

University of Cincinnati

Master of Public Health Program

College of Medicine
Department of Environmental &
Public Health Sciences

Student Handbook

2023-2024

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Introduction

Welcome to the University of Cincinnati's Master of Public Health (MPH) Program. This handbook provides the essential information and documentation necessary for a student to successfully fulfill the requirements of the MPH degree program. This handbook complements the University of Cincinnati's Graduate Student Handbook. This handbook should be referred to routinely.

(All MPH students must comply with the guidelines and policies defined in the University of Cincinnati's [Graduate School Student Handbook](#).)

The University of Cincinnati (UC) [Council on Education for Public Health](#) (CEPH)-accredited MPH Program resides in the Department of Environmental and Public Health Sciences (DEPHS) within the College of Medicine. The MPH degree is offered in collaboration with the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services. UC is one of the nation's premier urban institutions of higher education.

Currently, the MPH Program has concentrations in the following fields:

- Biostatistics
- Environmental Public Health
- Epidemiology
- Global Health
- Health Education and Health Promotion
- Health Services Management
- Occupational Public Health

This handbook supplements the [MPH Webpage](#) and MPH Advising Community (Canvas) and these are both essential resources for your information.

Belonging, Equity and Inclusion Commitment

UC, DEPHS, and the Public Health program are dedicated to fostering an atmosphere that supports equity and promotes diverse perspectives that reflect a multicultural environment. We support and encourage belonging and inclusion in research, education, and service as well as among our faculty, students, and staff. We encourage students to explore and expose inequalities and discrimination. We recognize that systemic and structural barriers and institutional bias can inhibit the success of students, staff, and faculty by thwarting the achievement of an individual's potential. Achieving diversity and inclusion is a University-wide ongoing goal. Therefore, we also recognize the need to continue a long-term dialogue that reflects equity and a culture of inclusion.

Program Mission and Goals

The mission of UC's MPH Program is to promote health, prevent disease, and protect the environment of our communities, locally and beyond, through evidence-based interdisciplinary approaches in education, research, practice, and community engagement.

- **GOAL 1. Education and Instruction**
 - To prepare knowledgeable, innovative, and effective public health practitioners, researchers, and faculty through an interdisciplinary curriculum comprised of public health coursework, service, and practice.
- **GOAL 2. Research and Scholarship**
 - To advance knowledge in the public health sciences through conduct and dissemination of high-quality, multidisciplinary, and evidence-based research that encourages student involvement.
- **GOAL 3. Service**
 - To engage, serve, and partner with communities in Ohio and beyond through service, outreach, and authentic partnerships to advance public health.

The UC MPH Program is dedicated to the promotion and improvement of community and population health. The Program promotes and values the following core principles:

1. Health Equity in Populations and Communities

- a. Health as a public good and a fundamental right of all people;
- b. Social justice and the ethical treatment of all people; and
- c. Public health as a means for improving and maintaining the health of communities – locally, nationally, and globally.

2. Scientific and Academic Integrity

- a. Use of the scientific method to identify basic conditions necessary for optimum public health, to protect the public's health and to promote good health practices for populations and individuals and
- b. Maintain and promote the highest standards of productivity, objectivity, accountability, transparency, and professionalism in all activities coupled with open and honest communication among students, staff, faculty, and community partners.

3. Evidence-Based Multidisciplinary Approaches

- a. Research and its practical applications as an underpinning of evidence-based public health;
- b. A learning environment based on multidisciplinary teamwork that fosters high quality education, imparts a sense of excitement in the acquisition of new knowledge, and communicates the importance and value of public health; and

- c. Continuous quality improvement as a means for enhancing the value and reputation of the program and its students, staff, and faculty.

4. Diversity and Inclusion

- a. Diversity in the cultural, ethnic, and racial background of students, staff, faculty, and populations served and the strengths of insight, experience, and creativity found in such diversity and
- b. Inclusion of faculty and students with different disciplines, training and experience to work collaboratively and cooperatively in the program.

5. Engagement and Advocacy

- a. Community engagement as a core element in the education of students, conduct of research, and provision of service and
- b. Increasing awareness and support for a robust, comprehensive public health agenda.

Graduates of the MPH Program will have the capacity to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills to produce a positive impact on the health of diverse populations through numerous public and community health agencies, business and industrial settings, schools and educational agencies, and/or social service agencies. The faculty of the MPH Program are committed to furthering the mission of the program through a strong commitment to scholarly research and publication, teaching, leadership in academic and professional societies, and service to the community at large.

Departmental and Divisional Contacts

Department

- Department Chair – Alex Lentsch, PhD
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Graduate Office

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Public Health Program

- MPH Program Director – Rachael Nolan, PhD

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- MD/MPH Program Director – Whitney Bryant, MD, MPH
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 - Epidemiology – Ardythe Morrow, PhD
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 - Health Education & Promotion – Rebecca Vidourek, PhD
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 - Health Services Management – Rachael Nolan, PhD
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 - Occupational Public Health – Victoria Wulsin, MD
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Academic Advising

Students are advised directly by their academic advisor and Concentration Director. These advisors are available to assist with the many decisions that will be faced along the educational sequence that begins with coursework and ends with the culminating experience.

