

MPH Advising Process Guidelines
2026-2027

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Introduction

This guide is meant to serve as a resource for certificate staff who determine advisor assignments for students in the MPH program. Per the [Advising Working Group Recommendations](#), assigning MPH students with faculty advisors in the functional area of their choice should be completed in a timely manner following a student's self-selection into a certificate. This will bring the MPH program in line with other BUSPH degree programs.

Below are the specific working group recommendations that this guide aims to address:

1. Improve the efficiency of advising by optimizing the strengths of faculty and staff
 - a. Academic Program Administrators (APA), program and certificate directors should continue to serve as the main points of contact for students, and should provide information on program requirements and advise students on course options
2. Ensure quality advising and mentoring
 - a. Assign MPH faculty advisors based on functional certificate selection shortly after the accepted student submits a deposit, ensuring consistency across degree programs
 - i. Because it is a time-consuming process, "matching" students with advisors is discouraged and should be retained only if advisors can be assigned shortly after the accepted student submits a deposit and without access to the student's application.
3. Develop and implement systems to promote transparency and equity in advising allocations
 - a. Implement a more consistent, transparent, and equitable approach to allocating advisees across all degree programs, among faculty within and across departments.
 - b. Regularly review advising allocations to assess equity of allocations

MPH 42-Unit Reduction

Beginning Fall 2026, the MPH minimum credit requirement will be 42-units to completion. **This 42-unit minimum applies to new MPH students who matriculate in Summer 2026 and later only. MPH students that matriculated in Spring 2026 or earlier are still required to complete 48 units.** As you advise students, please check their **Admit Date** on their record to ensure that they are working toward the appropriate number of required units. Please note the following.

- The Fall 2026 cohort will have the **option** to complete 48 units without losing awarded scholarship support beyond the 42-unit minimum.
- The Healthcare Management Functional Certificate requires 28 units of coursework due to Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME) accreditation. Thus, students interested in Healthcare Management will complete an additional 2 units (44 units total) to complete the healthcare management option within the MPH.

International Students

International students matriculating in Fall 2026 who wish to complete the MPH in **two years** should consider the following:

Fall 2026	Integrated Core Curriculum – 16 units
Spring 2027	Certificate requirements and electives – 16 units
Summer 2027	Not required
Fall 2027	Certificate requirements and practicum Full-time equivalence: • 4+ units and entire practicum OR • 8+ units and ½ practicum
Spring 2028	Reduced course load – remaining course units/practicum hours and ILE

PLEASE NOTE: International students are required to maintain full-time status throughout their time in the program. International students who wish to complete the MPH in two years will need to make sure their plans follow ISSO guidance, and that their full-time equivalence is approved by the SPH Registrar's Office.

Tuition and Finances

All incoming and continuing students will continue to be charged tuition each semester based on course registrations. Students registering for 12-18 units are considered full-time and pay the full-time rate (equivalent to 16 units). Students registering for less than 12 units are considered part-time and pay per units. Thus, we must continue to carefully advise students and remind them to avoid registering for 12 units, whenever possible.

Students will have questions about loans and finances that are specific to their circumstances. Advisors and Academic Program Administrators should direct students to the [BUMC Office of Student Financial Support](#) (osfs-sph@bu.edu) for further guidance, as they are the most qualified to advise.

Incoming MPH Student Onboarding Process

Student Submits Deposit

1. Student appears on Admissions Deposit List
2. Student appears on [MyBU Student](#)



Registration Onboarding E-mail (from SPH Registrar)

1. Request to set up Kerberos/BU e-mail account
2. Registration guidance
3. [Certificate Declaration Form](#)

Note: Students who do not create their BU e-mail/Kerberos will receive regular reminders from SPH Registrar. Students who do not declare their certificate will receive reminders from SPH Education Office. Students have **one month** to set up their Kerberos.



