

HEALTH EDUCATION AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION, MSPH

General Program Information

The Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) program in Health Education and Health Communication (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/msph-in-health-education-and-health-communication/>) is designed for individuals seeking formal academic training in health education, health promotion, and health communication. The program equips students with the fundamental skills and knowledge necessary for a career in these areas in settings ranging from voluntary, community-based agencies to health departments and government agencies to for-profit companies. The degree is appropriate for individuals interested in either or both domestic or international work. Four major elements comprise the MSPH program in Health Education and Health Communication and are described below: program requirements, academic course requirements, a field placement, and a final written assignment.

Bachelor's/MSPH

The Bachelor's/Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) in Health Education and Health Communication is designed exclusively for undergraduate students currently enrolled at Johns Hopkins University (JHU).

JHU undergraduate students have the unique opportunity to seek early admission to the MSPH degree. The combined Bachelor's/MSPH in Health Education and Health Communication program is designed for students seeking specialized formal academic training in health education, health promotion, and health communication. The MSPH in Health Education and Health Communication provides a solid foundation in behavioral sciences principles and theories, along with advanced skills in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Students may apply up to 16 credits of interdivisional public health coursework counted towards their undergraduate degree to their MSPH degree. Students in this program will receive co-advising from both schools to optimize their academic experience.

To learn more, please review the specific program details for the Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) in Health Education and Health Communication program offered by the Department of Health, Behavior and Society (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/msph-in-health-education-and-health-communication/>).

Program Requirements

Course location and modality is found on the BSPH website (<https://www.jhsph.edu/courses/>).

Student Status

The program is open to both full-time and part-time students. However, during the field placement, all students must be registered as full-time students. Students must maintain their student status up until they complete all requirements for graduation.

Timing

Full-time students complete course requirements in their first year of study; part-time students must complete them within three years of matriculating into the program. All students are required to participate in a full-time field placement of at least six months duration, only after their required and elective coursework is complete.

Course/Credit Load

The Department strongly encourages students to register for fewer than 19 credits (including special studies) in any one academic term. While a credit registration of more than 18 credits is possible through the registration system, departmental faculty think that the additional course burden prohibits students from dedicating the appropriate time needed for the educational activities being undertaken. Any decision to register for more than 18 credits should be carefully considered and discussed with the student's adviser prior to registering. The Department encourages students to register for a minimum of 16 credits each term. The School requires a minimum of 12 credits to maintain full-time status and a maximum of 22 credits.

Certification for Graduation

MSPH students in good academic standing who complete all program components are certified for graduation by the HBS Academic Program Administrator.

Students must communicate their graduation plans well in advance to their adviser, program director, and the School and meet all deadlines for degree requirements. Students are certified for graduation only after they have successfully completed all coursework, the field placement, and the final writing assignment. Students who do not fulfill program requirements within the stated time frame run the risk of delaying their graduation. Specific deadlines and graduation conferral dates will be provided to the student.

The University now has three conferral dates for graduation (December, May, and August) but only one graduation ceremony per year (May). December and August graduates may participate in the May graduation ceremony of the appropriate academic year. Most MSPH students are certified for May graduation.

Students who have not completed both the field placement experience and the final writing assignment by the May graduation deadline will be required to register for two credits in the summer term. Students will receive an Incomplete (I) grade for field placement (PH.410.810 Field Placement Health Behavior and Society) and, as dictated by School policy, the Incomplete grade will convert to a Fail (F) grade if the activity is not completed within 120 days of the end of 4th term.

Academic Course Requirements

Students must complete a *minimum* of 64 credits, which includes both required and elective courses (see table below), before becoming eligible for field placement. Program course requirements are designed to give students general competence in core areas of public health and more in-depth competence in the theories and practice of public health education, promotion, and communication. For a number of required areas, students may select among options to fulfill the requirement. For instance, students can pursue the Biostatistics requirement through one of two options. The first option (Track A) emphasizes interpretation and concepts rather than data analysis. This sequence develops an understanding of statistical methods rather than developing a student's own data analysis skills. The second option (Track B) is

aimed at students who intend to analyze data themselves or contribute meaningfully to a group of practitioners or researchers doing so. Students may not switch between tracks after they have begun one. Both courses in the track must be completed to fulfill the Biostatistics requirement. *All students taking online courses are required to complete Introduction to Online Learning (offered all four terms) before they take their first online course.* Students are encouraged to consult with their academic advisers when making course selections.

The required curriculum emphasizes:

- assessment of educational and communication needs;
- development and implementation of health behavior change strategies and health communication programs targeting the individual, group, and community; and
- evaluation of program effects.

