



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTH CAROLINA**

**Department of Exercise Science**

**Arnold School of Public Health**

**Master of Public Health in Physical Activity and Public Health**

**Handbook**

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## **Introduction**

**Our MPH in Physical Activity in Public Health is the first academic program in the nation designed to prepare professionals to increase physical activity and improve health in populations.**

As physical inactivity becomes the norm for an increasing number of the population, the risk of chronic disease is at an all-time high. Physical inactivity is a risk factor for an array of chronic diseases including coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes and certain cancers. Only 44% of the adult population meets the current Federal guideline for aerobic activity, and only 29% of adolescents meet the physical activity guidelines. By 2020, a goal for the United States is to increase the proportion of adults who meet the physical activity guideline to 48% and to increase the proportion of adolescents who meet the physical activity guideline to 32%. Achieving this goal will require a coordinated public health approach. Thus, the promotion of physical activity for people of all ages has become a top priority in public health.

As the first academic program in the nation designed to prepare professionals to increase physical activity and improve health in populations, the Master of Public Health in Physical Activity and Public Health (MPH-PAPH) addresses this need directly. Persons who successfully acquire this degree will have the essential knowledge, skills and experiences to play an integral role as a physical activity specialist on interdisciplinary teams whose primary focus is the promotion of physical activity and the prevention of chronic disease in public health settings.

The Department of Exercise Science in the Arnold School of Public Health offers the MPH-PAPH for health professionals who have a career interest in physical activity. The program provides students with unique opportunities to:

- study issues germane to physical activity and public health,
- acquire appropriate background knowledge and experience in an epidemiological approach to public health problems as they relate to physical activity, and
- develop skills integral to the design, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs that are intended to promote increased physical activity in populations.

The MPH-PAPH is also designed for professionals working in physical activity programs within community or government settings. These settings may be city, county or state health departments, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health maintenance organizations, medical clinics, etc. The MPH-PAPH also offers physicians and PhD research scientists trained in diverse areas an opportunity to learn about public health applications for physical activity.

### **Graduates of this program will:**

- understand physical activity as it relates to core functions of public health,

- develop research-based knowledge about relationships between physical activity and health,
- use accepted public health methods to evaluate the impact of physical inactivity on communities and identify the benefits of participation in physical activity at community levels,
- acquire skills needed to develop, implement, and evaluate physical activity interventions in a variety of community settings,
- understand how social and behavioral theories are used in programs designed to promote physical activity in community settings, and
- work with public health educators and other professionals to promote physical activity in diverse populations.

### **Two areas of emphasis:**

- The programmatic emphasis prepares the individual for employment as a physical activity specialist in community health promotion and intervention settings.
- The surveillance emphasis prepares the individual for employment as a physical activity research and measurement specialist in public health and private agencies.

### **Career Opportunities:**

Employment opportunities for graduates with a MPH degree in Physical Activity and Public Health are many and diverse. They include:

- **Health Department Settings** - Nearly all states in the United States have physical activity practitioners that work at local, district, and state levels.
- **Federal Agencies** - The US Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have a commitment to the promotion of physical activity in the US population. The National Institutes of Health sponsor many physical activity programs among their various Institutes.
- **Prevention Research Centers** - There are 26 such centers housed in universities throughout the United States. The centers provide health promotion and evaluation programs to the community, conduct research, and develop linkages between community, state health department, and university programs.
- **Professional Organizations** - There are numerous professional organizations and societies with a focus on physical activity and health. Examples include the American College of Sports Medicine, National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity, and National Society for Physical Activity Practitioners in Public Health.
- **Commercial Organizations** - Many commercial organizations, (e.g. book publishers, national strength and conditioning organizations, hospitals, nursing

homes, health and fitness clubs, and employee wellness organizations), market exercise and physical activity products and may employ graduates with a MPH degree in Physical Activity and Public Health.

- **Nonprofit Organizations** – a number of local, state, and national nonprofit organizations implement physical activity programs, or provide technical assistance and resources to others who implement physical activity programs. These include the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, National Center for Older Adults, National Center for Biking and Walking, America Walks, National Safe Routes to School Program, and statewide or community-based physical activity coalitions.

Recent graduates of the MPH-PAPH program are in mid-level positions, such as coordinator for the Safe Routes to School program in South Carolina, health educator for chronic disease prevention at the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and health educator of campus wellness at the University of South Carolina.

## **GUIDELINES FOR MPH-PAPH STUDENTS**

### **Admission Requirements**

1. Students seeking admission to the MPH-PAPH must first meet the general requirements of The Graduate School of the University of South Carolina. Admission to The Graduate School requires a degree from a college or university with regional accreditation. Academic records should indicate that the applicant:

- earned a grade point average of 3.00/4.00 or higher
- completed an undergraduate program with appropriate preparation in the field in which graduate work is to be undertaken (preferred courses include biology, anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, psychology, and health education)

2. Other requirements include:

- satisfactory GRE scores
- an official transcript from each school or college previously attended (all prior post-secondary school study must be represented)
- a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation
- a detailed written statement of career goals and areas of interest
- demonstration of a broad educational background that indicates public health interests and experiences in physical activity

3. International applicants whose native tongue is not English: satisfactory scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (570 paper/230 computer) or IELTS Academic Course Type 2 Exam (6.5).

