

**DREXEL
UNIVERSITY**



**SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**

**EXECUTIVE PROGRAM
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2007 - 2008



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DREXEL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

“This school of public health is founded on a commitment – a commitment to public health as social justice. We see health not as a privilege, but as a right.”

Jonathan Mann, MD, MPH - April 20, 1998

I. MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Mission

The mission of the Drexel University School of Public Health (SPH) is to promote the health of communities through an integrated program of education, research, service and practice. The Drexel University SPH is committed to identifying societal conditions required for people to be healthy, and to advancing practices that improve the health of vulnerable populations. The SPH enhances the health of communities by creating partnerships based on community values, strengths, and assets. Our mission and our curriculum stress the importance of understanding and addressing the connection between human rights and health status.

This mission statement is the foundation of an interdisciplinary program dedicated to:

- Developing new knowledge in the principles and the core functions of public health consistent with the evolving needs of the field;
- Educating public health professionals (including faculty, students, and current practitioners) in the principles and delivery of population health services;
- Undertaking research and evaluation to improve public health interventions; and
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local, regional and national health care delivery and financing systems

Core Values

1. Population health promotion and protection
2. Commitment to human rights and social justice
3. Community respect and partnership
4. Sensitivity to cultural and human diversity
5. Analytic and systems thinking
6. Effective communications
7. Commitment to lifelong, self-directed learning

8. Continuous self-assessment, evaluation, and improvement

II. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The School of Public Health confers the following degrees: Master of Public Health (MPH) degree, the M.S. in Biostatistics, the Ph.D. in Epidemiology and the DrPH in Community Health and Prevention. The Master of Public Health degree program is designed to provide advanced professional and scientific study to prepare thinkers, planners and practitioners engaged in public health activity, as well as to prepare students for entry into a doctoral program. The School of Public Health's objective is to graduate individuals with the knowledge, skills and perspectives necessary to lead the nation's public health system.

The degree programs of the School of Public Health prepare its graduates to address the major public health problems of the 21st century by combining students' acquisition of knowledge with their development of critical thinking skills, an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving, and a commitment to lifelong, self-directed learning.

Basic to the School's mission is the integration of the core disciplines in public health: biostatistics; epidemiology; occupational and environmental health; health management and policy; and social and behavioral sciences. These disciplines are presented within the framework of health as intertwined with human rights and social justice. The curriculum is designed to foster a habit of systematic reasoning and knowledge acquisition focused on meaning rather than memorization as its principle teaching methodology.

Master of Public Health (MPH) Executive Program Description

The MPH degree program is designed to prepare students to enter an array of public health fields as well as doctoral programs. A minimum of 42 credit hours is required for the Executive Master of Public Health generalist degree. All degree requirements must be completed within five years of the date of matriculation.

Students are assigned a faculty advisor in the beginning of the program. Generally, a student is expected to meet with or communicate with their advisor every semester. The advisor receives all end-of-block evaluation forms and meets with the student when necessary. The advisor serves as an advocate for the student. The advisor may serve as the student's mentor for the Block VIII independent study.

A schedule for the 2007-2008 Executive MPH program can be found at the back of this handbook. With the exception of Blocks I and VIII, class meets once a month on Fridays and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 and 1:00 - 4:00 PM. A Block is a discipline-specific course that meets for a total of 24 hours during a semester. A description of each block follows:

Block I

Introduction to Public Health and Social Justice

Introduces the mission, roles, issues, and context of public health, community health, and public health & health systems.

Block II

Biostatistics

Introduces and applies the biostatistics tools and analytical base required for population-based and community health assessment and evaluation. The focus is on providing a broad and basic understanding of biostatistics, with more advanced methods included as appropriate.

Block III

Epidemiology

Introduces and applies the principles of epidemiology and study design needed to support population-based and community-health assessment and evaluation. Basic and more advanced methods are covered as appropriate, with applications to public health and community contexts, and integration with the biostatistics taught in Block II.

Block IV

Health Behavior and Health Promotion

Introduces principles of health behavior in context of the human life cycle and covers their application to prevention and health promotion programs in a community context.

Block V

Community Health Assessment

Examines concepts and theories regarding planned change, including models of community organization for health promotion. Presents critical appraisal of community-wide health communication campaigns.

Block VI

Health Management and Leadership

Explores critical elements of the assurance role of public health, beginning from the premise that effectiveness of program delivery and of the assurance role itself requires an understanding of organizations, leadership, and change in economic, strategic & systemic context. Applies management concepts and theories through an integrated model of the management process. In the latter portion of the block it extends, applies, and integrates previously developed concepts and theories with those of strategy, planning, accounting, financial management, and information systems.

