

# MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Advising Guide

Boston University School of Public Health



# BU MPH Advising Guide for Faculty and Staff

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## Introduction

This guide is meant to serve as a resource for faculty and staff who advise students in the MPH program. The quality of a student's performance, academic experience, and preparation for a public health career begins with the successful recruitment of students, and is greatly enhanced by faculty and staff mentoring and advising. Students may approach you with concerns about academic performance, career pathways, personal concerns, registration, progress towards their degree, and much more. The resources and information compiled in this guide will help to answer many student questions.

## Advising roles

### Role of students

Students are ultimately responsible for their educational and professional development. While advisors will provide guidance. Students are encouraged to contact and schedule appointments with their advisor when in need of specific assistance or support, prepare for advising sessions with appropriate resources or materials, and stay up to date on BUSPH and departmental communications. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the "open-door" policy and reach out to other faculty, as needed.

### Role of department staff

Each department has dedicated administrators who provide support for academic programs and student life issues, and serve as liaisons between faculty, students, and administration. Departmental staff support faculty in the planning and implementation of our curriculum and carry out extra-curricular activities to enrich student learning, career preparation, alumni networking, and community building. These administrators are the go-to for general student questions, regarding navigating life as a student, course sequencing, registration, and identifying resources on campus.

### Role of faculty advisors

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

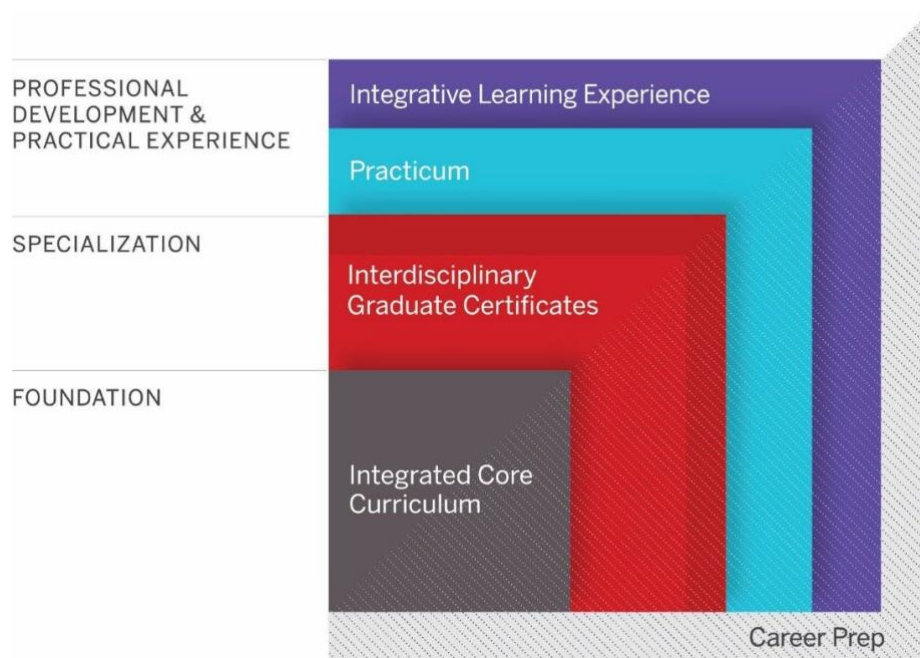
- learn more about the field of public health, including research and career paths;
- understand how their interests and skills fit in the field of public health research and practice; and
- design an educational path that will facilitate academic success and achievement of career goals

Faculty advisors meet or correspond with their advisees each semester to help plan their course of study and 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.

## Degree overview

The BU MPH provides:

- A strong foundation in the values, history, methods, and functions of public health through an **Integrated Core Curriculum** which provides the foundational knowledge and skills required for public health professionals in the 21st-century.
- Rigorous and sequenced training in focused specialty areas through **Interdisciplinary Certificates** in exciting areas targeted to the needs of the field. The specialization is the distinguishing feature of the BU MPH and designed to be adaptable to changes in the field and the needs of the workforce; and
- **Professional Development and Practical Experience** including an enhanced Practicum to ensure that all graduates have the required practical experience for successful employment, an Integrative Learning Experience where students demonstrate their abilities to integrate, synthesize, and apply the knowledge and skills from their specialty areas as well as from other areas of public health that are relevant to their professional goals, and a comprehensive, co-curricular Career Development Program to ensure that all graduates have the necessary competencies, techniques and professional confidence to effectively market themselves during the job search process and beyond.