## Application Process for the MPH-PAPH Program

- Student submits the application through the Schools of Public Health Application Service (SOPHAS). **The deadline for summer and fall enrollment is February 15; the deadline for spring enrollment is July 15.**
- The Arnold School of Public Health Office of Graduate Student Services forwards the completed SOPHAS application to the MPH-PAPH Graduate Director in the Department of Exercise Science.
- Members of the MPH-PAPH Advisory Board (including the Graduate Director) review the completed application. The Advisory Board meets to discuss the application and decides the admission recommendation.
- The Department of Exercise Science forwards the recommendation to The Graduate School, which makes the final admission decision and officially informs the student of his/her admission status. As indicated in the *Graduate Studies Bulletin*, "admission is determined by the Dean of The Graduate School, upon the recommendations of the department or college concerned, on the basis of an appraisal of the credentials submitted."

**Only upon official notification from The Graduate School is the application process completed.** Any questions regarding this sequence may be addressed to the MPH-PAPH Graduate Director in the Department of Exercise Science.

## Advisement

- After official notification of acceptance from The Graduate School, the student should contact the Department of Exercise Science at (803) 777-2185, [ljfrazi@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:ljfrazi@mailbox.sc.edu), Room 301 of the Public Health Research Center, 921 Assembly Street.
- The Department of Exercise Science refers the student to the MPH-PAPH Graduate Director.
- For students beginning in the fall semester, the initial advisement occurs during the school's graduate student orientation held mid-August.
- For students beginning in the spring or summer semesters, the student arranges an appointment with the Graduate Director for advisement.
- All students must be advised prior to registering for any term.
- The student's file is retained in the Department of Exercise Science.

## Program of Study

A total of 45-46 credit hours in public health is required for the completion of this degree. This includes:

- Arnold School of Public Health core courses for a MPH degree (Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Health Services Policy & Management, Environmental Health Sciences, and Health Promotion, Education & Behavior)
- Eighteen to nineteen (18-19) hours of the physical activity core (including 6 hours of Public Health Practice),
- Twelve (12) hours in an area of emphasis (programmatic or surveillance), and
- Satisfactory completion of a comprehensive examination.

The student and Graduate Director develop a Program of Study (*Form GS20*). This must be filed with The Graduate School via the Department of Exercise Science no later than the completion of 12 semester hours or the first year of study. Changes to the program of study must be completed using Form GS43 (*Program of Study Adjustment form*) and must be on file prior to application for graduation.

### ACADEMIC COURSEWORK

#### **Public Health Core Courses\*** (15 credit hours)

EPID 700 (3)	Introduction to Epidemiology
or EPID 701 (3)	Concepts and Methods of Epidemiology
BIOS 700 (3)	Introduction to Biostatistics
or BIOS 701 (3)	Concepts and Methods of Biostatistics
ENHS 660 (3)	Concepts of Environmental Health Sciences
HSPM 700 (3)	Approaches and Concepts for Health Administration
HPEB 700 (3)	Concepts and Methods in Health Promotion

\* **NOTE:** *EPID 701 and BIOS 701 required for Surveillance Emphasis*

#### **Physical Activity Core** (18-19 credit hours)

EXSC 700 (3)	Physical Activity and Health: Epidemiology, Research, and Practice
EXSC 530 (3)/530L (1)	The Physiology of Muscular Activity ( <i>for students without an undergraduate degree in Exercise Science</i> )
or EXSC 780 (3)	Physiology of Exercise ( <i>for students with an undergraduate degree in Exercise Science</i> )
EXSC 710 (3)	Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity
EXSC Elective (3)	
PUBH 798 (6)	Public Health Practice

**Emphasis Area** (12 hours)**Programmatic Emphasis****Required Courses** (9 credit hours)

HPEB 702 (3)	Planning Health Promotion Programs
HPEB 710 (3)	Evaluation of Health Promotion Programs
EXSC 754 (3)	Community-Based Physical Activity Interventions or HPEB 748 Community Health Development

**Suggested Electives** (3 credit hours)

EPID 730 (3)	Public Health Surveillance Systems
EPID 820 (3)	Seminar in the Epidemiology of Health Effects of Physical Activity
EXSC 563 (3)	Physical Activity & the Physical Dimensions of Aging
EXSC 585 (3)	Women's Health & Physical Activity
EXSC 731 (3)	Mechanisms of Motor Skill Performance
EXSC 784 (3)	Cardiovascular/Pulmonary Testing & Programming
EXSC 787 (3)	Research Methods and Design for Exercise Science
HPEB 701 (3)	Theoretical Foundation of Health Promotion
HPEB 711 (3)	Applied Health Communication
HPEB 752 (3)	Nutrition & Public Health
HSPM 707 (3)	Ethical Issues in Health Care & Research

**Surveillance Emphasis****Required Courses** (9 credit hours)

BIOS 710 (3)	Effective Data Management for Public Health
EPID 730 (3)	Public Health Surveillance Systems
EPID 820 (3)	Seminar in the Epidemiology of Health Effects of Physical Activity