Student Creates BU E-mail Account

1. Registrar enrolls student in PH700



Student Declares Certificate

1. APA determines advisor assignment
2. APA assigns advisee to their advisor in [MyBU Student](#)
3. Welcome letter is sent to student connecting them with advisor and Certificate Director

Note: Some incoming students may declare their certificate via their SOPHAS application and others may declare via the [Certificate Declaration Form](#).

Advisor Assignment Process Timeline & Instructions

Fall Semester

	Start	End	Person	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct
Faculty Advisee Load/Graduation Audit	April		APA							
Fall Deposits	4/15	7/15	Student							
Assign Bachelor's-to-Master's Students to Sophie Godley	5/1	8/31	SPH Registrar							
Triage Bachelor's-to-Master's Students w/declaration to APAs	5/1	8/31	SPH Education							
Run Student List w/ or w/o Advisor query in MyBU for Spring semester (weekly)	5/1	9/30	APA							
Determine INCOMING student advisors (w/Chair or Program Director)	5/1	9/30	APA							
Assign INCOMING student advisors in MyBU; Notify advisee/advisor via e-mail	5/1	9/30	APA							
Send reminders to UNDECLARED students	5/1	9/30	SPH Education							
MPH Certificate Fairs	September		SPH Education							
Advising events (group advising, open houses, info sessions, etc.)	Sept	October	Program Director/APA							
Ongoing Advising Tasks										
Certificate Change Advisee Assignments	N/A	N/A	APA							
Run Student List w/ or w/o Advisor query in MyBU (monthly)	N/A	N/A	APA							

Spring Semester

	Start	End	Person	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Faculty Advisee Load/Graduation Audit	November		APA					
Spring Deposits	Early Nov	Early Jan	Student					
Assign Bachelor's-to-Master's Students to Sophie Godley	Late Nov	Jan	SPH Registrar					
Triage Bachelor's-to-Master's Students w/declaration to APAs	Late Nov	Jan	SPH Education					
Run Student List w/ or w/o Advisor query in MyBU for Spring semester (weekly)	Late Nov	1/30	APA					
Determine INCOMING student advisors (w/Chair or Program Director)	Late Nov	1/30	APA					
Assign INCOMING student advisors in MyBU; Notify advisee/advisor via e-mail	Late Nov	1/30	APA					
Send reminders to UNDECLARED students	Late Nov	1/30	SPH Education					
MPH Certificate Fairs	February		SPH Education					
Advising events (group advising, open houses, info sessions, etc.)	Jan	March	Program Director/APA					
Ongoing Advising Tasks								
Certificate Change Advisee Assignments	N/A	N/A	APA					
Run Student List w/ or w/o Advisor query in MyBU (monthly)	N/A	N/A	APA					

Review of Current Advising Loads

To prepare for the incoming cohorts for Fall and Spring, APAs should work with their Chair or Certificate Director to determine which faculty are able to take on advisees and how many. To ensure an accurate count, APAs will be asked to factor in students who will be graduating during a given semester and remove them from the faculty advisee totals. For Fall, advising load review should begin in March. For Spring, this review should begin in November. Please find guidance for auditing graduating advisees under the [MyBU Student Instructions for Advising](#) section.

MPH Advisor Assignment Process (**INCOMING** students)

Beginning in May (Fall semester) or November (Spring semester):

1. APA runs **Student w/ or w/o Advisor report** in [MyBU Student](#) to identify incoming certificate students. Prior to registration for the following semester, reports should be run on a weekly basis before shifting to at least once per month. Instructions for this report can be found under the “[MyBU Student Report Instructions](#)” section of this document.
 - a. **PLEASE NOTE:** Due to ongoing issues with various reports/queries in the system, the Registrar’s Office has advised that APAs continue to only utilize the **Student List w/ or w/o Advisor report** for faculty advisor administration, as it remains the most reliable report for advising at this time. This will capture all SPH students and their advisor assignments including those that are currently unassigned.
2. APA works with Certificate Director or Department Chair to determine new advisor assignments
3. APA shares the following with the respective advisors –
 - a. Advisee list
 - b. Relevant advising materials (e.g., MPH Advising Guide, Certificate Roadmap, etc.)
 - c. [Faculty Advisor Engagement Recommendations](#)
4. Once advisor assignment is finalized, APA sends welcome e-mail to new advisee connecting them with their advisor.
 - a. CC: Advisor and Certificate Director
 - b. Relevant advising materials (e.g., Certificate Roadmap)
 - c. [Welcome e-mail examples](#)
5. APA assigns advisees on MyBU Student (see: [MyBU Student Instructions for Advising](#) section for guidance)
 - a. **PLEASE NOTE:** Faculty Advisors must be designated as **GRADUATE PROGRAM ADVISOR** to align with University procedures.

