

Handbook for the MPH Faculty Advisor 2023 – 2024

*University of Florida College of Public Health and Health Professions
Master of Public Health Program*

Guidelines for the MPH Faculty Advisor

In this handbook, faculty advisors will find information related to approval forms, MPH competencies, and processes, from the University of Florida Master of Public Health graduate program.

MPH Program Director

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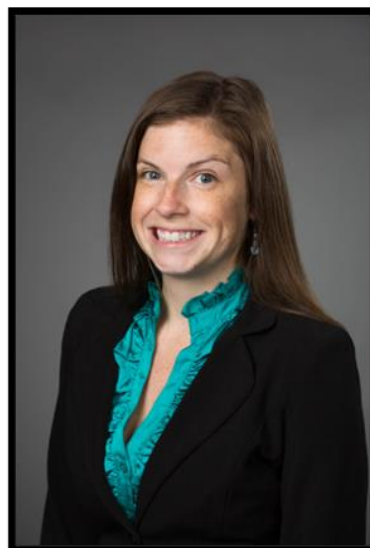
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MPH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The MPH Program is administered at the college level, while the MPH concentrations are housed in the departments of Biostatistics; Environmental and Global Health; Epidemiology; and Health Services Research, Management and Policy; as well as the Social and Behavioral Sciences Program. MPH students have both the identity of being in the MPH program as well as a student within their department or concentration.

MPH students declare a concentration when applying to the MPH program. Upon enrollment, students are assigned a faculty advisor within their concentration. Each concentration also has a coordinator who serves as the liaison between that concentration and the program and is responsible for applying program policies in the concentration.

How the MPH Program Works

The MPH program is offered in [four different formats](#). All students complete either the traditional 48-credit MPH program or the accelerated 42-credit MPH (only for qualified health professionals with a terminal degree). The MPH program also has several combination programs options: combined bachelor's to MPH, combined professional (e.g., MD, JD, DVM,), or other combined graduate (i.e., master's or doctoral) with MPH degree.

The MPH curricula is designed to meet current developments in the field of public health, the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH, 2021) accreditation criteria, and the College's mission, goals, and objectives. No matter their program, all students gain a broad knowledge base of foundational to public health issues through the core courses. All students attain depth in specialized public health knowledge and skills through their concentration. The foundational public health concepts presented in the program are assimilated through applied practice experiences (APEs); while the foundational public health concepts combined with concentration competencies are synthesized and assimilated through an integrative learning experience (ILE or Capstone) at the end of the program.

For detailed information about program requirements and concentration-specific requirements, please check the [MPH Student Handbook](#).

Competencies Expected of MPH Students

All MPH students are expected to master a set of public health competencies during their studies (see [Appendix A](#) for a full list). The MPH core (or foundational) competencies are defined by the [Council on Education in Public Health \(CEPH, 2021\)](#), the accrediting body for public health schools and programs. The concentration competencies were identified by the faculty within that concentration and are also consistent with CEPH accreditation standards.

THE MPH FACULTY ADVISOR ROLE

Both student and faculty advisor-mentor (FAM) are important to making the student/FAM relationship a successful one. FAMs contribute to MPH students' growth, professionalism, and well-being in multiple ways. FAM are expected to:

- Generally:
 - Set a regular meeting time with your students so to check-in
 - Tip: Consider group meetings with your advisees!
 - Mentor students in developing professionalism skills
 - Support students as they define and work toward professional goals
 - Provide general guidance on career options
 - Communicate to the MPH Director and Associate Director any known issues that may impact the student's academic progress
 - Attend the MPH Faculty Town Halls or meetings* to learn about program updates, provide input, and/or participate in discussion.
 - Optional:
 - Advise the student when they are considering changes to the already established plan of study (i.e., coursework to meet graduation requirements)
 - Give input to students as they search for an internship site that matches their career goals
- Capstone (detailed information about Capstone is in "The MPH Capstone" section):
 - Prior to the Capstone semester
 - guide students in conceptualizing and preparing to complete a capstone project
 - Support the student during the Capstone semester, including providing guidance, feedback, and evaluation of their progress.
 - Note: The FAM
 - is the instructor of record within Canvas for the Capstone Project.
 - Review and grade written paper drafts and the final paper of the capstone project report
 - Attend and serve as an evaluator/reviewer for Public Health Day(s)
 - Notify the MPH program of any concerns about the student's progress, including not being ready for project completion or graduation from the program.