**Suggested Electives** (3 credit hours)

BIOS 757 (3)	Intermediate Biometrics
EPID 741 (4)	Epidemiologic Methods
EPID 744 (3)	Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology
EPID 746 (3)	Cancer Epidemiology
EXSC 563 (3)	Physical Activity & the Physical Dimensions of Aging
EXSC 585 (3)	Women's Health & Physical Activity
EXSC 727 (3)	Controlled Trials in Exercise Science
EXSC 731 (3)	Mechanisms of Motor Skill Performance
EXSC 754 (3)	Community-based Physical Activity Interventions
EXSC 784 (3)	Cardiovascular/Pulmonary Testing & Programming
EXSC 787 (3)	Research Methods and Design for Exercise Science
HPEB 702 (3)	Planning Health Promotion Programs
HPEB 710 (3)	Evaluation of Health Promotion Programs
HPEB 748 (3)	Community Health Development



**Suggested Sequence of Course of Study****Programmatic Emphasis:**

**First Year**  
**Fall:** EPID 700 (3)  
 BIOS 700 (3)  
 HPEB 700 (3)  
 EXSC 530 (3)/530L (1)  
 or EXSC 780 (3)

**Spring:** EXSC 700 (3)  
 EXSC 710 (3)  
 HPEB 702 (3)  
 EXSC Elective (3)

**Summer:** HSPM 700 (3)  
 ENHS 660 (3)

**Second Year**  
**Fall:** EXSC 754 (3)  
 or HPEB 748 (3)  
 HPEB 710 (3)  
 Prog. Elective (3)

**Spring:** PUBH 798 (6)

**Surveillance Emphasis:**

**First Year**  
**Fall:** EPID 701 (3)  
 BIOS 701 (3)  
 BIOS 710 (3)  
 EXSC 530 (3)/530L (1)  
 or EXSC 780 (3)

**Spring:** EXSC 700 (3)  
 EXSC 710 (3)  
 EPID 730 (3)  
 EXSC Elective (3)

**Summer:** HSPM 700 (3)  
 ENHS 660 (3)

**Second Year**  
**Fall:** HPEB 700 (3)  
 EPID 820 (3)  
 Surv. Elective (3)

**Spring:** PUBH 798 (6)

## **Public Health Practice\***

### ***Purpose and Benefits of Completing a Practicum***

The Arnold School provides competitive and viable MPH and DrPH academic programs. The purpose of the practicum is to blend practical field experiences with academic learning. The practicum is an essential part of the MPH and DrPH program curricula and is intended to provide hands-on experience in the field of public health. The practicum aims to provide every student with opportunities to apply and test public health concepts and theories in practical settings and demonstrate achievement of the program's public health competencies. The practicum is a mandatory academic requirement and is an important component of a student's culminating experience; therefore, practicum waivers or exemptions are not permitted.

It is very important that students approach the practicum experience with the mindset that this is a career building experience, which can be added to a student's résumé and/or curriculum vitae. The practicum experience is an opportunity to:

- Put academic lessons into practice
- Increase professional confidence
- Improve communication skills
- Develop and expand professional networks

### ***What is a Practicum?***

- A practicum is an academic credit course in which the student accomplishes specific tasks at a practice site.
- The Arnold School MPH practica require a minimum of 250 contact hours associated with six credit hours, and are completed over one to two semesters.
- All practica are graded on a pass/fail basis.
- Credit hours assigned are variable depending upon the nature and extent of the work tasks undertaken.
- In a regular semester (fall or spring terms), three (3) credit hours of practice work requires an average of ten (10) hours of work each week including writing the final report. Six (6) credit hours require twenty (20) hours of work per week.
- In a summer term, six (6) hours of credit would require forty (40) hours per week.

The practicum is a three-way partnership among the student, faculty advisor, and preceptor. Each partner in this mutually beneficial relationship assumes certain responsibilities, performs specific functions, and receives benefits. The practicum is guided by a set of goals, competencies, and objectives, which are based on the needs and resources of all parties involved. A practicum is individually developed; therefore, the focus, substance, and approach of the practicum will vary, depending on a student's academic program, individual interests, and professional goals. However, the objectives of the practicum must be consistent with the vision, mission, and goals of the Arnold School and of the student's program.

*\* Information about the Public Health Practice is from the Arnold School of Public Health Practicum Guide, September 2016.*

From planning through completion of the practicum, a student works under the guidance of an Arnold School faculty member (practicum advisor) and the supervision of a practitioner (preceptor). Decisions on the nature, site, specific objectives, and activities of the practicum are determined through discussions and agreements among the student, preceptor, and advisor (and perhaps other faculty who have expertise in the area). The roles and responsibilities of each person are outlined below.

A practicum **cannot** be part of a student's existing job or graduate assistantship (GA). It is possible to carry out a practicum at an existing job or GA if it is above and beyond the job or GA requirements and results in the appropriate amount of contact hours. This exception should be carefully negotiated with the practicum advisor. The practicum report is considered part of the culminating experience of each MPH curriculum, much like a project or a thesis. Faculty research projects are generally not appropriate for the practice experience.

The practicum is a professional position and one in which students are representatives of the Arnold School and University of South Carolina. Students are expected to conduct themselves and dress in a professional and ethical manner at all times. Experience with organizations that have sponsored Arnold School of Public Health students suggest that if six major conditions are present, a sound practice activity can be developed.