The following table can be used to differentiate what each type of advisor can help the student with:

MPH Academic Advisor Roles and Responsibilities
Provides consultation, guidance and program advisement to MPH students
Answers questions pertaining to MPH program requirements, policies and procedures
Communicates with MPH students about academic deadlines and relevant program information
Connects students to MPH resources
Processes, verifies, and/or approves MPH course registration and permits
Assists in preparation of student's class schedule
Monitors MPH student progress to degree and conducts degree audits
Facilitates submission of course exceptions, waivers, and substitutes
Tracks and receives documentation of volunteer hours and seminar attendance

Provides assistance with thesis committee procedures when needed
MPH Concentration Director Roles and Responsibilities
Provides consultation and guidance on career related course decisions
Advises on practicum and capstone/thesis content and activities (PH9010 & PH9020)
Reviews and approves advanced standing requests, sub-plan changes, non-typical electives, and course waivers/subs

Students are expected to initiate contact and meet with their academic advisor and Concentration Director at least once a semester. The responsibility for arranging these meetings lies with the student. These meetings will assist the student in planning an individual program of study for tracking degree progress within the framework of the program. The meetings will also provide more insight to the practicum and culminating experience project. These meetings can occur in person or virtually, keeping in mind UC and DEPHS guidelines.

Program Competencies

The UC MPH Program uses these competencies to guide the development of our curriculum and course specific learning objectives. The core public health competencies include:

Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health

1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice

Public Health & Health Care Systems

5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels

Planning & Management to Promote Health

7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs

9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs

Policy in Public Health

12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes
14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity

Leadership

16. Apply principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges

Communication

18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content

Interprofessional Practice

21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams

Systems Thinking

22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

Course Requirements

The UC MPH degree is a 42-credit hour professional degree that prepares the student to address public health problems by applying professional disciplinary approaches and methods in professional environments such as local, state or national public health agencies and healthcare organizations. Each MPH student must complete a total of seven core courses for a total of 19 credit hours, 18 credit hours of required and elective courses from their selected MPH concentration, a 2-credit hour Applied Practice Experience (APE)

and a culminating experience, a 3-credit hour Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) [also referred to as practicum and capstone, respectively]. Students have 2 options to select from to fulfill the ILE requirement: (1) a capstone project or (2) a thesis.

It is strongly advised that each student entering the UC MPH program saves a copy of this handbook so that requirements based on his/her year of matriculation are clear.

Core Coursework

All students in the MPH program must complete a total of 19 credit hours of core coursework. These courses consist of the following seven MPH core courses:

1. PH 7010: Biostatistics for Public Health (3 credits)
2. PH 7012: Introduction to Qualitative Methods (1 credit)
3. PH 7020: Environmental Public Health (3 credits)
4. PH 7030: Epidemiology for Public Health (3 credits)
5. PH 7060: Health Systems & Policy (3 credits)
6. PH 7070: Leadership, Comm, & Systems Thinking Public Health Management (3 credits)
7. HPE 7040: Social & Behavioral Foundations in Public Health (3 credits)

Applied Practice Experience (Practicum; 120-hours required)

Per the Council on Education for Public Health (see: <https://ceph.org>) [CEPH], the Practicum, otherwise referred to as Applied Practice Experience (APE), is an unpaid learning opportunity that provides graduate students of the Masters in Public Health (MPH) program a chance to participate in a short-term, collaborative, field-based experience in public or population health. The minimum requirement of 120-contact hours must be completed in-person at a non-academic site; meaning with a sponsoring organization and under the supervision of a qualified site supervisor (i.e., preceptor). Practicum sites typically include community-based organizations, non-profits, private businesses, as well as local, state, federal and international public health agencies. The 120-contact hour requirement refers to the amount of time that a student must spend working in contact with their site supervisor, or associated staff at the practicum site. The practicum, also sometimes referred to as a culminating experience, is a program requirement that constitutes a significant part of the work toward an MPH degree. Therefore, clinical, patient-specific work would not satisfy this program requirement. For more detailed information, please refer to the Practicum Instructions found on the Canvas course site and within the MPH Advising Community.

NOTE: Practicum must be completed before or at the same time as capstone or thesis.

Practicum Eligibility

To be eligible for practicum, students must have met three (3) distinct criterion. First, students must have completed at least 21 hours of coursework in the MPH the program prior to the start of their practicum. Second, students must have completed at least 20 hours of volunteer service within a public health agency (e.g., governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial, or for-profit). Third, students are required to attend at least one DEPHS mandatory seminar each semester prior to registering for practicum.