## Academic advising

### **First semester**

All full-time students complete the 4 required integrated core courses in their first semester. Part-time students should take Quantitative Methods and if they chose to, the Individual, Community, and Population Health course.

### **Certificate selection**

With some foundational content, a sense of the breadth of public health, and an understanding of the potential training pathways and career opportunities available to them, students select functional and context certificates. All students are required to choose a functional certificate. In addition, students have the option to choose a context certificate, a second functional certificate, or complete their program requirements through electives.

Students are assigned a faculty advisor based on their certificate selection. Assignment of faculty advisors is done by the departmentally-based certificate staff to ensure equitable and realistic distributions.

BUSPH messages to students that they will be fully supported by faculty and staff advisors throughout their program. They are informed about the details of every certificate to make the best choices in designing their program. Students are assigned a faculty advisor to assist them both academically and professionally and are encouraged to work closely with certificate staff and Career Services. Students can update their certificate enrollment by completing a [certificate change request form](#).

### **Financial services**

For most students, finances play an important role in the decision to invest in a graduate degree. The SPH Admissions Office guides students through a variety of funding sources, including [need-based aid](#), [fellowships](#), [scholarships](#), [loans](#), or [tuition remission](#). In addition to the many [internal funding opportunities](#) at BU and within SPH, there are many [external scholarships and fellowships](#) available to public health graduate students.

The [cost of attendance](#) is determined by enrollment status. Students registered for 12-18 credits are full-time. Part-time students are those registered for less than 12 credits. A student must register for at least 6 credits in order to qualify for financial aid. Students can learn more about applying for financial aid through the Medical Campus [Student Financial Services](#).

## Registration

Students are sent detailed instructions explaining how to register through the [My BU Student Portal](#) each semester before registration opens. Instructions can also be found [here](#). The [registration FAQ](#) section of the website answers the most common questions regarding the registration process

### Course schedule

Each semester's course listing is viewable on the [My BU Student Portal](#); use the [Class Search](#) function to view classes in a particular semester.

### Schedule Builder

Review the class schedule and use the "[Schedule Builder](#)" function on the [My BU 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 [requirements for registration](#) and students can check their status on the [My BU Student Portal](#) under the "My Information" > "Holds".

### Course descriptions

SPH students, faculty, and staff may view course descriptions for approved SPH courses in the [SPH Bulletin](#). Semester course descriptions are also viewable on the [My BU Student Portal](#) in the Class Search tool. **Note:** revisions are part of an annual University process.

For a listing of courses by topic across Boston University, go to [BU Course Description Search](#). This site also links to registration information for the current semester. Course Description Search is part of the BU app downloadable to mobile devices.

### Waitlists

In the event that a student is closed out of a course, they should complete a [waitlist form](#) 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 [Waitlist FAQs](#) section of the website answers the most common questions regarding the waitlist process. Any additional questions should be directed to the [Registrar's Office](#).

## Bulletin

Boston University's [Bulletin](#) 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 [archive](#) 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 [archive](#) of programs, departments, and courses from previous years

### Advising Resources

- [Academic calendar](#)
- [Course meeting dates](#)
- [Certificate change request form](#)

## Foundations of public health

Prior to matriculation, all students complete **PH700 OL: Foundations of Public Health**, a self-directed, online course designed to provide foundational knowledge in the profession and science of public health and factors related to public health. Students are automatically enrolled in the course and required to complete it before the first day of classes. The course allows students to meet the foundational knowledge criteria as determined by the Council on Education for Public Health.

### Foundational knowledge criteria

At the end of PH700, students will be able to:

1. Explain public health history, philosophy and values
2. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services
3. Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health
4. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other community relevant to the school or program
5. Discuss the science of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.
6. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge
7. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population's health
8. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population's health
9. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health
10. Explain the social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities
11. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease
12. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health and ecosystem health (e.g., One Health)

## Integrated core curriculum

The integrated core curriculum provides a strong foundation in the values, history, methods, and functions of public health, as well as the fundamental knowledge and skills required of 21st-century public health professionals. Through the core courses, students gain a comprehensive understanding of key public health concepts that are designed to cut across traditional disciplines. Case studies and problem-based learning are used to excite students to learn more and prepare them to interact effectively with public health professionals. Core courses not only serve as an introduction to the range of public health skills, research, and practice, but also provide the groundwork students need to pursue higher-level, specialized courses.