The conditions are:

- The student has some previously developed competence/ experience that indicates the potential for contributions to the organization and citizenry, including knowledge gained in prerequisite courses.
- The student and the advisor have developed thoughtful and well-articulated learning objectives that can be pursued in the framework of the practicum experience.
- The student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of what is to be done and is able to identify a supportive network of people in the organization.
- The student seeks advice and monitoring from his/her practicum advisor and/or preceptor.
- A preceptor is identified who wants a productive experience for both the organization and the student. An organization wants or needs something done, and it 'controls' or 'owns' the work results.

#### **Practicum Prerequisites for MPH-PAPH Students:**

- Completion at least three of the five public health core courses,
- Completion of a minimum number of 24 credit hours,
- EXSC 700 and EXSC 530/530L or 780, and
- Completion or concurrent enrollment in at least two (2) track (e.g., programmatic, surveillance) courses.

## **Practicum Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Student**

Practicum students are expected to take initiative and responsibility to meet all practicum requirements and to function as a professional at all times. Specifically, students are expected to:

- Select an appropriate setting for a practice activity and make arrangements to conduct the practicum there
- Register for the practicum in the semester in which the practicum begins
- Develop a complete practicum proposal for approval by the practicum advisor and preceptor
- Submit the full proposal through MySPH Opportunity Manager and ensure that it is electronically signed by the practicum advisor and preceptor
- Complete work and learning tasks by the specified deadlines
- Arrange appropriate meetings with the faculty advisor and preceptor, including the final oral presentation
- Discuss practicum-related issues and departmental practicum requirements with the practicum advisor, preceptor and faculty advisor as needed
- Submit all required reports, documents and products to your academic department
- Complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager upon conclusion of the practicum.

### **Practicum Advisor**

During the practicum, the practicum advisor serves as a resource for both the student and the preceptor. The practicum advisor tracks the student's progress and consults with the preceptor when necessary. The ideal practicum advisor is someone who has an interest related to the student's practicum or someone with whom they have developed a supportive student-faculty relationship. The practicum advisor is expected to:

- Advise the student in developing practicum learning objectives
- Review the practicum proposal and any requested revisions
- Review and approve the practicum proposal in MySPH Opportunity Manager
- Advise the student regarding an Ethics Review if Communicate with the student and preceptor throughout the practicum
- Provide ongoing expert advice and guidance as needed or required
- Attend and evaluate the student's final oral presentation
- Review and evaluate the practicum final report
- Assess accomplishment of learning objectives and assign pass/fail grade at the appropriate time
- Complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager.

**Preceptor**

The preceptor is the person at the practicum site who agrees to mentor the student and oversee the day to day activities and projects in which the student is involved. The preceptor should have expertise in the assigned project areas, experience and status within the organization, and the ability and desire to supervise and mentor a student.

The preceptor is expected to do the following:

- Assist the student and the practicum advisor in defining short-term tasks for the practicum project
- Review the student's practicum proposal for usefulness to the organization  
Determine the scope of the preceptor's role with the student
- Provide on-site direction for the work component of the practicum
- Provide the student with logistical support within the organization (e.g., arrange for space, equipment, use of phones, use of computer and/or computer software, secretarial help, making introductions in the organization, provide data or help gaining access to it, etc.)
- Provide opportunities for growth, development, and leadership for the student
- Assist the faculty advisor with assessment of student's work and growth in competence during the practicum
- Attend and evaluate the student's final oral presentation if possible
- Review and evaluate the practicum final report
- Complete the practicum evaluation through MySPH Opportunity Manager.

***Practicum Proposal***

During this stage of the process, the student works with the preceptor and practicum advisor to develop a practicum proposal that includes the components listed below. The student should communicate with the practicum advisor and preceptor via email, Skype, conference call, or in a face-to-face meeting to complete the practicum proposal. Students are required to upload their practicum proposal in MySPH Opportunity Manager, in addition to copying specific information into the database.

The practicum proposal includes the following:

1. Title page
2. Introduction to the public health problem
3. Problem statement and rationale; literature review
4. Setting (description of the practicum site)
5. Project-specific learning objectives. These objectives should clearly relate to the program learning outcomes and reflect synthesis of the public health core
6. Performance objectives that describe project-specific activities including any deliverables and the time line to accomplish these tasks
7. Description of each party's responsibilities; interaction among student, advisor and preceptor; what resources will be provided by each party; how student's performance will be monitored; any particular restrictions for the project identified in the agency's MOA.
8. Bibliography

Once the practicum proposal is completed and accepted by practicum advisor and preceptor, the student must upload the document to MySPH Opportunity Manager and enter specific information from the proposal into the online practicum proposal databank. The student, practicum advisor and preceptor must indicate their approval of the practicum proposal within MySPH Opportunity Manager by electronic signature.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all information in the proposal is accurate and complete and that it is electronically approved prior to starting the practicum. The practicum proposal is for the student's protection, as it will ensure that all parties agree upon the deliverables and experience within the set time frame.

### ***The Practicum Experience***

During the practicum, the student is responsible for completing the activities as specified in the practicum proposal. The student should interact with the preceptor and practicum advisor to assess progress and to address any concerns, challenges or unexpected developments.