Block VII

Program Planning and Evaluation

The block content is built on the premise that the health-assurance role of public health begins with program planning, development, implementation and evidence-based practice. Examines concepts and theories underlying program planning, development, and evaluation. Emphasizes program application in context of specific problems and community context.

Block VIII

Public Health Independent Study

Allows students to develop in-depth knowledge of concepts and theories, and competencies in an area of public health that is of special interest to the student through preparation of a major paper and under the guidance of a faculty member.

Block IX

Environmental/Occupational Health

Introduces concepts, theories, and programmatic applications within the fields of environmental and occupational health.

Block X

Health Policy and Advocacy: Integration

Introduces the fundamentals of public health law and the concepts and theories of health policy development, adoption, and evaluation. Also introduces the advocacy process and its importance to development of sound public health policy. Students complete the M.P.H. program by exploring major public health topics in some depth. Emphasizes systemic integration and the integration of the assessment, assurance and policy development roles of public health in problem, population, and political context.

Block XI

This course has been designed to fulfill the requirement that all Master of Public Health degree candidates have the opportunity, as described by the Council on Education for Public Health, "to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in course work and other learning experiences and to apply theory and principles in a situation that approximates some aspect of professional practice".

Practicum

Because of the nature of public health practice, the accrediting body for public health education requires an opportunity for students in academic programs to have a practicum experience, a period of service in a public health organization to develop knowledge and skills in the practice of public health. To determine if prior education, employment and/or volunteer activities may have given students the requisite competencies associated with the practicum, each new student will be asked to complete the Self-Evaluation for the Executive MPH Practicum Program located at the back of this handbook. This form must be completed by each student and submitted to Jon Cass, Director of Community Projects (jcass@drexel.edu), no later than November 1, 2007. The information on the form, along with the student's resume, will be evaluated to determine if a practicum experience is required. If a practicum is indicated, the Director of Community Projects and the Director of the MPH Executive Program will meet with each student to determine their interests and type of experience they would like to acquire and work with each to achieve a suitable organization and preceptor to meet this requirement. The practicum will be organized around a pre-approved project

the student will complete in collaboration with her/his preceptor. You will be reminded prior to the due date for the Practicum Evaluation Form.

III. SUMMARY OF GRADING POLICIES

General Grading Policies and Expectations

There is an expectation of a steady increase in each student's ability throughout the program, with a concomitant expectation of steadily increasing ability to integrate and apply the critical elements from all preceding blocks. Students are graded on their performance in all aspects of the curriculum.

- a. Students are expected to comply with the School's Attendance Policy.
- b. It is expected that all assignments are submitted on time. Failure to do so may result in a lower grade.

Block Grades

Grade Point Average Requirements

Students are required to maintain an overall minimum grade point average of B (3.00) for graduation. No graduate credit is allowed for grades below C (2.00).

After each quarter in which a student fails to achieve a B (3.00) cumulative Grade Point Average, the student will be placed on academic probation and notified in writing by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Any student whose cumulative grade point average for two consecutive quarters is less than 3.00 will be dismissed from the School of Public Health, unless the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs requests a waiver and it is approved by the Dean of the School of Public Health. All decisions are subject to appeal to the Student Academic Appeals Committee of the University.

A graduate student about to be dismissed for academic reasons may be given the opportunity to withdraw voluntarily from the School of Public Health before final action is taken. The student must meet with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, complete the form for University Withdrawal, and follow the procedure outlined on the form.

Letter Grade Definitions

A: The student has **exceeded the required standards and expectations** of academic performance. A letter grade of "A" carries four (4.0) grade points. Performance at the "A" letter grade level is indicative of:

- Exemplary achievement of course objectives
- Depth and breadth of learning sources and level of analysis

- Accurate and comprehensive analysis and synthesis of ideas
- Independent thinking of a contributory quality
- Exceptional organization and accuracy relative to content and form

A-: The student has met the required standards and expectations of academic performance slightly **below the exceptional level**. A letter grade of “A-” carries 3.7 grade points. Feedback to students – both written and verbal – should define the specific areas where improvement is needed.

B+: The student has met the required standards and expectations of academic performance slightly **above the satisfactory level**. A letter grade of “B+” carries 3.3 grade points. Feedback to students – both written and verbal – should define the specific areas where improvement is needed.

B: The student has met the required standards and expectations of academic performance **at a satisfactory level**. Performance at this level is indicative of good academic work with command of factual knowledge. The student’s critical analysis and synthesis skills are appropriate but not exceptional. A letter grade of B carries three (3.0) grade points. Performance at the “B” letter grade level is indicative of:

- Satisfactory achievement of course objectives
- Command of factual knowledge
- Appropriate research skills
- Appropriate analysis and synthesis
- Appropriate articulation and completeness of ideas

B-: The student has met the required standards and expectations of academic performance slightly **below the satisfactory level**. A letter grade of “B-” carries 2.7 grade points. Feedback to students – both written and verbal – should define the specific areas where improvement is needed.

C+: The student has met the required standards and expectations of academic performance slightly **above the marginally acceptable level**. A letter grade of “C+” carries 2.3 grade points. Feedback to students – both written and verbal – should define the specific areas where improvement is needed.

C: The student has met the required standards and expectations of academic performance **at the marginally acceptable level**. The academic work performed at this level is lacking in substance and/or form, and is of marginal quality. A letter grade of C carries two (2.0) grade points. Performance at the “C” letter grade level is indicative of:

- Marginal achievement of course objectives

- Marginal command of factual knowledge
- Marginal research skills
- Marginal analysis and synthesis ability
- Marginal capacity articulating and completing ideas

F: The student has failed to meet the required performance standards and expectations of academic performance. A letter grade of “F” carries zero (0) grade points. Performance at the “F” letter grade level is indicative of:

- Failure to achieve course objectives
- Substandard command of factual knowledge
- Substandard research skills
- Substandard analysis and synthesis ability
- Substandard capacity articulating and completing ideas

Incompletes

If the student does not complete assigned work during the prescribed period, the notation, “I” (incomplete), may be given by the instructor. It is expected that the student will initiate a meeting with the instructor prior to the end of the quarter to discuss the work expectations and establish a mutually agreed upon timeline for completion. If the work is not completed within the time allowed by the instructor, which is a maximum of one calendar year, a final grade of “F” will be recorded and the student may be required to repeat the course for credit.

A student with two or more incomplete grades will not be allowed to register for additional courses without permission from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Remediation

Remediation is at the discretion of the Course Director and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The purpose of remediation is to rectify deficiencies identified during the course. The remediation plan delineates noted deficiencies, the corrective action required, and the date of its submission to the Course Director. It is expected that the Course Director will inform the Office of Academic Affairs the results of the remediation within two (2) days of receipt. Successful remediation would result in a change of grade.

IV. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic Advising

In order to ensure timely and correct completion of the curriculum, students should consult regularly with their academic advisor. Academic advisors serve to provide career advice, are well-connected with public health resources locally, nationally,

and internationally, and are excellent sounding boards for advice on educational and professional matters. Entering students are assigned an advisor by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, using the student's application for admission. Every effort is made to match students with advisors who share common public health interests or backgrounds. Following the first year, MPH students are assigned a new advisor directly related to their CBMP project.

Academic Integrity

As detailed in the Drexel University Student Handbook, plagiarism, cheating, forgery or other forms of academic misconduct are not tolerated at this institution and if allegations of misconduct related to academic integrity are upheld, a student may be expelled from the school. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that his/her study and participation in the academic process is so conducted that there can be no question concerning his/her integrity.

All assignments are expected to be the work of the individual student. Any use of ideas, data or wording of another person must include explicit acknowledgement of the source. Failure to give such credit is plagiarism. Any alteration/fabrication of data or inaccurate reporting of actual participation in an assignment are also examples of academic misconduct.

Any violations of the above will be dealt with utilizing the procedures outlined in the University Student Handbook which is available online at <http://www.drexel.edu/cchc/studentlife/StudentHandbook/>.

Adding/Withdrawing Courses

With the written permission of the instructor and advisors or dean, graduate students may withdraw from a course up to the last day of classes for the term in which the course is taken and before the Final exam in the course. Refunds and credit depend on the date of the transaction and the University Refund Policy.

Attendance and Missed Sessions

Drexel University School of Public Health's curriculum is built upon the active participation of students in all educational activities. A fundamental component of the program is the sharing of information among students. The learning of each student relies on the active participation and involvement of the others. Therefore, the following policies on attendance, missed sessions and leaves of absence have been adopted by the School of Public Health:

1. All curricular requirements must be fulfilled prior to graduation.

2. All missed material in a course must be made up to the satisfaction of the appropriate faculty as soon as possible.
3. Attendance, punctuality, and participation are expected for all required activities. Chronic tardiness or absence from scheduled class time may result in a student's completing remediation or repeating the block. Excused absences must be negotiated in advance with the facilitator, with the exception of emergencies such as serious illness or death in the family. When emergencies make class attendance impossible, the student must advise the facilitator **as soon as** the emergency is known.
4. Absences from any small group sessions should be discussed within the group, in advance if possible. Illness and other emergencies should be discussed with the facilitator.
5. All other missed activities must have adequate justification. Alleged violations of these policies will be referred to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs for review and action. At the discretion of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, the student matter under review will be referred to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for evaluation and recommendation.

Block Withdraw Policy

A block of study may be dropped during the University's official Drop/Add period after discussion with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Once it has been determined the student will drop the course the student should visit the office of the SPH Academic Program Manager to fill out the official Course (Block) Drop/Add Request form which will be processed through the appropriate offices by Academic Affairs staff. If this Course (Block) Drop/Add Request form is received by the Office of the Registrar before the end of the Drop/Add period, no record of the registration for the dropped block will appear on the student's transcript and no tuition fees for the block/course will apply.

Students may withdraw from a block of study after the Drop/Add period following a discussion with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Program will submit an official Course (Block) Withdrawal form to the Office of the University Registrar.

If the Course (Block) Withdrawal form is received by the Office of the University Registrar after the Drop/Add period, but up until the day prior to the last class in the block, students, at the option of the Block Leader, may be assigned grades of Withdrawn (W), Withdrawn Passing (WP) or Withdrawn Failing (WF) if the block has already begun.

Center City Student Service Offices

Many student services are available in satellite offices to Center City students. These offices are in place so that Center City students will not have to travel to the main campus in order to receive assistance. The following services are available:

Student Services Office, New College Building (NCB), Room 1106
Consultation with the Drexel Dean of Students, multicultural programs, judicial affairs

Center for Student Academic Resources, NCB, Room 1602
Tutoring, study skill development, academic counseling

Counseling Center, Bellet 3rd floor
Personal counseling and group counseling

Students seeking other services and who are unable to identify who they need to contact for help, should consult with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Additional student services information is available here:

<http://www.drexel.edu/studentlife/default.htm>

DragonCard

The Dragon Card is the Drexel University Identification card for students, staff, and faculty. The card should be carried at all times as it allows access to campus buildings and is also a way to access campus printers and photocopiers.

If you wish to add funds to Dragon Card in order to use printing or photocopying services, funds can be added at the Dragon Card office in the New College Building, Room 1608 or in the Creese Student Union, Room 124. You can learn more about the card at <http://www.drexel.edu/dragoncard/>

Faculty/Staff Financial Support

Faculty and staff at the School of Public Health are fully supportive of students seeking to engage in learning experiences outside of the regular academic program that may require funding support, e.g. unpaid summer internships, special short-term projects, conference attendance, etc. This support may be sought through guidance from faculty (individual and through Departments) regarding potential funding sources and other ideas for students utilizing their entrepreneurial skills to identify financial support for these activities. Students may not solicit financial support directly from individual faculty and staff to help fund any *extra-curricular* programs.

Financial Aid Process and Awards

The Financial Aid office makes every effort to assist students in finding the resources necessary to attend Drexel University. The school recognizes, however, the primary responsibility of the individual to provide funds to achieve the objective of a post-secondary education. The Financial Aid office assists students in seeking and applying for grants, scholarships and loans to meet their costs above and beyond what can be contributed by the student and the student's family.

Drexel University awards funds to students through numerous loan, scholarship, and grant programs, including Federal Work-Study. Funds are awarded to students based on financial need with the neediest students funded first. Some scholarship funds are available for students based on financial need and academic merit.

All students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in order to be considered for any financial aid. The electronic version of this form, as well as additional Drexel University financial aid information can be found here: <http://www.drexel.edu/provost/financialaid/> Students wishing to be considered for financial assistance may also be required to complete an institutional financial aid application, and provide copies of the students', and in some cases, parents' prior year's federal income tax return.

Graduation Requirements

A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to be eligible for graduation from the Executive MPH Program.

A minimum of five academic semesters, divided into smaller units or blocks, is required for the basic Executive MPH degree; enrollment must be continuous, unless leaves are granted.

Grievance Policy and Appeal Procedures

The School of Public Health encourages open student-faculty communication and discussion to achieve a satisfactory solution to problems relating to academic matters. Grade issues should be discussed with the faculty member, course director and department Chair.

To submit a formal appeal or complaint, the student must address a letter to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Dean, stating the specific complaint. The Dean will review the complaint, gather supporting material and render a decision within 10 days from receipt of the letter.