Volunteer Hours

To be eligible to enroll in practicum, students must have completed at least 20 hours of community-based volunteer service with or for a public health agency (e.g., governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, industrial, or for-profit). By this definition, hours spent babysitting, dog sitting in a home or participating in meetings for on-campus and student-led groups (e.g., Gamma Rho, SIG etc.) do not count towards volunteer hours. For a list of local community-based settings where volunteer hours can be served, please visit the Canvas course site or the MPH Advising Community page.

Public health volunteering has many benefits, both for the communities being served and for the volunteers themselves. For example, those who take advantage of volunteer opportunities in public health can add their experiences to resumes as evidence of initiative, collaboration, and the ability to work as a team player. All of these traits are things that employers want from their employees, which is why volunteer work must be in a community-based, public health setting where a student volunteer can catch the eye of a potential employer, or at the very least, be placed in contact with other public health workers, which may result in greater networking opportunities.

Volunteer Opportunities

Your time is your most valuable asset, so it is important that your volunteer position is a good fit. As you investigate opportunities, do not limit yourself to a single organization or a specific type of work. Although an opportunity may look great on paper, the reality can be quite different. Here are some of the most common volunteer opportunities in public health available at the local level:

- **At a hospital:** Help is always needed in hospitals, and they all welcome volunteers. You could be asked to perform a wide variety of duties, from greeting families to delivering flowers. Most local hospitals could use the help of weekly volunteers to supplement their staffs' duties.
- **At a hospice center:** Volunteers for hospice centers are always needed for patients on Medicare and Medicaid, which require volunteers to provide a minimum of 5 percent of patient care hours. Be advised that volunteering for hospice can be an

emotionally draining experience, but you may become a very important person a family can rely on.

- **As a mentor:** Volunteer to make a difference in a child's future. Organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters are great outlets for mentoring. Expect a background check. United Way provides a list of volunteer opportunities in your area on their website.
- **At a food pantry:** It takes a lot of volunteers to operate a local shelter or a food pantry. Consider delivering, serving, or preparing food, or helping with administrative tasks. Most communities also sponsor a "Meals on Wheels" service, where volunteers deliver meals to the elderly. Offering nutritious meals and companionship to people who are often very lonely is an especially rewarding way to volunteer.
- **At a school:** Teachers are often underpaid, and schools are often understaffed. Volunteers are always needed for fun, rewarding assignments, such as reading to children, chaperoning field trips, or simply helping with lessons. Expect a background check.
- **At a community garden:** Community gardens offer a bounty of fresh produce, and they are a great way to meet new people and strengthen neighborhood ties.

DEPHS Seminars

Each semester, the department hosts a variety of seminars that cover a vast array of topics in public health. It is the expectation of the MPH program that students will attend these seminars to learn about and connect with public health experts in their respective disciplines. Each seminar is expected to last 45 minutes with 15 minutes for Q & A. Public health seminars are always held on Wednesdays in Kehoe Auditorium at 10 am. All seminars are video-recorded and are publicly available to watch on the [UC-MPH program website](#) within 48 hours of the live recording.

Mandatory Seminar Attendance

To be eligible to enroll in practicum, an MPH student must attend at least one mandatory public health seminar, each semester (fall and spring) prior to registering for practicum. To decide which mandatory seminar to attend, students will be provided with three options at the beginning of each semester to choose from. Of the three options available, students are required to attend only one mandatory seminar per semester. At the seminar, attendance will be recorded by a sign-in sheet until 10:05 am. If a student arrives past 10:05 am, their attendance will not be counted and they will be required to attend the next seminar option date. Since students receive notification at the beginning of each semester when mandatory seminars are to be held, it is expected that all MPH students will adjust their schedules accordingly to be able to attend the required seminar. For example, if a student is scheduled to work on a Wednesday that a mandatory seminar is scheduled, it is

expected that (s)he/they will work their employer to use flex-time, take an early lunch, or switch schedules with a fellow employee to accommodate this program requirement.

In the rare event that an emergency occurs and a student is unable to attend the mandatory public health seminar, the student will be required to attend the next seminar option date. If after the third time a mandatory seminar is offered, a student is unable to attend due to an emergency, (s)he/they will be required to watch an audio-recording of one of the three mandatory seminars and compose a detailed two-page, well-cited (if necessary) summary that provides 1) a detailed description on what the seminar was about; and 2) evidence of a documented emergency for each date/time that a mandatory seminar was missed. This comprehensive summary is to be submitted to MPH Program Director no later than the last day of class in any given semester.

Integrated Learning Experience (Capstone or Thesis)

Per the Council on Education for Public Health (see: <https://ceph.org>) [CEPH], the Capstone/Thesis, otherwise referred to as Integrated Learning Experience (ILE), is an unpaid learning opportunity that provides graduate students in the Masters in Public Health program a chance to independently immerse themselves in a public health problem by expanding, synthesizing and honing their public health practice skills, whilst gaining specialized content expertise in an area of particular interest. The capstone/thesis, also sometimes referred to as a culminating experience, is a program requirement that constitutes a significant part of the work toward an MPH degree. Therefore, clinical, patient-specific work would not satisfy this program requirement.

Students are strongly encouraged to begin thinking about a capstone/thesis topic as early as their first semester in the MPH program. Whereas, a capstone is more applied within a non-academic, sponsoring organization (i.e., a public health or community-based setting), a thesis is more research-focused that involves a testable question, for which a research design is developed based on identified gaps within the empirical literature. Then, data are obtained and analyzed to address the research question, and findings are discussed in relation to the research question and limitations of the research. Unlike the practicum, there is no set number of hours required to complete capstone/thesis. However, the expectation is that students spend no less than 40 hours working on the project. For more detailed information, please refer to the Capstone/Thesis Instructions found on the Canvas course site and within the MPH Advising Community.

NOTE: It is expected that students who select the thesis option will also produce a publishable manuscript that will be submitted to a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal.

Extension

If for any reason a student is unable to finish their culminating experience (i.e., practicum or capstone/thesis) as planned in the current term, (s)he/they may be eligible for an Extension. To be eligible for an Extension, a student must satisfactorily complete all course requirements by the deadline assigned by the course instructor. In most cases, the deadline assigned will be the last week prior to the start of the following semester. Extensions cannot be used to make up contact hours for the culminating experience. Upon satisfactory completion of the course requirements, a grade for the culminating experience will be assigned by the course instructor.

Example: For the current summer term, final deliverables for the culminating experience are due at the end of July. However, a student will not be finished until the first week of August. Since the student expects to complete all course requirements **before** the start (e.g., August 21st) of the following fall semester, the student is eligible for an Extension. The course instructor assigns a deadline of August 14th for the student to satisfactorily complete all course requirements. Upon satisfactory completion of the course requirements, the student receives a grade.

Incomplete (I) Grade & PH8091 – Independent Study

If for any reason a student is unable to finish their culminating experience as planned in the current term (i.e., practicum or capstone/thesis) and are not confident that all course requirements will be satisfactorily completed by the last week prior to the start of the following semester, (s)he/they may be eligible for an Incomplete. Students deemed eligible for an Incomplete will be required to enroll in a one-credit hour independent study (PH-8091) for their subsequent term of enrollment to complete their culminating experience. To be eligible for an Incomplete, a student must satisfactorily complete all course requirements by the deadline assigned by the course instructor. In most cases, the deadline assigned will be the second to last week prior to the end of the following semester. Incompletes cannot be used to make up contact hours for the culminating experience. Upon satisfactory completion of the course requirements, a grade for the culminating experience will be assigned by the course instructor.

Example: For the current summer term, final deliverables for the culminating experience are due by the end of July. However, due to some unforeseen circumstance, the student's project is delayed, making the student unable to satisfactorily complete all course requirements as planned until mid-October. Since the student doesn't expect to complete all course requirements until **after** the start (e.g., August 21st) of the following fall semester, the student is eligible for an Incomplete. The student enrolls in PH8091 for the fall semester, and the course instructor assigns a deadline of November 20th for the student to satisfactorily

complete all course requirements. Upon satisfactory completion of the course requirements, the student receives a grade.

Minimum Academic Performance

Full-time MPH students must be registered for at least 10 graduate credit hours per semester. If a student is registered for at least one (1) graduate credit, he or she will maintain part-time graduate student status throughout the entire academic year, fall through summer. In order to obtain an MPH Degree, a student must maintain a 3.0 GPA (B average) or higher. Students are reminded that they cannot graduate with an I (Incomplete) grades on their records. Students should keep their Advisors and the Graduate Studies Office well informed of their degree status and intentions.

GPA Requirements

In order to obtain an MPH degree from the University of Cincinnati, a student must accumulate a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0. Students are expected to attain a grade of B- or above in each of the following courses: (1) all MPH core courses, (2) the practicum course, (3) the culminating experience courses, and (4) all required concentration courses (if applicable) plus other selective concentration courses that are accumulated to a total of 18 credit hours.

Attendance

UC, DEPHS, and faculty in the Public Health program utilize methods of instruction that assume that a student will be present in class every day and prepared for active participation in the work of the day. The mode of delivery (face-to-face, hybrid, or virtual) does not change this assumption. It is the student's responsibility to view attendance at UC as a professional commitment.

As such, attendance in the Public Health program is mandatory and students are expected to be present and punctual for all class meetings (face-to-face, hybrid, or virtual). For hybrid and virtual classrooms, this means that students' cameras are on for the duration of the call, and students are in a location where they can contribute to the class lecture and/or discussion.

Policy on Class Absences

Regardless of why a class is missed, it is the responsibility of the student to contact each faculty member to discuss making up any missed work. A student is always responsible for written work due the day of the missed class, for any other assignments that day, and for knowing what transpired in class. It is possible that if quizzes or exams are missed student assessments may not be able to be rescheduled and the course grade will reflect as such.

Multiple absences, even if make-up assignments are completed, jeopardize student and group learning and will affect student grades. Please refer to individual course syllabi as each instructor may have different requirements.

Unavoidable Absences

The Public Health program recognizes that emergencies arise and that on occasion, an absence may be unavoidable. In these instances, the student should let individual faculty and the program manager know at least 24 hours in advance. If the emergency prevents a student from communicating prior to the scheduled class, the student should let individual faculty and the program manager know as soon as possible. In all cases, the purpose of this notification is to facilitate communication between students and faculty, and should not be construed as authorization or validation of an absence.

Religious Observances

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during an academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in a scheduled class, please contact individual faculty before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations. UC is committed to support students' religious observances and diverse faith practices.

Other Absences

The policy governing other absences is set by individual faculty members. Faculty are responsible for stating their class attendance policy clearly in their course syllabi or on their Canvas course site. This statement should also make the consequences of absences explicit. Students are responsible for understanding the course attendance policy specific to each course as well as the general policies discussed in this section of the Student Handbook. A student is always responsible for written work due the day of the missed class, for any other assignments for that day, and for knowing what transpired during the class. According to more specific rules governing class attendance, absences may also result in the lowering of a course grade or even exclusion from a course.

Leave of Absence

When a student is not continuously enrolled each term, a Leave of Absence request must be submitted; otherwise the student may be automatically withdrawn from the MPH program. Only students in good academic standing are eligible for a Leave of Absence. A Leave of Absence request must provide the current date, name, and student ID number of the student, time frame of the leave, and a detailed rationale for requesting a leave of absence.

A Leave of Absence may be taken for up to one year. Except in unusual circumstances, whenever a student is on leave for longer than one year, they will be withdrawn from the

MPH program. They may reapply at a later date. Students on a Leave of Absence are responsible for any charges to their student account (e.g., student health insurance).
Employment/School/Residency Interviews and Conference Attendance

Students are expected to avoid scheduling job, medical or other graduate school, and residency interviews that conflict with class attendance obligations. When such conflict is unavoidable, the student is still subject to the class attendance policies specified in the Student Handbook and in individual course syllabi.

Students often choose to attend or present at professional conferences. When missing class due to conference attendance, the student is still subject to the class attendance policies specified in the Student Handbook and in individual course syllabi.

Communication

In all educational settings timely and open communication is critical to creating a collaborative and productive learning environment and demonstrates respect and professionalism. Students are encouraged to reach out to the MPH Program staff, faculty, student groups, and classmates as appropriate to get the information they need to learn effectively and be successful.

UC email (name@ucmail.uc.edu) is the expected, primary method used for course-related correspondence. Faculty will communicate to students primarily through UC and Canvas-initiated emails. It is expected that students check their Canvas/UC email accounts regularly. *Delayed viewing of course-related emails is not a valid excuse for late, inaccurate, or missed assignments.*

Students are expected to respond to emails from faculty within 24 hours. Faculty will likewise respond to student emails in a timely manner. However, faculty may be unable to respond to emails sent at the last minute prior to deadlines or class. It is not the faculty's responsibility to track down unresponsive students. Non-responsiveness to faculty emails or other correspondence will affect grades and may prompt collaborative student/faculty reconsideration of participation in the program. Students are also expected to read and incorporate feedback on graded work when it is posted. If feedback is not posted by faculty, it is the student's responsibility to schedule an appointment or email faculty to formerly request feedback.

Laptops and Other Electronic Devices

The use of laptops and other electronic devices during face-to-face class sessions disengages users and distracts other students and presenters. To provide a first-class learning environment, and out of respect for fellow students, visitors, and faculty, the MPH

program honors the following policy regarding the use of laptops and other electronic devices during face-to-face class sessions:

Laptops and other electronic devices may not be used during class unless during an approved assignment or lab. Students should not be conducting any non-class activities such as texting, emailing, or surfing the web during class time. If laptops or other electronic communication devices are not being used for the current class session, the screen should be closed at all times.