Full-time students complete the four core courses in their first semester of study. Part-time students complete the core courses in their first year of study. The four, **required** integrated core courses are (each counting for four credits):

- PH717: Quantitative Methods for Public Health
- PH718: Leadership and Management in Public Health
- PH719: Health Systems, Law, and Policy
- PH720: Individual, Community, and Population Health

## Interdisciplinary certificates

Students select at least one area of specialization in the form of an interdisciplinary certificate in key functional and context areas for public health professionals.

**Functional certificates** represent skill bases in demand by employers. **Context certificates** reflect key populations or areas of interest within public health. Courses within each functional certificate are intentionally sequenced. As students progress through the certificate requirements, they draw upon knowledge from previous coursework to apply concepts, content, and skills to learn more deeply, gain higher competence, and demonstrate proficiency in the certificate area.

**One functional certificate is required.** From there students have the option to add a second functional certificate, a context certificate, or take electives across the school. Students are allowed to double count a maximum of **4 credits** between two certificates. While it is technically possible to complete three certificates with careful planning, faculty should discourage it.

## Integrative Learning Experience

The Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) affords students the opportunity to synthesize foundational and certificate competencies. Students integrate and apply the knowledge and skills obtained throughout the degree program.

ILEs are tied to the student's required functional certificate and may incorporate skills and content from their context certificate as appropriate. **Students will only complete one ILE, regardless of the number of certificates they pursue.** Students working to complete two functional certificates should meet with their faculty advisors and Career Services staff to determine which ILE option is best for their career interests.

The ILE is a student initiated and faculty guided requirement. It is a 0-credit course, **PH845: ILE for MPH**, which students must register for and complete in their last semester. All students must complete a [graduation application](#) in order to officially register for the ILE.

## Functional certificates

All MPH students are required to choose a functional certificate. Functional certificates are 16 credits.

### **Community Assessment, Program Design, Implementation, and Evaluation**

Director: Candice Belanoff ([cbelanof@bu.edu](mailto:cbelanof@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Sarah Lawrence ([sel6@bu.edu](mailto:sel6@bu.edu))

Assessing community needs and resources, program design and implementation, and evaluation are core functions of public health practice. This 16-credit certificate equips students with the essential tools and knowledge base to conduct effective community-based health promotion activities with a diverse array of populations and health issues. Special emphasis is placed on acquiring skills for anti-discriminatory, culturally proficient public health practice and strategies for developing authentic partnerships that grow sustainable political and social power in marginalized communities where need is greatest.

#### **Integrative Learning Experience**

The ILE will give students the opportunity to practice the skills essential to conducting a basic community needs assessment, an intervention and implementation plan, and an impact evaluation plan.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

### **Environmental Health & Justice**

Director: Junenette Peters ([petersj@bu.edu](mailto:petersj@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Christine Copacino ([Copacino@bu.edu](mailto:Copacino@bu.edu))

The environment, including drinking water, air, food, and housing quality, is a core determinant of population health. Health impacts associated with environmental hazards such as climate change, air pollution, lack of sanitation, and chemical exposures are often inequitably distributed, with socioeconomically vulnerable communities most at risk. Mitigating the causes and sources of environmental pollution—through data, policy, and advocacy—as well as the subsequent injustices caused by multigenerational inequitable exposure is central to the work of environmental health scientists and activists in the 21st century.

#### **Integrative Learning Experience**

The ILE involves writing a policy memo for a defined stakeholder group. The student will work on a case study either based on a case from a project-based class (e.g., Exposure Assessment, Risk Assessment) or an idea developed independently, in either case approved by the certificate director.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Co-Directors: Jacqui Milton-Hicks ([jmilton@bu.edu](mailto:jmilton@bu.edu)) and Samantha Parker Kelleher ([separker@bu.edu](mailto:separker@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Marcus Garrant ([marcusjg@bu.edu](mailto:marcusjg@bu.edu)) and Lauren Hall ([lmhall21@bu.edu](mailto:lmhall21@bu.edu))

Epidemiology and biostatistics are the quantitative sciences of public health, investigating causes and prevention of disease and injury and assessing patterns of health in populations around the globe. This 16-credit certificate provides training in design, statistical programming, data analysis, and valid interpretation of experimental (e.g., clinical) trials and observational studies. Students will gain knowledge and skills in the methods required to conduct and communicate public health research.