### ***Final Report and Oral Presentation***

The purpose of the final report and oral presentation is to assess the student's learning experience and application of public health theories. The student is responsible for arranging the time and place of the oral presentation. The practicum advisor and preceptor should be present at the presentation either physically or via Skype. Announcements of this presentation must be posted throughout the Arnold School buildings and online on the MySPH calendar at least one week prior to the presentation. The practicum final report begins with sections 1-5 of the practicum proposal followed by a summary of the student's practicum experience with details of specific experiences and how the practicum is important to the field of public health. For MPH students, the final report contributes to the student's culminating experience and should demonstrate the student's ability to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and to apply theory and principles in an experience that represents some aspect of professional practice.

The final report is designed to ensure that all MPH and DrPH graduates can integrate and apply the knowledge and skills that they have gained during their academic graduate training. Students should discuss the expectations of their report carefully with their practicum advisor. The report length should be sufficient to cover the expected content carefully. The best recent reports have usually been five to ten pages in length.

In addition to the narrative report, the student should include any deliverables or products of the practicum experience, e.g., curricular material or resource material.

### **MPH-PAPH Program-Specific Practicum Information**

The goal of the practicum is for the student to demonstrate basic understanding of the philosophy of public health practice as applied to programs to increase/promote physical activity in a particular population, or to provide surveillance of physical activity.

## **MPH-PAPH Practicum Learning Objectives**

MPH-PAPH Students will

1. Demonstrate practical skills in a public health practice setting.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in public health practice by successfully completing at least two of the following during their practicum:
  - a. Using measurement and surveillance mechanisms to determine physical activity levels across populations
  - b. Assessing organizational and community needs for physical activity
  - c. Planning, implementing and evaluating physical activity programs and initiatives
  - d. Developing and communicating physical activity messages
  - e. Building physical activity coalitions
  - f. Identifying physical activity resources
  - g. Developing and using a variety of educational methods and materials for physical activity promotion
  - h. Acting as an advocate for physical activity policies

For MPH-PAPH students in the programmatic track, the goal is to gain experience in planning, implementing, and evaluating a theory-based physical activity and public health program or initiative. MPH-PAPH students in the programmatic track should graduate having been exposed to a variety of physical activity and public health settings and populations. Thus, for the practicum, the student should usually work in a setting and with a population different from the student's graduate assistantships or previous volunteer/work experience. The student should ideally work in a non-university setting. In some cases, the student may become involved in a portion of an ongoing program or initiative, but in all cases the practicum should involve significant responsibility and decision-making on the part of the student.

### **Practicum Committee**

Each student in the MPH in Physical Activity and Public Health degree program must have a practicum committee. The practicum committee is composed of the student's practicum advisor, the preceptor from the practicum site, and the program's graduate director (unless the graduate director is the practicum advisor). The student's academic advisor does not automatically serve as the practicum advisor; the student may select the practicum advisor from any Arnold School of Public Health faculty with relevant interests.

### **Financial Support**

If financial resources are required for doing a practicum, the responsibility for negotiating these arrangements rests with the practicum site and the student. These costs and responsibilities for coverage are included in the practicum proposal.

## **Developing a Practicum**

There is no magic or proper way to find the right setting for a practicum. One approach is to locate something that needs to be done that some organization and persons within the organization cares about, and then determine if that task will allow the student to pursue the learning objectives and can be done in the time available.

## **Ethics and Professional Standards**

Students are expected to act in an ethical, responsible and professional manner. These ethical principles benefit and protect the students, as well as clients, placement agencies, preceptors, and the university. Students are also expected to learn and adhere to guidelines specific to the practicum site. If, at any time, a student has questions about or responsible conduct, they should immediately contact the practicum advisor or preceptor. Commitment to ethical principles and the capacity to engage in ethical decision-making processes are hallmarks of professionalism. At a minimum, students must adhere to the following ethical principles:

- All information related to clients of the practicum site is to remain confidential.
- Students must follow standards of academic integrity as described by the Office of Academic Integrity. Any student identified as having engaged in any acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, copying information available through the worksite and presenting it as the student's own work to either representatives of the host organization or the practicum faculty advisor) while engaged in practicum activities will be subject to the standards and review process outlined in the bulletin, including the possibility of dismissal.
- Students should be guided by codes of ethics most closely associated with the profession and organization of their practicum site.
- Students are encouraged to discuss either the preceptor or the practicum advisor any activities they believe may potentially compromise legal or ethical standards.
- Students may undertake only those program activities explicitly outlined in the practicum agreement or assigned by the preceptor or practicum advisor.
- Students may not correspond with or for clients regarding matters of a professional nature without explicit approval of the preceptor.
- Students may not visit clients socially during regular working hours without explicit approval of the practicum preceptor.

One of the most important components of the practicum is practicing appropriate professional workplace behavior. Practicum students are expected to demonstrate the standard of behavior expected of other employees in the organization, including compliance with the organization's policies and procedures. Thus, students are expected to act in a professional manner at all times. The behavior of practicum students should reflect favorably upon the worksite and the university. Students are expected to dress professionally and to arrive and depart at agreed upon hours. They also should promptly inform their preceptor of any anticipated absences or delays in their arrival times. They are expected to complete all agreed upon activities and work in



a timely and professional manner. Professional expectations for behavior and conduct include the following:

- Appearance: The student exhibits personal cleanliness, grooming, and dress appropriate for the organization and position.
- Attendance: The student reports regularly, consistently and on time as described in the practicum agreement or agreed upon with the preceptor.
- Accuracy: The student displays accuracy in his or her work (thorough and efficient).
- Responsibility: The student follows directions, is a self-starter and stays on task without close supervision.
- Relationships: The student exhibits respect and appropriate relationships with other employees, clients, and students (tact, courtesy, cooperation).