Submission Deadlines

UC aims to strike a balance between recognizing that life-events happen, encouraging professional communication, and having a response that feels fair to all students. Prompt communication about any issue that might impact a student's learning and/or ability to submit their best work in a timely fashion is considered a professional norm, demonstrates respect for the teaching team, and facilitates timely collaboration on fair response. The MPH program has late work policies that pertain to all courses:

1. **Eastern Standard Time (EST):** All assignments must be completed and submitted on time and meet the learning objectives and requirements of the assignment. UC courses operate in the Eastern Standard Time (EST) zone.
2. **Technical issues:** If a student has technical issues uploading an assignment that cannot be resolved prior to the assignment due date, the student should immediately send the assignment by email to the course instructor(s) with a description of the technical difficulty.
3. **Extension requests:** Requests for extensions are handled on a case-by-case basis and are granted at the discretion of the course instructor:
 - a. If a student foresees the need for an extension on an assignment, the student should let the course instructor know at least 24 hours in advance. A request does not a guarantee that faculty will grant an extension.
 - b. If a student is unable to make a due date/time unexpectedly, they should let the course instructor(s) know as soon as they are able. Faculty understand that emergencies and other life events happen. A request does not a guarantee that faculty will grant an extension.
4. **Repeated late submissions or extension requests:** Repeated late submissions or requests for extension will affect grades and may prompt collaborative student/faculty reconsideration of participation in the program, and may put the student at risk of not passing the course.
5. **Resubmission deadlines:** Faculty requests for a student to "revise and resubmit" will be due a midnight one week after the request date unless otherwise stated. For

example, if a resubmission is requested on Wednesday, the work is due the next Wednesday at 11:59 pm ET.

6. **Grade penalties:** Grade penalties for late work are defined in each course syllabus.

Grading and Class Participation

UC grading is designed to support learning and both personal and professional development. As such, faculty employ a variety of methods such as use of constructive feedback, coaching, and peer-to-peer learning to maximize scholarship, foster intellectuality, and develop leadership skills. More importantly, UC educational requirements call for a high level of participation and collaboration in all course work.

Given that a “team” approach will be needed to make meaningful improvements in public health and the health of the nation, it is expected that MPH students will participate in class discussions on a regular basis, contribute in a meaningful way to team projects, and learn in a collaborative manner with their colleagues. Failure to meet these expectations could jeopardize a student’s course grade and/or ongoing enrollment in UC educational programs. Students failing to meet the above expectations, regardless of current grade in a course, will be requested to meet with the course instructor to review the expectations and develop a plan for correction.

Each student is expected to complete each assignment – whether it is an individual or group assignment – at a level commensurate with professional norms for high performing individuals and teams. The faculty reserve the right to request that an assignment be revised and resubmitted to ensure that work meets quality standards.

The syllabus for each course contains an explanation of how grades for the respective course will be determined. Being aware of performance level during the term is the student’s responsibility. Whenever possible, however, faculty will warn students when performance falls below a satisfactory level.

Grade Changes

The assignment of final grades is the responsibility of the instructor. Once a course grade has been recorded by the Registrar, it is considered official and may not be changed except in the case of computational or recording error. Any grade appeal is limited to charges of unfair action toward an individual student and does not include a challenge of an instructor’s grading standard or policy. If a student believes a grade has been given unfairly, the student should confer with the instructor.

Academic Misconduct

In pursuit of its teaching, learning and research goals, the University of Cincinnati aspires for its students, faculty and administrators to reflect the highest ethical standards defined by the center for academic integrity as “a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, courage and responsibility.” Every student is bound by the academic misconduct provisions of this code which are enforced, in part, to assure academic integrity. Students at the University of Cincinnati are expected to uphold the highest level of academic integrity as outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Academic misconduct violations of the Student Code of Conduct include:

- Aiding and abetting misconduct
- Cheating
- Fabrication
- Plagiarism
- Violating Ethical or Professional Standards

Please review the policies and procedures on the University’s webpage for [Academic Misconduct](#).

Furthermore, the life and work of a graduate student are based upon a high standard of ethical behavior. Both in and outside the classroom the student is expected to embody the principles of honor and responsible behavior. Fundamental to the principle of independent learning is the requirement of honesty and integrity in all academic activities, and an obligation to promote an atmosphere in which honest and creative academic work can flourish. A student found in violation of these principles forfeits their right to continue in the MPH program.

[Student Responsibilities](#)

Students with questions about the six fundamental values should contact their faculty if they are unclear about the interpretation of these principles in any class. Submission of an assignment, examination, paper, project, practicum, capstone, or other course-related work by a student carries with it the implicit statement that the work is their own.

All work submitted which contains specific material from an outside source (written or verbal) must properly acknowledge the source. This includes one’s own written or verbal material. In those areas where collaborative efforts are acceptable, the student submitting the work will indicate other sources and the names of those with whom they collaborated. No student may infringe upon the right of others to have fair and equal access to College resources and to study in an environment conducive to learning and creative research.

[Unacceptable Behavior](#)

Plagiarism, harassment, coercion, disruption, violence, destruction, concealment, or misappropriation of property are examples of unacceptable behavior. When participating

in any UC-sponsored activities, graduate students are subject to all honor the six fundamental values and codes of conduct of the MPH program at UC. In the presence of an undoubted violation of any principle, to stand by and do nothing is to threaten the spirit and effectiveness of the principle. UC students are expected to preserve the six fundamental values by taking action whenever any principle is compromised. The MPH Program Director or the Graduate Studies office should be contacted for advice about appropriate and equitable action regarding both honor and conduct violations.