### Integrative Learning Experience

Students in the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Certificate program will have the option to conduct a data analysis or critical evaluation of the published literature.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Global Health Program Design, Monitoring and Evaluation

Director: Peter Rockers ([prockers@bu.edu](mailto:prockers@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Mary Gregory ([marykgry@bu.edu](mailto:marykgry@bu.edu))

This 16-credit certificate provides students with practical skills to work in health organizations in developing and developed countries. Students will design and implement monitoring and evaluation plans, apply rigorous analytic methods to estimate the impacts and costs of public health programs and policies, and critically assess and interpret existing evidence to inform public health decision-making and the design of innovative new programs.

### Integrative Learning Experience

The BU MPH Integrative Learning Experience serves to demonstrate the synthesis of foundational and certificate competencies. For students completing the Monitoring & Evaluation Certificate, there are two options for the ILE: a written M&E Plan; or a written Impact Evaluation Analysis.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Health Communication and Promotion

Director: Monica Wang ([mlwang@bu.edu](mailto:mlwang@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Sarah Lawrence ([sel6@bu.edu](mailto:sel6@bu.edu))

This 16-credit certificate provides multidisciplinary knowledge and practical skills for developing and implementing communications-based strategies to motivate healthy behaviors, change social norms, and promote public health programs and policies. Students will gain knowledge and skills, including qualitative research, intervention and campaign development, risk communication, media advocacy, and the use of social media, websites, print and broadcast media, and other communications channels to advance public health.

### **Integrative Learning Experience**

Students collaborate with a public health agency in need of communication strategies to solve a problem and/or support an approach.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

### **Healthcare Management (CAHME accredited – 28 credits)**

Director (interim): Kimberly Brimhall ([brimhall@bu.edu](mailto:brimhall@bu.edu))

Certificate staff (interim): Abigail Ford ([aford12@bu.edu](mailto:aford12@bu.edu))

The challenges in organizing healthcare delivery systems to improve patient care quality and achieve population-level access and equity while controlling costs have never been greater. SPH's practice-based program in healthcare management provides graduates crucial analytical and leadership competencies to tackle these challenges. Graduates can analyze the organization, financing, and delivery of healthcare; analyze effects of healthcare policy; apply project management and quality improvement tools; and lead individuals and teams to improve care delivery.

### **Integrative Learning Experience**

The ILE for the Healthcare Management certificate is designed to be completed during a student's last semester in the program, and is focused on evidence-based management, requiring that students apply current research findings in the field of healthcare management to an applied healthcare delivery problem or question. Review the full [ILE guide](#) for more details.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

### **Health Policy and Law**

Director: Kiersten Strombotne ([kiersten@bu.edu](mailto:kiersten@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Abigail Ford ([aford12@bu.edu](mailto:aford12@bu.edu))

Improving healthcare requires smart policies and effective laws that rest on sound evidence. Major challenges include assuring affordable healthcare for all; containing costs and cutting waste; assuring availability of the right caregivers in the right places; and relying on governments, professionals, and markets to take on jobs they are competent to perform. This certificate equips students to analyze, design, and improve policies and laws in the US or globally.

### **Integrative Learning Experience**

Students will participate in a mock legislative, regulatory, or legal hearing. The topic and stakeholder perspective will be selected by the certificate director and other faculty members from among health care controversies currently facing federal or state governments.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## **Program Management**

Director: Lora Sabin ([lsabin@bu.edu](mailto:lsabin@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Mary Gregory ([marykgry@bu.edu](mailto:marykgry@bu.edu))

In health programs around the world, from Boston to Kenya, managers use their skills to get the best results when working with communities, supervising staff, overseeing budgets, and designing, planning, and implementing programs. The 16-credit Program Management certificate equips students to lead public health programs in the United States and globally with a focus on low resource environments. In this certificate, you will have the opportunity to analyze and work with real organizations to help them solve operational challenges. You will learn skills in leadership, coordinating partnerships and resources, working with donors, managing costs, developing quality improvement plans, and much more.

