public Health Writing Program

The <u>Public Health Writing Program</u> offers many resources to help you build your research, writing, and oral communication skills.

The <u>Peer Writing Coach Program</u> offers student-directed writing appointments facilitated by trained peer coaches. Peer coaches can assist at any point in the writing process. We strongly encourage everyone to make an appointment with a peer coach as you work on your writing assignments. You can make up to two appointments per assignment. Peer coaches are available to work with individuals and teams.

The Public Health Presentation Skills Program can help you strengthen your oral communication skills. Appointments are available for students looking to practice presentations and receive feedback from a peer coach on slides, posters presentations, speech outlines, and/or oral communication skills.

**Both programs are open to students enrolled in an SPH class.** Students can make appointments for both individual and team sessions. You can book writing and presentation appointments by visiting <a href="https://bu.mywconline.net/">https://bu.mywconline.net/</a>. Contact <a href="https://bu.mywconline.net/">sphcoach@bu.edu</a> if you have questions.

#### Public Health Writing Guide

The <u>Public Health Writing Guide</u> provides concrete strategies for improving your prose, increasing your productivity, and meeting the specific needs of your readers. It offers strategies and best practices that can be useful to you while you are a student, over the course of your career. Take a look at it when you need

encouragement, structure, or advice about how to get started.

#### **Online Library Tutorials**

Librarians from the <u>BU Alumni Medical Library</u> have created an array of YouTube <u>tutorials</u> for SPH students that offer clear guidance on how to execute advanced searches using PubMed, Web of Science, Google, and other online resources. They have also created tutorials on using Mendeley and Zotero reference managers, properly citing sources, and avoiding plagiarism.

If you would like to make an appointment to meet with a librarian to get personalized assistance with a search you can contact them directly by email (<u>refquest@bu.edu</u>) or phone (617 638-4228).

# **Quick Links**

Outlined below are links to the most frequently used advising resources.

- <u>Academic Accommodations</u>
- <u>Academic Calendar</u>
- <u>Academic Policies</u>
- Activist Lab
- <u>Bulletin</u>
- <u>Career Services</u>
- <u>Course Descriptions</u>
- <u>Course Meeting Dates</u>
- Disability & Access Services
- Faculty Link
- Graduation Application
- Graduation Application FAQs
- Health & Wellness
- <u>Registrar's Office forms</u>: Add/drop, leave of absence, transfer credit, etc.
- <u>Registration FAQs</u>
- <u>SPH Calendar</u>
- <u>Student Financial Services & Housing Resources</u>

- <u>Teaching & Advising Dashboard</u>
- Transfer Credit and Course Waiver policy
- Waitlist FAQs
- International Students: ISSO

#### **MS PHR Mentored Research Proposal**

Student Name:	_Student BUID:
Primary Mentor:	
Name:	
Title:	
Email:	
Project Title:	
Planned work and meeting schedule:	

#### Content

Please complete the following information on separate paper and attach to this form:

- Project Summary (less than 200 words)
- Project Objectives (no more than 3, must contain action verbs such as "to examine" or "to quantify")
- Proposed Timeline (list of progress checks and schedule for completing research)
- Project Significance: In 350 words or less, explain the importance of the problem to be addressed and how the proposed research project will improve scientific knowledge and inform population health policies, programs, and/or clinical practice
- Project Innovation: In 200 words or less, explain how the project challenges and seeks to shift current research. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, and any advantage over existing methodologies. Explain any refinements or improvements, or new applications of concepts, approaches or methodologies
- Approach: In 500 words or less, present on any of your preliminary data or findings relevant to the project objectives (if available). Describe the data and methods to be used to accomplish the project objectives. Discuss potential difficulties and limitations and how these will be overcome or mitigated.

#### **Requirements for Completion of Mentored Research**

- Submission of a signed and approved Proposal
- Completion of Midpoint Review
- Completion of minimum number of at least 400 hours
- Completion of a written manuscript
- Participation in Research Poster Summit
- Submission of evaluation form from mentor

#### Signatures - Required by student and mentor, submitted to the Program Director by October 1st

Student:	Date:
Primary Mentor:	Date:
MS PHR Program Director	Date: