

Department of Community Health Sciences

The Vision and Mission of the Department

We envision a time when all people in all communities can reach their full potential and enjoy physical, mental, and social well-being. We believe that this vision can be achieved through public health interventions and research focused on public policy, the environment, social relationships, communication, communities, and organizations.

Our mission is to develop community-oriented solutions to global public health problems. We strive to close the health gap among diverse communities in New Orleans, in Louisiana, and in the United States.

Our goals are:

- To train people from diverse communities to become effective public health leaders;
- To promote community health and empowerment through the application of public health knowledge and practice;
- To conduct community-oriented research to create knowledge that influences practice and public policy; and
- To create an open, supportive, collaborative environment for faculty, students, and community partners.

The Masters of Public Health Program

Our MPH program is designed to prepare students to be front line public health practitioners thus community experience and exposure is vital to all our programs.

You may concentrate in any of our three sections: Maternal and Child Health, Health Education and Communication and Nutrition, or do a generic Community Health Master. You can also follow one of our dual-concentration tracks in: Maternal and Child Health/Health Education, Maternal and Child Health/Epidemiology, Global Maternal and Child Health.

The curriculum for the MPH degree breaks down into four areas: school core requirements, department core requirements, section requirements, and electives. Please follow the hyperlinks for the **Course Requirements** specific to each Program.

All students in the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine have to complete a 200 hour **Practicum**, and the Practicum handbook provides all relevant information. The Department of Community Health Sciences requires a minimum of 200 contact hours and recommends that all students initiate their search for a suitable practicum placement as early as possible. The practicum report should thoroughly and completely describe your practicum experience and is focused on your assessment of your learning through this experience. The advisor works with each student to develop measurable learning objectives prior to their practicum experience. Self assessment and reflection as well as assessment of teams, peers and supervisors are important skills in future public health leaders. The Practicum handbook provides guidelines for the Practicum Report.

The Department of Community Health Sciences requires a **Community Health Project Thesis** as the MPH student's Culminating Experience. The Community Health Thesis Project will enhance professional leadership, growth and development of graduates of our masters programs. This thesis project has three components:

- 100 additional hours on a community project;
- Writing of a thesis project; and
- A public presentation of the results.

Additional Hours: The 100 additional hours on a community project is beyond the 200 hours required for the Practicum but could be a defined project related to your practicum and with the same organization and preceptor. Alternatively, the additional hours could be a further development of your initial practicum, such as a more scientific or research based expansion of the practicum. Your thesis could also involve the development, implementation or evaluation of a particular community project.

Written Thesis: The goal of the Community Health Project Thesis is to provide an opportunity for all Department of Community Health Sciences MPH students to assess and present a community project in writing. It is imperative that the perspective of the thesis document is evidence-based community public health. The thesis document should include a literature review of related context and theory and the application of the community project to the literature. It should have the following sections: 1) abstract; 2) background and context; 3) theoretical foundations; 4) goals and objectives; 5) results and outcomes; 6) discussion; and 7) public health implications. The thesis should be in the American Psychology Association (APA) format and include a comprehensive bibliography. Relevant appendices should be included. Your academic advisor will be your key mentor in this process. Grading of the thesis will be on a pass/fail basis.

Public Presentation of Results: The final requirement of the Community Health Thesis Project is a public presentation of your result in the form of an APHA-grade poster. It is important for public health leaders to be able to present their message to a broad audience. Being able to create a concise and informative poster is a great professional skill. The posters will be presented at the biannual Open House in the Community Health Department where all graduating students' posters are presented; community partners, preceptors, current and former students are invited. The posters will be evaluated by the faculty and the top three posters will be acknowledged.

All students in a dual major masters program shared between two departments in the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine will have to complete the Culminating Experience requirements of both departments.

The Department of Community Health Sciences faculty members are confident that the educational experience we offer in our department enables the students that come here to acquire knowledge and skills pertaining to global community health. We have an extensive local community network and appreciate the unique skills and experience our community partners share with us and our students. We know that community work, projects and partnerships enable participants to discover their strengths and acknowledge their limitations and to build capacity that facilitates breaking of new ground.