Required Courses: Core Public Health Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Ethics		
PH.550.860	Academic & Research Ethics at BSPH (all terms)	0
Epidemiology		
PH.340.721	Epidemiologic Inference in Public Health I (Terms 1 (recommended),3,SI)	5
Biostatistics		
Select one of the following:		6-8
PH.140.611 & PH.140.612	Statistical Reasoning in Public Health I and Statistical Reasoning in Public Health II ¹	
PH.140.621 & PH.140.622	Statistical Methods in Public Health I and Statistical Methods in Public Health II ²	
Total Credits		11-13

¹ Terms 1 (recommended), 2, 3 for PH.140.611 Statistical Reasoning in Public Health I; Terms 2 (recommended), 3, 4 for PH.140.612 Statistical Reasoning in Public Health II

² Term 1 recommended for PH.140.621 Statistical Methods in Public Health I; Term 2 recommended for PH.140.622 Statistical Methods in Public Health II

Required Courses: Health Education, Promotion and Communication

Code	Title	Credits
Theory		
PH.410.600	Fundamentals of Health, Behavior and Society (Term 1 recommended)	4
Planning and Implementation		
Select one of the following:		6-8
PH.410.620 & PH.410.630	Program Planning for Health Behavior Change and Implementation and Sustainability of Community-Based Health Programs ¹	
PH.410.654 & PH.410.655	Health Communication Programs I: Planning and Strategic Design and Health Communication Programs II: Implementation and Evaluation ²	
Program Evaluation		
Select one of the following:		3-4

PH.410.615 Research Design in the Social and Behavioral Sciences (Term 2 recommended)

PH.380.611 Fundamentals of Program Evaluation (Term 3 recommended)

Communication

PH.410.650 Introduction to Persuasive Communications: Theories and Practice (Term 2 recommended, WI) 4

PH.410.651 Health Literacy: Challenges and Strategies for Effective Communication (Term 3 recommended) 3

Policy

PH.410.668 Policy Interventions for Health Behavior Change 3

Professional Development

PH.410.865 MSPH Seminar in Health Education and Health Promotion 1

PH.410.866 Careers in Health Education and Health Promotion 1

PH.410.867 MSPH Field Placement Preparation I 1

PH.410.869 MSPH Field Placement Preparation II 1

Total Credits **27-30**

¹ Terms 1 (recommended), WI, 4 for PH.410.620 Program Planning for Health Behavior Change; Terms 2 (recommended), 4 for PH.410.630 Implementation and Sustainability of Community-Based Health Programs

² Term 3 recommended for PH.410.654 Health Communication Programs I: Planning and Strategic Design; Term 4 recommended for PH.410.655 Health Communication Programs II: Implementation and Evaluation

Remember to check for prerequisites. Note: all online courses require completion of Introduction to Online Learning.

Required Courses: CEPH Introductory Learning Objectives and Professional Development Competencies

The Council for Education in Public Health (CEPH) is responsible for the accreditation of all schools of public health. According to CEPH requirements, all degree students must be grounded in foundational public health knowledge, as outlined in 12 'introductory learning objectives'. In addition, students in professional master's degree programs like the MSPH must also demonstrate their ability to perform 22 professional development competencies. For MSPH students in HBS, many of these competencies are integrated into core departmental and program requirements. Competencies not already covered are included in 0.5 credit "Cells to Society" (C2S) online modules (552.601 - 552.626) or variable credit "Leadership Skills" courses (552.622, 552.651, 552.655) developed by the school. The C2S modules are offered in several academic terms; the Leadership Skills courses are offered as noted. All CEPH requirements must be completed prior to graduation.

MPSH students are *strongly encouraged* to complete them prior to the start of the field placement. More details about CEPH requirements can be found here (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/ceph-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
PH.552.601	Foundational Principles of Public Health	0.5
PH.552.603	The Role of Qualitative Methods and Science in Describing and Assessing a Population's Health	0.5
PH.552.607	Essentials of Environmental Health	0.5
PH.552.608	Biologic, Genetic and Infectious Bases of Human Disease	0.5

PH.552.609	Psychological and Behavioral Factors That Affect A Population's Health	0.5
PH.552.611	Globalization and Population Health	0.5
PH.552.612	Essentials of One Health	0.5
PH.552.622	Creating, Implementing and Monitoring Budgets for Projects and Programs	1
PH.552.623	Principles of Negotiation and Mediation for Public Health Professionals	0.5
PH.552.624	Applications of Negotiation and Mediation for Public Health Professionals	0.5
PH.552.625	Building Collaborations Across Sectors to Improve Population Health	0.5
PH.552.626	Systems Thinking: Concepts and Methods	0.5
PH.300.651	Introduction to the U.S. Healthcare System	4
PH.312.655	Organizational Behavior and Management	2
Total Credits		12.5

Elective Courses

Students have ample opportunity to choose elective courses to tailor their program of study to their own unique needs and interests. Students may use electives to broaden their understanding of major public health issues by taking courses in any of the departments of the School. Electives may also be used to pursue specialized training such as that offered by the Certificate in Injury Control, Certificate in Health Finance and Management, etc. Again, students are encouraged to consult with their advisers and program director about elective course selections.

Field Placement

Overview

The field placement is designed to provide students with an opportunity, under supervision, to apply the knowledge and skills from the classroom to professional health education, promotion, and communication practice. The primary purpose of the field placement, an integral component of the MSPH program, is skill-building: helping students learn how to apply theories and principles and develop skills essential for functioning as an effective health educator. Another goal for the placement is to allow for the seamless transition from student to public health professional.

Field placement is an activity in which the student, the placement agency, and the faculty share responsibility. All three parties must be involved in developing work objectives to guide the student's field placement experience. Appropriate field placement is one that consists of a full-time work experience as a health education, promotion, or communication trainee in a health-related agency or organization in which the student participates in some aspect of program/project planning, implementation, and/or evaluation. The placement must be full-time, last at least six months (consecutive), and provide the student with appropriate supervision and guidance from agency personnel. Both the student and the agency preceptor will be asked to participate in a mid-course discussion and a final evaluation.

Part-time students who are employed full-time by an agency may propose a field placement with their current employer. In such instances, the student must propose a scope of work that involves new responsibilities or activities that are not part of their current work, and the students must extend the time frame to accommodate the fact that they are not engaged in new work for 100% effort.

Additional field placement information and requirements will be provided to students by the program director.

Second Year Seminar

Students are required to participate in a monthly seminar series during year two of the program. The purpose of the seminar series is to allow students to learn about each other's placements and to discuss issues relevant to current health education and communication practice. The seminar also reviews the purpose and procedures for the final written assignment. Additional seminar information and requirements will be provided to the students by the program director. The seminars will be held virtually using Zoom technology; students will need a laptop or desktop computer with audio capabilities. If time zone or work priorities interfere with the student's ability to participate in the seminar, it is the student's responsibility to watch on their own time the recorded seminar. Monthly seminars are held during the academic year on Friday afternoons; the specific schedule will be shared by the program director.

Final Written Assignment

The concluding requirement of the program is the completion of a program proposal prepared by the student. The goal of this written assignment is threefold:

- to provide students with an opportunity to synthesize information obtained in the academic year with that experienced during the field placement,
- to demonstrate the ability to write at the graduate level, and
- to gain proposal writing skills.

The proposal must display academic rigor, must comply with program requirements (provided by the program director and reviewed in seminar), and must be grounded in the needs and activities of the field placement agency.

The proposal must be reviewed and approved by the academic adviser and one faculty member from outside the Department, known as the Second Reader. Failure to submit the completed, approved proposal to the MSPH program director by the specified due date may delay graduation. Students must maintain their registration status until the approved proposal is submitted to the program director. Additional proposal information and requirements will be provided to students by the program director.

Graduates

Recent graduates from the MSPH program in Health Education and Health Communication are employed by such agencies as Academy for Educational Development, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, Health Resources and Services Administration, Washington DC Department of Health, Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, and the Center for Communication Programs at The Johns Hopkins University.

Graduates from this program are eligible to sit for national certification exams. One is conducted by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing. Upon successful completion of this exam, individuals earn the designation of Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) or MCHES (Masters Certified Health Education Specialist). Another is conducted by the National Board of Public Health Examiners. Upon successful completion of this exam, individuals earn the designation of Certified in Public Health (CPH). Additional information

and requirements about CHES, MCHES and CPH will be provided to students by the program director.

