

PUBLIC HEALTH MAJOR

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Public Health Program Mission

The mission of the Public Health program is *to* prepare graduates to 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 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.

Public Health Required Courses		
Course	Title	Credit Hours
PUBH 100	Introduction to Public Health	3
PUBH 2XX	Environmental Health	3
PUBH 220	Introduction to Epidemiology	3
PUBH 3XX	The US Healthcare System	3
PUBH 310	Public and Global Health	3
PUBH 320	Social Determinants of Health	3
PUBH 340	Exercise and the Psychological Mind	3
PUBH 350	Appalachian Health and Wellness	3
PUBH 360	Public Health Policy	3
PUBH 4XX	Disease Impact Planning	3
PUBH 4XX	Social and Behavioral Theories	3
PUBH 475	Public Health Capstone	3
PUBH 497	Public Health Internship	3
Required Credit Hours in Major		39

Health Science Required Courses in Public Health Major			
Course	Title		Credit Hours
HSCI 110	History of Health Sciences		3

HSCI 204	Nutrition		3
HSCI 230	Interprofessional Practice and Collaboration		3
HSCI 302	Health Ethics and Policy		3
HSCI 310	Health Informatics		3
HSCI 312	Statistics for Evidence Based Practice		3
HSCI 401	Health Leadership and Management		3
HSCI 402	Research		3
	HSCI Total Credit Hours		24

Public Health –Required Courses Outside the Major		
Course	Title	Credit Hours
PSYCH 101	Introduction to Psychology	3
PYSC 212	Life Span and Development	3
EXER 225	Medical Terminology	3
BIOL 130/130L	Biology for Majors with Lab	4
BIOL 212/212L or BIOL 251/251L BIOL 252/252L	Intro to Human Anatomy and Physiology with Lab Or Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab Anatomy and Physiology II with Lab	4
MATH 120	Intermediate Algebra	3
ICOM 225	Introduction to Public Relations	3
ICOMM 362	Public Relations Writing	3
	Total Credit Hours Outside of Major	26

Immersed Internship -- Ready for the Real World!

Public Health majors have the opportunity to complete two internships while in the program. One is in the junior year and the other is 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.