Add/Drop Certificate Advisor Assignment Process (**CURRENT** students)

1. Student fills out Certificate Change Form to add or drop certificate
 - a. Certificate changes will be updated in the system for the next effective semester, for example if a student completes it in October 2026, the change will be reflected on their record in Spring 2027.
2. Automated e-mail from SPH Registrar notifying the relevant APA of the student add/drop is sent directly to APA or Department Inbox
 - a. **Adding Certificate:** APA sends follow up with e-mail notifying the student that they can expect to receive a faculty advisor within ~2 weeks.

- b. **Dropping Certificate:** APAs to coordinate across certificates to process advisor removal from the dropped certificate in a timely manner. This will ensure that the advisor assignment is reflected in the system accurately.
- 3. Send welcome e-mail to new advisee
 - a. CC: Advisor and Certificate Director
 - b. Relevant advising materials (e.g., Certificate Roadmap)
- 4. APA assigns advisees on MyBU Student as needed

Bachelor's-to-Master's Dual Degree Students (formerly 4+1)

- All incoming Bachelor's-to-Master's students will be assigned to Sophie Godley on MyBU Student by SPH Registrar once they've submitted their deposit.
- Bachelor's-to-Master's students who have declared their functional certificate should be assigned to a functional certificate advisor.
 - Due to current limitations with degree codes and reporting in MyBU Student, SPH Education will triage incoming Bachelor's-to-Master's student information via the deposit list, specifically for those who selected their certificate during the application process. SPH Education will share this information with the appropriate APA for their advisor assignment. Please note that deposit lists are received on a rolling basis.
 - Bachelor's-to-Master's students can be identified via the **Student w/ or w/o Advisor Report** by the indicators below:
 - Joint Program Indicator Column: Y
 - Dual Academic Program Column: USAR, UCAS, UPAR, and UCOM
 - APAs to assign Bachelor's-to-Master's students to a designated Bachelor's-to-Master's advisor for that certificate.
 - Designated Bachelor's-to-Master's advisors by certificate:
 - **CAPDIE:** Sophie Godley
 - **Environmental Health:** Greg Wellenius
 - **Epi/Bio:** Megan Healey
 - **Health Communication and Promotion:** Sophie Godley
 - **Healthcare Management:** TBD
 - **Health Policy and Law:** Kiersten Strombotne
 - **GHPDME:** Peter Rockers
 - **Program Management:** Jen Beard

Other Dual Degree Students

- Incoming MBA/MPH students are assigned to the Director of Dual Degree Programs as advisees by the SPH Registrar as a dual program advisor. A separate certificate advisor is also assigned by the appropriate APA if applicable.
- Like MPH students, dual degree students are assigned to an advisor as soon as they declare their certificate.
 - Dual degree students can be identified by the columns indicated below:
 - Joint Program Indicator: Y
 - Dual Academic Program:
 - MBA/MPH - QSTMB

- JD/MPH - LAW JD
- MS/MPH - GGMS
 - **Note:** this includes the GMS Medical Science dual and the GMS Genetic Counseling dual
- MD/MPH - MEDMD
- MSW/MPH - GSSW

Undeclared Students

- SPH Education will run reports identifying undeclared MPH students
- Undeclared students will receive regular reminders from SPH Education to select their certificate via the [Certificate Declaration Form](#)
- Spring and Fall Certificate Info Sessions will be held in-person to engage undeclared students. Any additional virtual sessions will be recorded and shared.