### **Integrative Learning Experience**

The Program Management ILE gives students an opportunity to hone research, critical analysis, and communication skills that will be vital to their future careers. People working in program management are frequently asked to write various types of internal and external documents for a wide variety of audiences. The ILE multi-draft process gives students an opportunity to build confidence in their professional writing skills and practice receiving and incorporating feedback. By the end of the process, students will have two pieces of professional writing to share with potential employers as writing samples.

#### **Advising Resources**

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Context certificates

Students have the option to choose a context certificate in addition to their required functional certificate. Context certificates are 12 credits.

### **Chronic and Non-Communicable Diseases**

Director: Martha Werler ([werler@bu.edu](mailto:werler@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Marcus Garrant ([marcusjg@bu.edu](mailto:marcusjg@bu.edu))

Chronic diseases—such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, asthma, diabetes, and Alzheimer’s disease—are responsible for a large majority of the deaths in the United States and a rapidly rising share of deaths in developing countries. In addition to their effect on mortality, these conditions have an enormous impact on disability, quality of life, healthcare costs, and lost productivity, and are also a major contributor to health disparities. The 12-credit certificate is designed to provide graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to address a broad range of challenges posed by these conditions, including identification of their causes; design, implementation and evaluation of programs to prevent their occurrence, and also to extend life and improve quality of life once they occur; and organization of the medical care system so that it focuses first on prevention, and also provides access to high-quality and efficient treatment and management.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

### **Climate Change and Health**

Director: Jonathan Buonocore ([jjbuono@bu.edu](mailto:jjbuono@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Christine Copacino ([Copacino@bu.edu](mailto:Copacino@bu.edu))

Climate change, impacting water supply, air, food, and infectious / vector borne diseases, has been identified as one of the biggest global health threats of the 21st century. Health effects of climate change may occur directly (due to changes in temperature and precipitation, or in the occurrence of tropical cyclones, heat waves, floods, droughts, and wildfires) or indirectly (through social responses to climate change, such as displacement of populations following hurricanes and associated flooding, or prolonged drought). Additionally, climate change is an environmental justice issue, both because of disproportionate exposures to climate change in lower-income communities and communities of color, and because those most impacted are least likely to contribute to or benefit from the anthropogenic activities that lead to a changing climate.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

### **Global Health**

Directors: Monica Onyango ([monyango@bu.edu](mailto:monyango@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Mary Gregory ([marykgry@bu.edu](mailto:marykgry@bu.edu))

Global health is at a critical turning point. We have dramatically improved health and well-being over the last 20 years, but there is still much to do. We need to improve the organization and delivery of health services by translating theory and evidence into effective interventions, especially in low- and middle-income countries. The global health context certificate provides foundational knowledge and skills to analyze complex health challenges, strengthen health systems, and implement interventions that will bring

us closer to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and transforming our world by 2030.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Human Rights and Social Justice

Director: Michael Ulrich ([mrulrich@bu.edu](mailto:mrulrich@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Abigail Ford ([aford12@bu.edu](mailto:aford12@bu.edu))

Health is strongly affected by racism, sexism, poverty, violence, and discrimination. Consequently, public health strategies that promote human rights and social justice are needed to empower vulnerable and marginalized populations, including the elderly and immigrants, to improve their health and well-being. This 12-credit certificate equips students to engage communities at the local, state, country, and global levels to address critical public health problems in a human rights framework.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Infectious Disease

Director: David Hamer ([dhamer@bu.edu](mailto:dhamer@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Mary Gregory ([marykgry@bu.edu](mailto:marykgry@bu.edu))

Infectious diseases are responsible for a significant burden of disease, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations worldwide. The problems posed by these diseases to both governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations focused on health and development are numerous and varied. Infectious diseases range from the chronic neglected tropical diseases that primarily occur in rural communities of low- and middle-income countries, to the waterborne and vector-borne diseases that affect both rural and urban populations in those countries, to diseases caused by anti-microbial resistant organisms that are one of the largest threats to public health in all regions of the world. Adding to the many complex challenges posed by infectious diseases is the role of global travel and commerce in promoting rapid and widespread movement of pathogens to new geographical locations.