Academic Integrity and Citation Style(s)

Plagiarism is intellectual theft. It occurs when a student uses the words or ideas of others without acknowledging they have done so through proper citation. A student using proper citation methods (APA or AMA standards) and mastering the ability to synthesize/paraphrase empirical literature are requirements of the MPH program. As such, the use of online citation generators is strongly discouraged and students are expected to independently learn how to properly cite and paraphrase content. Verbatim copy from original sources is considered plagiarism (unless properly quoted) even when the source is cited. Assignments with evidence of plagiarism (intentional or not) will not be accepted, nor receive a grade from the course instructor. To avoid issues with plagiarism, students are strongly encouraged to utilize services provided by the [UC Academic Writing Center](#), which includes critical information about citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and evaluating the quality of sources.

1. **Examinations.** Any student giving or receiving assistance during an examination or quiz violates academic integrity.
2. **Plagiarism.** Any form of plagiarism violates academic integrity. Plagiarism is defined as the submission or presentation of work, in any form, that is not a student's own, without acknowledgment of the source. With specific regard to papers, a simple rule dictates when it is necessary to acknowledge sources. If a student obtains information or ideas from an outside source, that source must be acknowledged. Another rule to follow is that any direct quotation must be placed in quotation marks, or otherwise indicated, e.g., by indenting, and the source immediately cited.
3. **Use of the same work in more than one course.** Submission of the same work in more than one course violates academic integrity. The intent of this rule is that a student should not receive academic credit more than once for the same work product. The rule is not intended to regulate repeated use of an idea or a body of learning developed by the student, but rather the identical formulation and presentation of that idea. Thus the same paper, research project or results, or other academic work product should not be submitted in more than one course (whether in identical or rewritten form). Students with questions about the application of this rule in a specific case should seek faculty advice.

4. **Unauthorized Collaboration.** A student paying or authorizing someone else to compose or create work that they intend to submit for academic credit is a violation of academic integrity. Whether or not collaboration in course work (labs, reports, papers, homework assignments, take-home tests, or other academic work for credit) is permitted depends on expectations established in individual courses. Students are sometimes encouraged to collaborate on group projects, for example, but told to write their scholarly reports independently. Students should presume that collaboration on academic work is not permitted, and that submission of collaborative work would constitute a violation of academic integrity, unless an instructor specifically authorizes collaboration. Students should not presume that authorization in one class applies to any other class, even classes in the same subject area. Students should discuss with instructors in advance any questions or uncertainty regarding permitted collaboration.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and ChatGPT Use

All assignments submitted via CANVAS will be subjected to Turn-It-In, a plagiarism software program, that checks for the originality of work by comparing students' writing to a large, international database of original published and non-published works across universities and academic centers. Turn-It-In also critically evaluates for use of AI and other GPT bot programs to generate written content. Once a submission is processed by the program, an originality report is generated that reveals the amount (by percentage) of suspicious content (e.g., plagiarized, copied, unoriginal) material. Because plagiarism is a violation of the student handbook, students may not use AI or GPT bots' programs under any circumstances to create assignments.

Any assignment found to have more than 15% of unoriginal content not properly cited, or more than 15% of AI or GPT bot use will not be graded. Next, the student will receive an immediate response from faculty, requiring that a meeting be held between the student and the instructor of record to discuss the UC plagiarism policy and student code of conduct. Assignments found to have 25% or greater of unoriginal content not properly cited, or more than 25% of AI or GPT bot use will not be graded and will be automatically submitted to the UC-Academic Integrity Review Board for review, and could result in a student's dismissal from the MPH program.

Standards and Procedures for Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal from the Program

All students must maintain an overall B average (3.0) and to obtain grades of B (83 points or higher) in all required courses. Failure to do so will result in students moving to Probation status, and failure to reconcile the issue within one academic year will result in dismissal of the student from the program. Students on probation are expected to develop

a plan in writing to improve their studies with input from their Concentration Director. Students on probation may be asked to leave the program if no measurable improvement is made.

A student who has received a failing grade or two or more low passing grades will automatically be placed on academic probation during the following term. A UC faculty review committee will meet toward the end of the following term to determine whether satisfactory progress has been resumed. If so, the probationary status will end. If not, the student will be placed in “unsatisfactory standing,” thereby being ineligible for federal loans and subject to suspension or dismissal from the program.

Suspension and Dismissal

Students who receive a non-passing grade, or more than two low-passing grades, during one term or over multiple terms, may be suspended or dismissed by the MPH program without further formalities. Suspension could be for one or more terms. Students cannot graduate with more than one non-passing grade, or more than two low-passing grades on their transcripts without retaking one or more of those courses, regardless of the number of units a course is assessed.