It is very important that students maintain an open line of communication with their preceptor. If they encounter any problems which they cannot resolve on their own, they should discuss the matter with their preceptor. If the student feels the problem has not been resolved after speaking with their preceptor, then they should contact their practicum advisor for assistance. The Arnold School Office of Public Health Practice is available to assist and support faculty, preceptors and students.

Although MPH practica typically do not require IRB approval from USC Office of Research Compliance, it is still important for each student to be familiar with the IRB requirements at the University of South Carolina. However, some projects may need to be approved by the agency review committee at the practicum site. Certain categories of research have been designated as exempt from federal regulations related to the use of human subjects. Institutions may choose to recognize these categories of exemption and waive the requirement for review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The University of South Carolina requires review of all research involving human subjects, but imposes different requirements for research meeting the criteria for exemption. Visit USC's Office of Research Compliance to learn more about the IRB process. Any necessary approvals must be obtained prior to beginning work on the defined practicum tasks. Some practicum activities related to an ongoing research project may be covered under that project's IRB approval. Such approval should be discussed with the project principal investigator and/or practicum advisor. In most situations, notification to the IRB of a change in protocol is sufficient.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

A comprehensive examination is required for all master's students. The purpose of the exam is to evaluate the knowledge acquired by the student in the core and major courses, and to evaluate mastery of the major concepts and methodologies in the discipline.

The comprehensive exam will be taken upon completion of the majority of major coursework, defined as satisfactory completion in all required courses listed on the student's program of study within three (3) credit hours (excluding public health

practice). The exam will have three major sections: public health core, physical activity core and emphasis area core.

The exam will be coordinated by the Department of Exercise Science. The MPH-PAPH Advisory Board will build sets of questions with input from other faculty who teach required courses. The exam will have three major sections:

- Public health core
- Physical activity core
- Emphasis: Programmatic or Surveillance

Each section will contain approximately 3-4 questions, of which the student will select at least two to answer. The number of questions may be greater to reflect shorter questions, with the targeted completion time being 1.5 hours per section. For students planning to graduate in May, the exam will be offered in February. For students planning to graduate in August or December, the exam will be offered approximately halfway through the semester, June or October, respectively.

Each section will have at least two readers, who will classify the section as pass or fail. Readers may be assigned to individual questions within a section. Readers for a given question or section will meet to reconcile any discrepancies in evaluation in order to reach a consensus on pass or fail. Additional readers may be called in if necessary. Readers will be faculty members in the respective area.

To pass the comprehensive exam, a student must pass all three sections. If a student does not pass the comprehensive exam, the MPH-PAPH Advisory Board in conjunction with the student's academic advisor, will determine the appropriate follow up on an individual basis. Options include a second individualized written exam, remedial work with a specified project addressing a particular area of weakness, and/or a follow-up oral examination.

The determination of the outcome of the comprehensive examination, pass or fail, is forwarded to the student and to The Graduate School by the Department of Exercise Science.

### **Descriptions of Required Courses**

**BIOS 700** Introduction to Biostatistics. (3) Health-related statistical applications. Descriptive statistics, probability, confidence intervals, hypotheses testing, regression, correlation, ANOVA. May not be used for graduate credit in epidemiology or biostatistics.

**BIOS 701** Concepts and Methods of Biostatistics. (3) Descriptive and inferential statistical applications to public health. Probability, interval estimation, hypothesis testing, measures of association. Intended for those who will be involved in research applications of biostatistics.

- BIOS 710 Effective Data Management for Public Health. (3) (Prereq or co req: BIOS 700) Statistical data management techniques. Microcomputer applications, communication between microcomputers and mainframe, tape and disk storage, access of large health-related databases.
- ENHS 660 Concepts of Environmental Health Sciences. (3) Environmental health sciences presenting the earth as a complex system in which people, plants, animals, and non-living physical-chemical components interact.
- EPID 700 Introduction to Epidemiology. (3) (Prereq or Coreq: BIOS 700) Principles of epidemiology with examples of selected health problems. Health status of populations and conceptual tools for translating epidemiologic findings into public health action. May not be used as part of a degree program in epidemiology or biostatistics.
- EPID 701 Concepts and Methods of Epidemiology. (3) (Prereq or Coreq: BIOS 701) Conceptual foundation of epidemiologic research, quantitative methods, and epidemiologic study design. Intended for those who will be involved in epidemiologic research.
- EPID 730 Public Health Surveillance Systems. (3) (Prereq or Coreq: EPID 700/701) Introduction to the concepts, implementation and evaluation of surveillance systems to monitor the health of human populations.
- EPID 820 Seminar in the Epidemiology of Health Effects of Physical Activity. (3) (Prereq: EPID 700) Seminar presentation and group discussion on the major issues in the study of physical activity and exercise and their impact on health.
- EXSC 530 The Physiology of Muscular Activity. (3) (Prereq: EXSC 223 and 224; Coreq: EXSC 530L) The individual and combined roles of the major organ systems of the body in maintaining homeostasis during muscular exercise.
- EXSC 503L The Physiology of Muscular Activity Laboratory. (1) (Prereq: EXSC 223 and 224; Coreq: EXSC 530) Laboratory procedures in exercise physiology; measurement of physical fitness components.
- EXSC 700 Physical Activity and Health: Epidemiology, Research, and Practice. (3) An introduction to exercise science with emphasis on the relationships between exercise and health for promotion of physical activity in clinical and public health settings.
- EXSC 710 Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity. (3) Psychosocial and behavioral factors in physical activity. Topics include mental health effects of exercise, behavior change theories applied to mental health effects of

exercise, behavior change theories applied to physical activity, and physical activity determinants and interventions.