This 12-credit certificate provides a foundation for a public health career that will involve working with infectious diseases in the many settings where they occur. Students will learn how to collect and analyze data to identify agent, host, and environmental (physical, social, behavioral, cultural, economic, political) factors contributing to the cause and spread of infectious diseases. Upon completing the certificate, graduates will be prepared to design contextually appropriate interventions for infectious disease prevention, control, and elimination.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Maternal and Child Health

Directors: Ann Aschengrau ([aaschen@bu.edu](mailto:aaschen@bu.edu)) and Lois McCloskey ([loism@bu.edu](mailto:loism@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Sarah Lawrence ([sel6@bu.edu](mailto:sel6@bu.edu))

Assuring that women, their partners, children, and adolescents are healthy and thriving is central to the public health mission throughout the world. This 12-credit certificate expands knowledge and skills needed to understand the complex biologic, social, and systems-related determinants of key maternal and child health (MCH) challenges (such as infant and maternal mortality, reproductive justice, and youth development), evaluate MCH research, and critically assess and implement programs, policies, and advocacy strategies to achieve equity across MCH populations.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Mental Health and Substance Use

Director: Carol Dolan ([cdolan@bu.edu](mailto:cdolan@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Sarah Lawrence ([sel6@bu.edu](mailto:sel6@bu.edu))

This 12-credit certificate provides foundational training in the conceptual frameworks, knowledge, and technical skills necessary to understand how mental illness and substance use disorders develop, are manifested, and treated. Utilizing a multi-determinants, population-based public health perspective, students will develop expertise in assessing, preventing, and reducing mental illness and unhealthy substance use, and in promoting mental health and wellness.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Pharmaceutical Development, Delivery, and Access

Director: Warren Kaplan ([wak@bu.edu](mailto:wak@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Mary Gregory ([marykgry@bu.edu](mailto:marykgry@bu.edu))

Nearly every public health program relies on pharmaceuticals to achieve its goals—from treating infectious diseases to managing preventive and chronic care. This 12-credit certificate is one of the world's few programs examining the intersection of public health and medicines. Students will gain skills in medicines development, delivery, policies, and programs. Students will be able to effectively translate their knowledge and skills into rapidly growing public health, pharmaceutical, and medical technology markets.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Sex, Sexuality, and Gender

Director: Lisa Messersmith ([ljmesser@bu.edu](mailto:ljmesser@bu.edu))

Certificate staff: Mary Gregory ([marykgry@bu.edu](mailto:marykgry@bu.edu))

Inequality and discrimination related to gender and sexuality are major barriers to the attainment of health. Using behavioral and social science theory and methods as well as human rights and social justice frameworks, students will gain analytical, program, and policy skills to understand and address the behavioral, structural, and social determinants of gender inequality and their impacts on individual, community, and population health.

#### Advising Resources

- [Bulletin course requirements](#)

## Professional development and practical experience

A key and distinguishing feature of the BU MPH is its focus on preparing students for real-world public health practice. Three critical elements comprise this component – the practicum, integrative learning experience and career development program. These program components are designed for students to integrate learning, gain valuable experience, and leave with a solid career plan and a fantastic public health job.

### Practicum

Students complete a **240 hour practicum** where they will have the opportunity to develop professional experience by applying what they are learning to build practical skills and professional confidence while contributing to the solutions of current public health problems.

Students are encouraged to explore and learn new skills in their practicum, and can complete the requirement at one of the many public health organizations in Boston or other locations around the globe. They have flexibility and can tailor the practicum experience to meet their specific needs and goals. Students are **required to complete one practicum** during their MPH and it can be completed over several semesters. The practicum placement does not have to be tied to the functional certificate. Students are eligible to begin their practicum after completing 16 credits of coursework.

All steps in the practicum approval and review process are completed through the [BUSPH Practicum Portal](#). Information regarding the portal and [instructions](#) for students to register and successfully complete their practicum can be found in the [practicum section](#) of the website. The practicum process is managed by the [Career Services and Practicum Office](#), but student work products are reviewed by the Practicum Committee, which is comprised of faculty representatives across all academic departments. Practicum Committee membership is outlined on the next page.