A student may be dismissed from a program if either their academic work or behavior is not up to acceptable standards of a graduate scholar at UC. Although students may re-take a course in which they have received a non-passing grade, or more than two low-passing grades, a non-passing grade, or more than two low-passing grades remains on their academic record, regardless of the grade received in a course that is re-taken, and may be counted toward any future probationary, suspension, or dismissal actions. If a student retakes a course for which they received a non-passing grade, and receives a second non-passing grade, the student may be dismissed from the program without further formalities.

Students who are suspended for academic reasons, who withdraw in questionable academic standing, or who withdraw while on academic probation must present positive evidence of the ability to resume satisfactory progress when applying for readmission.

Withdrawal

If a student has withdrawn while on probationary or suspended status, the student must re-apply for admission, which is not automatically granted.

Degree Time Limitation

Students need to register for at least 1 credit hour per academic year (Fall-Summer) to maintain active status. A student pursuing the MPH degree must complete all requirements no later than five years from the date of matriculation into the program. Under extenuating circumstances, students may petition the Graduate School Dean,

through their department and college, for extension of the time limit. See the [Time to Degree and Extensions](#) and [Reinstatements](#) webpages for more details.

- Students who have not been enrolled in classes for more than three years are not eligible for reinstatement and must reapply for admission to the University.

Program Evaluation Completion

We encourage all students to complete an anonymous evaluation of all courses in which they are registered as well as an overall program evaluation. The evaluation process is very important to the MPH program as it is a requirement set by our institution of accreditation, the CEPH. Evaluations assist faculty, staff and program administration in assessing the quality of courses and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Non-Matriculated Students

Non-matriculated students may transfer up to 14 credit hours of coursework to their future MPH degree once they become admitted to the program.

Graduate Credit from Non-UC Graduate Programs

Students who have completed graduate work at other schools may petition the MPH Program for transfer of graduate credits earned elsewhere to be applied towards an MPH at UC. Should the program choose to accept the credits, they will forward an Advanced Standing form to the Graduate School on behalf of the student to initiate processing of the transfer of credits. The number of credit hours transferred from a course taken at another institution into a program UC cannot exceed the number of credit hours given for a UC course that covers equivalent material. (When converting quarter hours to semester hours, 4.5 quarter credit hours are equal to 3 semester credit hours; 1.5 quarter hours equal 1 semester credit hour.)

Only graduate courses taken outside of the University of Cincinnati can be considered for Advanced Standing. Students must have an [official transcript](#) on file from the previous institution with the UC Graduate School **before** the submission an advanced standing form to the MPH Program (see Canvas course, MPH Advising Community).

Programs are permitted to award up to one third of the credits of a UC graduate program through advanced standing (e.g. 14 credits in a 42-credit hour program). The one third rule doesn't apply to dual degrees, sequential Masters to doctorate programs, or others with shared content that have received approval from the Graduate School.

College of Medicine Student Mistreatment Policy

The University of Cincinnati College of Medicine (UCCOM), including all its academic departments and programs, is committed to providing a supportive learning environment to promote the development, education, training, and success of graduate students. To effectively achieve this goal, UCCOM has established standards of conduct based on mutual respect of all persons involved in the learning and development processes. No form of student abuse, mistreatment, or harassment is allowable. Please see the full policy and reporting link on the [College of Medicine Student Mistreatment webpage](#).

College of Medicine Graduate Student Problem Mentoring Policy

The University of Cincinnati College of Medicine (UCCOM), including all its academic departments and programs, is committed to providing a supportive learning environment to promote the development, education, training, and success of graduate students. Faculty mentorship is a critical part of student learning, training, and professional development. Students work very closely with faculty mentors on research and academic projects, and the relationship between a student and their advisor can add to or detract from the success or failure of the trainee. Ultimately, graduate student mentors are powerful role models and play an essential part in shaping the professional identity of the trainee. However, despite the importance of graduate student mentoring, not all mentors take advantage of opportunities to receive formal mentoring training. As such, it is important that universities have policies in place to address concerns about graduate student mentoring to ensure the best outcome for the trainee. Please see the full policy and reporting link on the [College of Medicine Problem Mentoring webpage](#).

The Graduate College Handbook

The [Graduate Handbook](#) clarifies minimum university-level requirements and policies that apply to all graduate students throughout the University of Cincinnati. Beyond these, each student is also expected to adhere to requirements, policies, and procedures specific to his or her own degree program and college.

Peruse the Graduate Handbook using the links on the [Graduate Handbook webpage](#) or download the PDF file [2022-23 UC Graduate College Graduate Handbook \(PDF\)](#).

International Student Services

The MPH Program (faculty or staff) does not advise students on policies related to their status as an international student. It is recommended that international students maintain

regular contact with the [International Services Office](#) to keep well-informed on policies and procedures relating to their individual situation.