

PUBLIC HEALTH MAJOR

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Public Health Program Mission

The mission of the Public Health program is to prepare graduates as health educators who promote healthy lifestyles and disease prevention, model life-long learning through continuing education, and are engaged in their profession and community.

Program Description

Public Health is defined as, “promoting and protecting the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play. This is achieved by healthy lifestyle promotion, researching disease and injury prevention, and detecting, preventing, and responding to diseases. The goal of public health is to protect the health of entire populations in our local communities, countries, and regions of the world. Public health majors keep communities safe and healthy, protect workers, pursue social justice, assist and/or lead with disaster relief, ensure healthcare access, and so much more. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#), this field will grow by 16 percent between 2016 and 2026.

Public Health at the University of Charleston is a baccalaureate degree program, that prepares graduates as public health professionals. Graduates can be employed in settings such as government, state and local health departments, health insurance agencies, corporate wellness programs, non-profit organizations, hospitals, and rehabilitation clinics. Graduates will also have the education required for further study in graduate programs such as Public Health, Exercise Science, and Health Care Administration.

Students will engage in a multidisciplinary curriculum with a strong health science emphasis that provides a robust health care foundation. In addition, there are several offerings of complementary courses in natural sciences, psychology, and exercise science. The public health program can be completed in either 3 or 4 years, depending on the courseload the student takes. The 3-year track may require summer semesters. A public health internship is required as part of the course requirements. It is a chance for the public health major to gain real-world skills in their discipline's professional environment. Students will refine their ability to perform comprehensive program development in areas such as assessing health needs, planning, implementation, evaluation, and management.

In addition, graduates may be eligible for certifications through NCHC as a Certified Health Education Specialist, or through the National Wellness Institute as a Certified Wellness Practitioner. Additionally, graduates can increase their marketability by seeking outside professional certifications such as Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES), American College of Sports Medicine certifications (ACSM), American College of Exercise Certifications (ACE), Performance Enhancement Specialist (PES), and First Aid/CPR/AED.

Public Health Program Learning Outcomes

The graduate will be able to:

1. Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and respect of individual differences within the healthcare profession.
2. Plan and implement health education and promotion.
3. Conduct and evaluate research related to health and health related fields.
4. Model professional behaviors and attitudes that reflect the expectations of the healthcare profession and the community.
5. Communicate and advocate for changing lifestyles progressing towards optimal health.

What You Will Study

The Public Health major consists of 121 credit hours that include a combination of major courses and related disciplines (81 credits), core courses (15 credits), and elective credit courses (28 credits).

The following is a guide based on a 4-year completion period. **Students may accelerate their experience and complete the program in 3 or 3 ½ years if desired.** Every student is assigned an academic advisor who will assist with degree completion planning and career exploration.

Sample Curriculum Sequence

FIRST YEAR			
FALL SEMESTER		SPRING SEMESTER	
UNIV 104 College Motivation & Success	3	UNIV 105 Foundations of Character & Leadership	3
ENGL 101 Freshman Writing I	3	ENGL 102 Freshman Writing II	3
HSCI 110 History of Health Sciences	3	SPCH 103 Oral Communication (embedded)	3
PUBH 100 Introduction to Public Health	3	PUBH 220 Introduction to Epidemiology	3
PSYC 101 Introduction to Psychology	3	MATH 120 Intermediate Algebra	3
		ICOMM 225 Introduction to Public Relations	3
TOTAL CREDITS	15		18

SECOND YEAR

PUBH 250 Public Health Policy	3	Minor Elective	3
BIOL 251 Anatomy & Physiology I / BIOL 130 Biology for Majors	3	PYSC 212 Life Span and Development	3
BIOL 251L Anatomy & Physiology Lab I / BIOL 130L Biology for Majors Lab	1	BIOL 252 Anatomy & Physiology II / HSCI 201 Assessment	3/2
Minor Elective	3	BIOL 252L Anatomy & Physiology Lab II / HSCI 201L Assessment Lab	1
HSCI 230 Interprofessional Practice & Collaboration	3	MATH 121 College Algebra	3
HSCI 204 Nutrition	3	EXER 225 Medical Terminology	3
TOTAL CREDITS	16		15/6

THIRD YEAR

HSCI 302 Health Ethics & Policy	3	EXER 330 Special Populations	3
PUBH 340 Exercise & Psychological Mindfulness	3	ICOM 362 Public Relations Writing	3
MATH 240/HSCI 312 Statistics	3	HSCI 310 Health Informatics	3
PUBH 320 Social Determinants of Health	3	PUBH 350X Appalachian Health and Well-Being	3
Minor Elective	3	PUBH 310 Public & Global Health	3
TOTAL CREDITS	15		15

FOURTH YEAR

PUBH 475 Public Health Capstone	3	PUBH 498 OR PUBH 497 Internship	3/12
HSCI 402 Research	3	HSCI 401 Health Leadership & Management	3
Minor Elective	3	Minor Elective	3
Minor Elective	3	EXER 452 Organization and Administration in Exercise Science	
TOTAL CREDITS	12		12/8

Immersed Internship -- Ready for the Real World!

Public Health majors complete an immersed 3 or 12-credit internship in the final semester before graduation. Students can apply and/or arrange to complete this experience in any location pending university approval. The opportunity to gain real world skills in the

professional environment of their discipline equips graduates with the work experience that employers and graduate schools desire. Students will refine their ability to perform comprehensive program development in areas such as assessing health needs, planning, implementation, evaluation, and management.

Admission Requirements

Students must gain general admission to the University of Charleston and declare public Health as their major. Students must have a 2.2 GPA for admittance.

Additional Requirements and Successful Progression

To progress in the program and graduate, students must pass their required courses, including a 3 or 12 credit immersed internship, with a C or better and meet the institutional academic requirement of maintaining a minimum cumulative 2.0 GPA to remain in good academic standing.