MyBU Student Instructions for Advising

- [MyBU Advisor Assignment Instructions](#): This website provides the steps on how to manage individual Student-Advisor assignments.
- [MyBU Query Manual for Administrative Staff](#): This guide provides an overview of running a query on the Query Viewer page, and highlights some of the frequently used staff queries.
- [MyBU Student Services Center for Staff Guide](#): The Student Services Center allows staff across schools and colleges to see various types of MyBU Student data in one central area.
- [MyBU Advisee/Student Lookup and Student Details](#): These instructions cover Advisee & Student Lookup and Student Details pages in MyBU Student. The Advisee & Student Lookup page is one streamlined page to view assigned advisees and search for students. Student Details can be accessed from that list to review more detailed data for a student.
- [MyBU Student Training Recordings on Advising](#)

Identifying Advisees

Student List w or w/o Advisor Query

This query generates a report displaying student advisor information, including students that do not currently have an advisor assignment.

1. Log into MyBU Student
2. Upon landing on the Dashboard, scroll through the left menu and select Reporting Center.
3. In the Query Name field, search for **BU_SR_PROG_STDNT_ADVISOR_INFO**
4. Enter search prompts (asterisks indicate required field):
 - a. *Institution: BU001
 - b. *Academic Career: Graduate
 - c. *Acad Prog or %Col%: GSPH or %SPH%
 - d. Program Status: "Active in Program"
5. Download Excel file
6. Filter spreadsheet by Academic Plan(s) column to identify unassigned advisees

Faculty Advising Load Audit

Graduation Report Query

This query generates a report displaying student academic information and graduation related data. Additional details can be found in the Query Manual linked above.

1. Log into MyBU Student
2. Upon landing on the Dashboard, scroll through the left menu and select Reporting Center.
3. In the Query Name field, search for **BU_R0046L_SR_GRADUATION**
4. Enter search prompts (asterisks indicate required field):
 - a. *Institution: BU001
 - b. Career: Graduate
 - c. *Acad Prog or %Col%: GSPH or %SPH%
 - d. *Exp Grad/Comp Term (From): Spring/Fall

- e. *Exp Grad/Comp Term (To): Summer/Fall
 - i. For example, if you're determining fall advising caps, you should pull spring and summer grad lists to find students who will graduate before fall

5. **PLEASE NOTE:** Dual degree students will require additional verification as this report **does not** currently capture this student population. Review ILE roster for the relevant certificate to reconcile graduating advisees.

Roster for a Class Report

Utilize this report to review roster for the corresponding certificate ILE course section (see table below).

Reconcile with Graduation Report and Student w or w/o Advisor Report to capture dual degree students.

1. Log into MyBU Student
2. Upon landing on the Dashboard, scroll through the left menu and select Reporting Center.
3. In the Query Name field, search for: **BU_R0010K_CLASS_ROSTER**
4. Enter search prompts (asterisks indicate required field):
 - a. Institution: BU001
 - b. Term: [Select current term]
 - c. Subject: SPHPH
 - d. Catalog Nbr: 845
 - e. Section: [Enter certificate ILE course section]
 - f. Enrollment status: Enrolled
5. **PLEASE NOTE:** Students that have declared two functional certificates will be registered for the functional certificate ILE section that they have selected and will require additional verification as they may not appear on the ILE roster for the certificate you manage.