<b>Practicum Committee representative</b>	<b>Department</b>
Michael LaValley ( <a href="mailto:mlava@bu.edu">mlava@bu.edu</a> )	Biostatistics
Carol Dolan ( <a href="mailto:cdolan@bu.edu">cdolan@bu.edu</a> )	Community Health Sciences
Dan Merrigan ( <a href="mailto:merrigan@bu.edu">merrigan@bu.edu</a> )	Community Health Sciences
Jonathan Buonocore ( <a href="mailto:jjbuono@bu.edu">jjbuono@bu.edu</a> )	Environmental Health
Ann Aschengrau ( <a href="mailto:aaschen@bu.edu">aaschen@bu.edu</a> )	Epidemiology
William Macleod ( <a href="mailto:wmacleod@bu.edu">wmacleod@bu.edu</a> )	Global Health
Kiersten Strombotne ( <a href="mailto:kiersten@bu.edu">kiersten@bu.edu</a> )	Health Law, Policy and Management
Chris Louis ( <a href="mailto:louisc@bu.edu">louisc@bu.edu</a> )	Health Law, Policy and Management
Joe Anzalone ( <a href="mailto:josanz@bu.edu">josanz@bu.edu</a> )	Career and Practicum Office
Ryan Wisniewski ( <a href="mailto:ryanwis@bu.edu">ryanwis@bu.edu</a> )	Career and Practicum Office

## International students and the practicum

International students must contact [ISSO to apply for Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#). Students are alerted to this step in the practicum approval process.

## Part-time students and the practicum

Many part-time students are concerned about their ability to complete the practicum requirement while working full-time. In order to increase the flexibility for part-time students, the Career Services and Practicum Office works to identify more remote practicum opportunities and will allow students to complete two separate projects with shorter time commitments to meet the requirement.

### Advising Resources

- [Practicum resources](#)
- [Helping students find a practicum](#)
- [Practicum requirements](#)
- [Practicum FAQs](#)

## Career development

The career development program ensures that all students gain the necessary competencies, techniques, and professional confidence to effectively market themselves during the job search process and into their public health careers.

All MPH students must register for and complete PH746: Career P.R.E.P., a 0-credit career development course, which covers topics such as interviewing strategies, networking, marketing and positioning oneself in the job market. The course also enables students to research potential career options and to manage their job searches and careers as proactively and effectively as possible. Multiple sections of Career PREP are available every fall, spring, and summer, including an online section. Many students find it helpful to complete Career PREP before their practicum.

### Advising Resources

- [Session by session details](#)

## 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 [Disability & Access Services](#), 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 [health and wellness](#) resources. Please contact Mary Murphy-Phillips about any area related to student life at 617-358-1750 or [mcmurph@bu.edu](mailto:mcmurph@bu.edu).

## Core course tutoring

The [core course tutoring program](#) is a free peer tutoring program for MPH students who are at risk of failing to meet the minimum grade required (B-) in the MPH core courses. Students are referred to the program by their core course instructor. For more information, please [contact the Program Manager](#).

## Public health writing program

The [Public Health Writing Program](#) offers many resources to help you build your research, writing, and oral communication skills.

The [Peer Writing Coach Program](#) 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.

**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 <https://bu.mywconline.net/>. Contact [sphcoach@bu.edu](mailto:sphcoach@bu.edu) if you have questions.

### **Public health writing guide**

The [Public Health Writing Guide](#) 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 [BU Alumni Medical Library](#) have created an array of YouTube [tutorials](#) 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 ([refquest@bu.edu](mailto:refquest@bu.edu)) or phone (617 638-4228).

## Quick links

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

- [Academic Accommodations](#)
- [Academic Bulletin](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#): Important academic year dates at BUSPH
- [Academic Policies](#)
- [Certificate change form](#)
- [Course descriptions](#): Course descriptions for approved SPH courses
- [Course evaluations](#): Online course evaluations from past semesters
- [Course meeting dates](#)
- [Disability & Access Services](#)
- [Grading policy](#)
- [Graduation application](#)
- [Health & Wellness](#)
- [MyBU Student Portal](#)
- [Registrar's Office forms](#): Add/drop, leave of absence, transfer credit, etc.
- [SPH Calendar](#)
- [Student Financial Services & Housing Resources](#)
- [Teaching and advising resources](#)
- [Transfer credit and course waiver policy](#)