

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, BEHAVIOR AND SOCIETY

About

The Department of Health, Behavior and Society (HBS) advances public health research, pedagogy, and practice through our focus on health equity, social justice, and the myriad factors that drive people's health and well-being. We develop, evaluate, and implement solutions to pressing public health challenges in Baltimore, throughout the U.S., and in dozens of countries around the world. We believe that human behaviors are key determinants of health and well-being and that behavioral determinants reside at the nexus of social context, political and policy structures, systems, and constructed environments.

Our research, practice, and pedagogy reflect this multilevel orientation, centering on factors that occur within and across each level, including:

- **The individual level:** people's own attitudes, beliefs, and emotions.
- **The interpersonal level:** people's social networks at home, the workplace, and elsewhere.
- **The policy level:** policies that promote or hinder access to healthy living, including access to healthcare, insurance, and housing.
- **The structural level:** structures of racism, inequity, and injustice.

Some of HBS's areas of expertise include addiction, social justice, anti-racism, health equity, LGBTQ studies, chronic diseases, health communication, social factors, sex work, opioid use, tobacco control, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and COVID-19 prevention and control. We are particularly known for our mixed methods (including qualitative) approaches.

We house several centers and institutes, including one of BSPH's largest centers, the Center for Communication Programs. Since our founding in 2005, our Department has grown to include 130+ students and approximately 60 full-time faculty members. We are also proud to have a dedicated core of highly skilled staff members who support and strengthen all aspects of our work in the Department of Health, Behavior and Society.

Programs

- Health Education and Health Communication, MSPH (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/departments/health-behavior-society/health-education-communication-msph/>)
- Genetic Counseling, ScM (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/departments/health-behavior-society/genetic-counseling-scm/>)
- Health, Behavior, and Society, MHS (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/departments/health-behavior-society/health-behavior-society-mhs/>)
- Health, Behavior and Society, PhD (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/departments/health-behavior-society/health-behavior-society-phd/>)
- Non-Degree Training (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/departments/health-behavior-society/non-degree-training/>)

Summer Institute

Our HBS Summer Institute offers short, intensive courses that provide students with an understanding of behavioral and societal impacts on public health—and specific strategies to address the challenges they present.

Overview - Explore how social context and behavior shape population health through our HBS Summer Institute courses. Institute courses offer the same rigor and quality as our full-term HBS courses, condensed into days instead of weeks. Our HBS faculty experts lead each of our courses, ranging in focus from risk communication to program planning to qualitative studies and more. HBS Summer Institute courses:

- Offer the same rigor and quality of full-term courses, **condensed into days** instead of weeks.
- Are taught by our **HBS faculty experts**.
- May be taken on a **for-credit** or **non-credit basis** (with reduced tuition available for non-credit courses).
- Are eligible for **tuition remission** under the terms of the Hopkins Tuition Remission Plan (<https://hr.jhu.edu/benefits-worklife/tuition-assistance/>).
- Courses taken for credit may be applied towards the completion of many full-time and part-time **degree programs** at HBS and BSPH.

HBS Policies and Student Resources

HBS Policy on Advising

All students are assigned a faculty adviser at the time of admission to their program. Adviser assignments are based, in part, on the compatibility of the student and faculty research or practice interests. Advisers play an important role in the student's academic life. The adviser is expected to keep abreast of School and Departmental degree requirements, so they can counsel students on courses and the proper progression toward the degree. Students should consult with their advisers prior to registering for courses each term. In addition, any special requests or petitions that a student submits to any of the administrative offices of the School will require the endorsement of the student's adviser as well as that of the Department chair.

As students move through their degree programs, they may elect to choose a different adviser, depending on their chosen area of concentration and the dissertation topic selected or for other reasons. In that event, the student should contact the preferred faculty member to determine if that person is able to assume responsibility as the student's adviser. If so, the student should notify the Department in writing of an adviser change, obtain the signatures of the prior adviser and the new adviser, and submit the signed notification to their respective program director for approval. Once approved, notify the HBS Academic Program Office so the change may be processed.

Each student is required to meet with their adviser at least once per academic term to discuss academic progress, to plan for fulfillment of degree requirements, and to review and modify course selection plans for the next term. These meetings are formally scheduled before each major registration period. **HBS students are responsible for scheduling these meetings with their advisers. See Milestones tables in each degree program description.** The HBS Academic Program Office works closely with the faculty advisers and also provides guidance to students with the School and Departmental academic policies and procedures.

- Students are expected to engage in pre-planning for these meetings.
- Both advisers and students should be aware of and understand curriculum policies and procedures.
- Students and advisers should identify future professional career goals and interests.
- The adviser and student should review the student's tentative curriculum and course schedule and alternatives should be identified.
- Any major issues or questions about academic programs and non-academic problems should be identified and discussed.

HBS Program Directors for each respective program and the HBS Academic Program Office are also available as resources within the Department for students who have questions or concerns related to their own academic advisers. These individuals may be able to assist with mediation, coaching, facilitating co-mentoring, or switching advisers as needed. The Vice Chair for Pedagogy and Academic Affairs is also available to serve in this role.

HBS Teaching Assistant Policy

Any student, regardless of program, who wishes to serve as a Teaching Assistant (TA) in any Health, Behavior and Society course must first complete the self-paced, online "Teaching Assistantship Training (<https://www.cctltoolkit.com/teaching-assistants/>)" course. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) will provide students with a certificate of completion, which they must then submit with their TA Payment Form.

Introduction to Online Learning: Students are now required to take the free, non-credit mini course "Introduction to Online Learning (IOL (<https://courseplus.jhu.edu/core/index.cfm/go/course.home/cid/90/>))" before beginning their first term.

Funding

Per the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) (<https://provost.jhu.edu/education/graduate-and-professional-education/phd-union/collective-bargaining-agreement/>) with the JHU PhD Union, the minimum guaranteed 2025-2026 academic year stipend is \$50,000 for all PhD students with a 4% increase the following year. Tuition, fees, and medical benefits are provided, including health insurance premiums for PhD student's children and spouses of international students, depending on visa type. The minimum stipend and tuition coverage is guaranteed for at least the first four years of a BSPH PhD program; specific amounts and the number of years supported, as well as work expectations related to that stipend will vary across departments and funding source. Please refer to the CBA to review specific benefits, compensation, and other terms.