- EXSC 754 Community-Based Physical Activity Interventions. (3) Role of the physical activity specialist within the community health department. Development, initiation, and evaluation of campaigns, resources, community capacity building, and coalitions to promote physical activity.
- EXSC 780 Physiology of Exercise. (3) Physiological responses to exercise: skeletal muscle structure and function, cardiorespiratory function, physiological determinants of exercise performance, and training adaptations. Didactic and laboratory included.
- HPEB 700 Concepts and Methods in Health Promotion. (3) Fundamental principles and practices of public health promotion including history, ethics, cultural competence, professional responsibilities, overview of theory and models, and selection and implementation of instructional methods.
- HPEB 702 Planning Health Promotion Programs. (3) Health promotion planning frameworks; issues in planning, implementing and evaluating health promotion programs in a variety of settings.
- HPEB 710 Evaluation of Health Promotion Programs. (3) (Prereq 700 or consent of instructor) Planning and implementation of health education program evaluations. Emphasis on political, practical, and theoretical aspects of evaluation.
- HPEB 748 Community Health Development. (3) Organizational development, policy influence, capacity building, empowerment, community diagnosis and coalition development for enhancing health.
- HSPM 700 Approaches and Concepts for Health Administration. (3) An interdisciplinary perspective on the field of health administration. Philosophy concepts, and skills of implementation, management and evaluation are presented and discussed. Principles in the practice of health administration are applied to identified problems and situations.
- PUBH 798 Public Health Practice. (1-6) Limited work experience or service project in an approved public health setting relating to physical activity.

### **Graduation/Hooding Ceremony**

The University holds commencement ceremonies in May and December of each year. In addition, the Arnold School of Public Health hosts a Hooding Ceremony each May for students who graduated in December of the previous year or anticipate graduating in May or August of the current year.

**During the final semester of study, the student applies for graduation. The deadline for application for graduation is set by the Office of the Registrar each semester. For fall and spring semesters, this deadline is within the first three weeks of classes. For August graduation, the deadline is within days of the first summer term.**

- The graduation application form is available in the Arnold School of Public Health's Office of Graduate Student Services (PHRC 204).
- The Department of Exercise Science verifies the completion of all degree requirements and submits clearance for graduation to The Graduate School.
- Clearance for graduation also requires that the student complete and submit the exit questionnaire. This questionnaire is distributed by the Office of Academic Affairs.
- The Graduate School notifies the Registrar's Office that all degree requirements have been completed. This notification usually does not occur until several weeks after the actual commencement ceremony. The diploma is distributed via mail.
- The student is responsible for purchasing caps, gowns, hoods, and announcements for graduation and should be mindful that these purchases are made in a timely fashion.

### **Academic Responsibility and Academic Standards**

#### **Academic Responsibility**

The **University of South Carolina Honor Code** states, "It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina at Columbia to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic program. Any student who violates this rule or who knowingly assists another to violate this rule shall be subject to discipline."

The USC Honor Code is the University's policy regarding incidents involving academic integrity. The Honor Code codifies the values espoused in the tenets of the Carolinian Creed (<http://sa.sc.edu/creed/>). Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the Carolinian Creed.

#### **Academic Standards**

For purposes of academic standards, cumulative GPA is defined as the grade point average of all graduate-credit courses recorded on the official USC academic transcript. The *Graduate Bulletin* states, "Graduate courses may be passed for degree credit with a grade as low as C, but a degree-seeking student's cumulative grade point average must be at least **B** (3.00 on a 4.00 scale). At the time of graduation, the student's cumulative grade point average must be at least 3.00. Additionally, the student's average on all grades recorded on the Program of Study must be 3.00 and the student's grade point average for courses numbered 700 or above, recorded on the Program of Study, must be at least 3.00. Grades earned on graduate credits transferred from other universities are not included in the grade point average."

“Graduate degree-seeking students whose cumulative grade point average drops below 3.00 (**B**) will be placed on academic probation and allowed one calendar year in which to raise the grade point average to at least 3.00. In case of conversion of grades of incomplete that cause a cumulative GPA to drop below 3.0, a degree-seeking student will be placed on academic probation at the end of the semester in which the grade is posted. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below the required minimum of 3.0 by receiving a grade for a course in which they received an Incomplete will, instead of a one year probationary period, be granted only one major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the grade is received by the registrar in which to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.0 or above. Students who do not reach a cumulative 3.00 grade point average during the probationary period will not be permitted to enroll for further graduate course work as a degree or non-degree student.”