Leave of Absence

On recommendation of the student's advisor and the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, a student may take a leave of absence for up to a maximum of two years consecutively or separately for master's candidates, for reasons of 1) military service, 2) family care, 3) serious illness or 4) another reason deemed adequate for interrupting graduate studies. Financial obligations to the University for past periods of matriculation are not waived by a leave of absence. Furthermore, a leave of absence does not extend the time limits allowed for completion of degree. Students on F-1 or J-1 visas are not eligible for a leave of absence.

To take a leave of absence a student must meet with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs to discuss the request and then submit a letter stating the reasons for the leave and leave time needed. After consultation with the student's advisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will notify the student of action regarding the request.

At least 30 days prior to the conclusion of a leave of absence, a student must submit a letter to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs stating his/her intent to be reinstated or the desire to renew the leave for another year. If reinstatement is requested, any financial liabilities and other conditions of reinstatement must be completed. The conditions of reinstatement are determined at the beginning of the leave of absence by the School of Public Health.

A student who neither applies for reinstatement nor requests renewal of the leave of absence for a second period of one year will be withdrawn from the rolls of the School of Public Health.

Library

Public health students have access to several libraries located throughout Philadelphia. The Hahnemann Library, located on the first and second floors of the New College Building, is the best resource for public health students. The library has a number of paper and electronic resources available, as well as support staff to assist students in locating materials and information. The W.W. Hagerty library is located on the Drexel main campus and the Learning resources Center on the Queen Lan campus are alternate library sites available to public health students. Learn more about the Drexel library system here: <http://www.library.drexel.edu/healthsciences/defaultHS.html>

Maintenance of Matriculation

All matriculated School of Public Health students are required to be registered each semester in order to continue to be degree candidates, unless they have requested and have received a formal leave of absence approved by the Student Promotions Committee. Informal leave of absence arrangements are not acceptable and will not be honored retroactively.

Matriculated students who fail to obtain a leave of absence or be registered for a semester will be subject to termination of their matriculated status and may be administratively withdrawn and dropped from the rolls of the School of Public Health. Reinstatement of matriculated status for students who are administratively withdrawn will require petition to, and action by, the SPH Admissions Committee. Such students will be treated as new applicants requesting admission with advanced standing. They will be required to file a new application and pay the application fee again.

Registration

The Academic Program Manager in the Office of Academic Affairs of the School of Public Health registers all Executive MPH students. It is the responsibility of each student to check their registration status each semester through DrexelOne

Student Government

Consistent with the School's mission and values statement, the School of Public Health is committed to a philosophy that embraces and endorses both the rights and responsibilities of its student body. As such, the School is pleased to listen and receive input from its student body. Moreover, student representation is included within appropriate standing committees of the School.

The School of Public Health Student Organization is the vehicle for formal representation. The overall purpose of the organization is to promote communication, collaboration between the School and the student body, and intellectual stimulation among students, Drexel University and the community-at-large.

All School of Public Health students are voting members within this organization and are encouraged to contribute their time and services to the activities of the organization. The organization elects student representatives as voting members for several standing and ad hoc committees of the School of Public Health and the University. These activities provide an avenue for students to participate actively in all levels of Drexel University's governmental system and ensure that the student body is kept informed of School of Public Health and University policy matters. School of Public Health Student Government Organization officers and graduate students who are representatives to councils and committees must be in good academic standing.

Student-Related Standing Committees of the School of Public Health Faculty

Admissions Committee: Establishes requirements for admissions to the School, reviews and acts on applications to the School, and awards fellowship Support.

Educational Coordinating Committee: Serves as the planning and coordinating group for educational activities of the School of Public Health. Ensures the effectiveness and conformance of the program to its mission and

Changes in public health and contemporary educational principles. The Committee has student representation.

Transportation

Drexel University provides shuttle service between the three major campus locations: Main campus, Center City, and Queen Lane. Shuttles run on a regular schedule, which can be found here: http://www.drexel.edu/admin/publicsafety/shuttle_service.htm
A valid DragonCard is required to use the shuttle services. In addition, the city of Philadelphia has an excellent public transportation system/ SEPTA (Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority) bus, trolley, subway, and regional rail schedules can be found here: <http://www.septa.org/>

Withdrawal from the School of Public Health

Students who wish to withdraw from the School of Public Health should do so in consultation with their advisor and the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Students must then submit a letter of intent to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and complete an exit interview with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

Disclaimer

The School of Public Health and the University may, at any time, change any provisions, curricular requirements, bylaws, rules, regulations and policies and procedures as may be necessary in the interest of the University, the School of Public Health and its students.