Fall/Spring

ILE Course #/Section	MPH Functional Certificate
SPH PH845 A1	Community Assessment, Program Design, Implementation, & Evaluation
SPH PH845 B1	Environmental Health & Justice
SPH PH845 C1	Epidemiology & Biostatistics
SPH PH845 D1	Health Communication & Promotion
SPH PH845 E1	Healthcare Management
SPH PH845 F1	Health Policy & Law
SPH PH845 G1	Global Health Program Design, Monitoring, & Evaluation
SPH PH845 H1	Program Management

Summer

ILE Course #/Section	MPH Functional Certificate
SPH PH845 C1	Community Assessment, Program Design, Implementation, & Evaluation
SPH PH845 C2	Environmental Health & Justice
SPH PH845 C3	Epidemiology & Biostatistics
SPH PH845 C4	Health Communication & Promotion

SPH PH845 C5	Healthcare Management
SPH PH845 C6	Health Policy & Law
SPH PH845 C7	Global Health Program Design, Monitoring, & Evaluation
SPH PH845 C8	Program Management

Advising Roles and Expectations

Advising Categories

- **Staff advisors** include department-based academic program administrators (APA), staff in the registrar's office, office of admissions, office of graduate student life (GSL), and career and practicum office (CPO)
- **Program directors/certificate leads**, who, together with the APA and other supporting staff, serve as the main points of contact for students regarding program or certificate advising
- **Faculty advisors/mentors** are faculty other than program directors and certificate leads engaged in the activities of the school

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, preparing for advising sessions with appropriate resources or materials, and staying up to date on BUSPH and departmental communications. Students are also 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
- 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. (see: [Faculty Advisor Engagement Recommendations](#) for best practices)

Advisor	Designation	Expertise
Admissions	Centralized, program level	Program preparation
		ISSO liaison
Office of Student Financial Services	Centralized	Financial aid
Student Accounting	Centralized	Student account support (e.g., payment deadlines and methods)
ISSO	Centralized	International student regulations and policies
Registrar's Office	Centralized	Program and graduation requirements
		Registration and academic policy
		Transfers, waivers, leaves, reinstatements, etc.
Office of Graduate Student Life	Centralized	Academic support (e.g., peer coaching, writing)
		Academic accommodations
		Student organizations
Career and Practicum Office	Centralized, certificate-specific	Practicum
		Career PREP
		Career advising
APAs	Departmental, certificate-specific	Program requirements
		ILE requirements
Program directors/ certificate leads	Centralized, certificate-specific	Program requirements
		Academic advising
Faculty advisors/ mentors	Departmental, certificate-specific	Academic advising
		Career advising

Advising Best Practices and Resources

- [Faculty Advisor Engagement Recommendations](#)
- [SPH Advising Resources](#)
- [Education Administrator's Working Group SharePoint](#)
 - [MPH Advising Resources](#)
 - [MPH Certificate Roadmaps](#)
- **Group Advising**
 - Group advising sessions have proven to be an effective tool for some MPH certificates in managing frequently asked questions that arise among students within the same certificate. Led or facilitated by the program director/certificate lead, program administrator, and/or faculty advisors in a given certificate, group advising sessions (in-person, via Zoom, or hybrid) have been used for several years and have emerged as an effective and efficient way to streamline communications with students and offer the opportunity for students to also learn from each other. These sessions may have formal agendas or be open-ended. Group advising sessions may be held on a regular or routine basis or used as a way to minimize significant backlogs of questions, especially around registration time. Advisors might expect students to attend group sessions first, before scheduling individual advising meetings so that common questions can be answered, leaving more time for individual issues.
- **Equitable Distribution of Advisees**
 - The Advising Working Group recommends that advisees be distributed equitably to all appropriate faculty for a given program or certificate, allowing for chair discretion in extenuating circumstances. For programs and certificates that are interdepartmental, advisees should be distributed equitably, based on the number of faculty connected to a specific program or certificate. Expectations for service and citizenship, including the typical number of advisees per faculty member per program should be communicated to faculty and staff on a regular basis (see Appendix 9). Each department should also share a description of the advisor assignment process with faculty and staff. These should be available for other departments for consultation to identify best practices.
- **Student Affinity Group Resources**
 - [FirstGen Mentoring](#) and [resources](#)
 - [Students of Color for Public Health](#)
 - [Queer Alliance](#)
 - [International Students Organization](#)
 - [International Students Success Program](#)
- [Alumni Mentorship Program](#)
- [GSL Student Resources](#)
- [SPH Wellness](#)
- [BU Student Behavioral Health Services](#)