This rule applies to all in-date graduate courses taken at the University of South Carolina (within six years) whether or not they are included on the student’s program of study. This rule also applies to courses taken in two or more degree programs. A grade of “U” earned in any course will be treated as a grade below “B” for the suspension policy.

### **Tuition and Fees**

All charges are due and payable on the date that they are incurred, or the due date indicated on the ticket, invoice, or statement. The Bursar’s Office online payment system is available at [my.sc.edu](http://my.sc.edu). Any student who has failed to pay all required registration fees on or before the last date to change course schedule (as indicated in the University calendar) may be dropped from class rolls. Any student who fails to relieve any other indebtedness to the university or to any of its auxiliary agencies on the date such obligations become due may not be permitted to remain in university residence halls or be issued a transcript, diploma, or degree. For information about fees, visit the USC Fee Schedule at the Bursar’s Office website: [http://www.sc.edu/bursar/schedule\\_main.shtml](http://www.sc.edu/bursar/schedule_main.shtml).

## **FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION**

Our graduate students receive funding through scholarships, fellowships, internships, graduate assistantships, and more.

### **Financial Aid**

#### **Scholarships and Fellowships**

Public health scholarship and fellowship information is distributed via student email listservs and also posted with the **MySPH (My Source for Public Health) Opportunity Manager**. In addition, since the Arnold School of Public Health is a member of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH), graduate students are eligible for fellowships offered through ASPPH. The University of South Carolina Graduate School also has a listing of available fellowships and awards.

## **Grants, Loans, and Other Financial Assistance**

The University of South Carolina Office of Student Financial Aid provides access to a variety of grants and loans for students in graduate programs of study. Financial aid inquiries should be made to:

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships  
University of South Carolina  
1714 College Street  
Columbia, SC 29208  
Phone: 803-777-8134  
Fax: 803-777-0941  
Email: [uscfaid@sc.edu](mailto:uscfaid@sc.edu)

## **Graduate Assistantships**

A limited number of Graduate Assistantships are available for full-time students. These assistantships provide a special tuition rate and a stipend in return for 10-20 hours of work per week under the direction of Arnold School of Public Health faculty. To qualify for an assistantship, a student must be fully admitted to a degree program, maintain a 3.0 average, and enroll in at least six (6) credit hours, but no more than 13 credit hours. Students who are awarded a graduate assistantship are charged the in-state tuition rate and may also be awarded a tuition supplement from the department.

In addition, the MySPH (My Source for Public Health) Opportunity Manager provides a centralized location for posting, searching, and applying for graduate assistantships, practicum/residency opportunities, and internships.

## **Internships and Traineeships**

Public health internship and traineeship information is distributed via student email listservs and also posted with the MySPH (My Source for Public Health) Opportunity Manager ([www.mysph.sc.edu](http://www.mysph.sc.edu)).

## **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES & COMPUTER RESOURCES**

### **Department of Exercise Science**

The Department of Exercise Science is located in Room 301 in the Public Health Research Center. This is the "home" of the MPH-PAPH degree program. Since student files are maintained in this office, all student academic transactions must be approved by the office.

A Listserv is maintained for all MPH-PAPH students. Incoming students will receive information about subscribing at orientation.

## **Office of Graduate Student Services**

The Office of Graduate Student Services is housed in the Public Health Research Center, Room 204. This office provides information to students about the school to prospective students, as well as support services to current students. Services provided to current students include: orientation, registration information, workshops, and providing information regarding the hooding ceremony. The Office's contact information is as follows:

Office of Graduate Student Services  
Arnold School of Public Health  
University of South Carolina  
921 Assembly Street, Room 204  
Columbia, SC 29208  
Phone: 803-777-5031  
Fax: 803-777-3588  
Email: sphstsr@mailbox.sc.edu

The Office of Graduate Student Services also encourages interaction among students through the Arnold School of Public Health Student Association. In addition, the office serves as a liaison between students and faculty within the Arnold School of Public Health and provides information on opportunities offered by the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), among others.

Students are encouraged to read newsletters, listserv information and the bulletin boards sponsored by the Office of Graduate Student Services to keep posted on workshops, internships and career information, as well as other relevant issues related to Arnold School of Public Health students.

## **Arnold School of Public Health Student Association (ASPHSA)**

The Office of Graduate Student Services sponsors the Arnold School of Public Health Student Association (ASPHSA). This is an active Arnold School of Public Health student organization. **The Executive Council of the ASPHA is the Dean's Student Advisory Council (DSAC).**

The purpose of this council is two-fold: (1) to provide a means for students to have dialogue with the dean and (2) to inform students about important events that are happening within the Arnold School of Public Health and the University. DSAC also assists the ASPH in recruiting students to participate in a variety of school-wide events including: seminars, activities associated with Public Health Week, and USC Graduate Student Day.

ASPHSA coordinates many aspects of the annual graduate student orientation for new students. All six departments have student representation and representatives include students at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels. Membership is selected annually by departmental elections.



If you have questions or would like to get involved, contact the Office of Graduate Student Services.

### **Computer Laboratory**

A computer lab is available to all Arnold School of Public Health students. The lab is located on the fourth floor of the Discovery Building, Room 431. Hours of operation are posted in the lab. The computers in this lab have Internet access, Microsoft Office applications and various specialized applications such as SAS statistical software.