Milestones for the MSPH in Health Education and Health Communication Program

Key Dates	Task/Event
First Year	
Term 1	
Before Drop/Add	Adviser Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
Term 2	
Before Drop/Add	Adviser Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
Term 3	
Before Drop/Add	Adviser Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
	Field Placement Options
Term 4	
Before Drop/Add	Adviser Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
	Field Placement Options/Selection
	Completed 64 credits (minimum)
	Master Tuition Scholarship Certification
Second Year	
Terms 1-4	
	Registered for Field Placement (each term)
	Work Agreement Signed Prior to Placement Start
	Seminar Participation
	Adviser Meetings #1 through #5
	Evaluation Completed
	Proposal Topics Discussed/Selected
	Proposal Outline
	Proposal Final Draft
	Second Reader Discussed/Selected
	Proposal Approved by Both Second Reader and Advisor
	Certified for Graduation
	Graduation

Timetable for Completion of Degree Requirements

Please direct questions regarding the timetable for completion of degree requirements to the Office of Records & Registration (JHSPH.Registra@jhu.edu).

MSPH Program Policies

For a full list of program policies, please visit the MSPH in Health Education and Health Communication page (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/msph-in-health-education-and-health-communication/>) where students can find our handbook.

MSPH Program Prerequisites

1. In order to take required online courses, students must complete Introduction to Online Learning, which is offered through the Center for Teaching and Learning at the Bloomberg School. This non-credit course is a prerequisite that **must be completed in the summer prior to matriculation**.
2. All students must take the required course PH.550.860 Academic & Research Ethics at JHSPH. This is an online offering that **must be completed in the summer prior to matriculation**. Failure to complete this course will prevent students from registering for 2nd term.

Master's Tuition Scholarship

The MTS provides eligible second year MSPH students with a 75% tuition scholarship for up to four consecutive terms. Students are eligible if they have successfully completed all Year 1 required coursework, are in good academic standing, and have accumulated a minimum of 64 credits. **Once the scholarship has been awarded, the student must maintain full# time registration for the entire period of the award.** Upon completion of the final written assignment, the MTS will be concluded. Students will not be permitted to enroll in courses using the MTS once they have been certified as complete in the MSPH program.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

The Department expects students to maintain satisfactory academic progress for the duration of the degree program. For the MSPH program, satisfactory academic progress is defined as follows:

- Maintaining a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75. Students falling below this minimum will have one term (or 12 additional units of coursework if part-time) to raise their GPA above 2.75.
- Earning a grade of "C" or higher in program-specific core courses. (Students earning lower grades must repeat the course.)
- Adhering to the timeframe for completion of the degree, defined as four years for all program requirements (coursework, placement and written assignment). Extensions are possible but must be formally approved by the Department and Committee on Academic Standards.

Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by any of the criteria above may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

HBS Course Waivers and Substitutions

Waiving or substituting a course that the faculty have determined essential to the program is a serious consideration. Students should discuss this thoroughly with their adviser well in advance of the start of the term in which the required course is offered. Course waivers are rare and are appropriate only when the student has completed the course or one very similar to it in prior *graduate-level* training. Course substitutions may be appropriate if the student can provide a rationale for why an alternate course is preferred to the required one. (NB: The alternate course must cover much of the same content as the required course in order to ensure that we stay true to the program as presented to and approved by CEPH.) If the student and the adviser agree that a waiver or substitution is warranted, a memo from the student (co-signed by the adviser) to the program directors, requesting the waiver should be

submitted to the HBS Academic Program Administrator no later than the first day of the term of the course in question.

All requests for course substitutions must be submitted in writing using the **required form** to the program directors and student's adviser prior to course enrollment and should include the following information: Proposed competency area for substitution; Proposed course name, number, number of credits, and description; Rationale for substitution, including a demonstrated match between course objectives and relevant training competency.

Learning Outcomes

The MSPH in Health Education and Health Communication is responsive to two national organizations: the Council for Education in Public Health (CEPH) and the National Commission on Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC). CEPH accredits training programs in Schools of Public Health; NCHEC administers a national certification exam that when passed allows individuals to use the designation, Certified Health Education Specialist.

CEPH aligned competencies include these five core competencies of the MSPH program:

- Analyze how social and behavioral factors affect health outcomes and public health responses using the social ecological perspective.
- Demonstrate skills in planning, designing, implementing and evaluating a health education or health communication program.
- Appraise written materials (website, brochures, pamphlets) for their literacy demand and apply strategies to reduce the burden for low literacy populations.
- Critically evaluate the utility of different theories of persuasion and apply at least one to the design, implementation and evaluation of a health behavior.
- Utilize policy to promote health behavior change.

CEPH also requires that the program grounds MSPH degree students in foundational public health knowledge. Please view the list of specific CEPH requirements by degree type (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/ceph-requirements/>).

In order to ensure that MSPH students are eligible to sit for the national exam to become a certified health educational specialist, the MSPH degree program also addresses these NCHEC competencies (<https://www.nchec.org/responsibilities-and-competencies/>).