*MPH Faculty Town Halls or Meetings typically occur 2-3 times per year, serving to update faculty on MPH program changes, including changes in expectations for faculty advisors.

Faculty Advisor Q&A

When is the Faculty Advisor assigned?

Most MPH students are assigned a Faculty Advisor-Mentor (FAM) upon matriculation into the program. Exceptions to this include:

- MPH Online (SBS & PHP) students are assigned a FAM about 9-12 months prior to their anticipated graduation date.

How are Faculty Advisors assigned?

Concentration Coordinators (i.e., the faculty coordinators for each concentration) work with department chairs and/or program directors to make these assignments while considering faculty availability and alignment of interests.

If a faculty member would like to request a specific student as an advisee, they should reach out to the Concentration Coordinator and the MPH Academic Advisor to make their request known.

How often should I meet with my advisee?

We recommend meeting with your advisee at least one time per semester in their first year of study, and much more frequently in their second year of study. (See [Appendix B for General Guidance on Capstone Timeline](#))

If you have multiple advisees consider group meetings, especially for those first couple of semesters! This helps foster a sense of community, allowing your advisee to get to know you and other students.

What should I talk about at my meetings with my advisees?

All meetings are an opportunity to check in on the student's progress and professional goals; and to help the student identify opportunities to further their goals. You can also ask about ongoing or changing professional or work experiences. You should also check in on when they anticipate completing Capstone.

Throughout these meetings you should strive to help the student to feel connected to their concentration and/or department; and provide professional mentoring.

At the first meeting (consider a group advisee meeting!)

- Discuss the student's educational and professional background; and goals while in the program.
- Set up a regular meeting schedule. We recommend at least 1x per semester in the first two semesters (traditional full-time students); more frequently starting the third semester.

Subsequent meetings in the first year (consider a group advisee meeting!)

- See "All Meetings" (above)

Around 6 to 9 months prior to anticipated graduation

- Begin discussing potential Capstone project ideas.
- Determine if IRB will be needed for the Capstone project.

Around 6 months prior to anticipated graduation:

- Help the student to solidify their Capstone Project idea and complete IRB if it's needed.

Subsequent meetings until graduation

- Check in on Capstone progress; use these meetings as an opportunity to give more in-depth feedback.
- Check in on professional and post-graduation goals.

Requests for Change in Faculty Advisor

Requests for changes to the student's Faculty Advisor may be initiated by the student or a faculty member by first contacting the Concentration Coordinator. The Concentration Coordinator should communicate any changes to both MPH Academic Advisors. Requests made after the student has begun their final semester will be granted only as a rare exception.

Faculty Advisor Resources

- [Faculty Advisor Resources webpage](#) includes:
 - This handbook
 - [MPH Faculty Meeting & Town Hall Recordings](#) – these are password protected. Please reach out to Andre McFadden II for the password.
 - [MPH Student Handbook](#)
- The MPH Concentration pages include required coursework, concentration competencies, etc.
 - [Biostatistics](#)
 - [Environmental Health](#)
 - [Epidemiology](#)
 - [Population Health Management](#)
 - [Public Health Practice – Campus](#)
 - [Public Health Practice – Online](#)
 - [Social and Behavioral Sciences – Campus](#)
 - [Social and Behavioral Sciences – Online](#)
- [MPH program requirements for all students](#)

We are continually working to update the MPH website. If you find something that needs updating or clarification, please let us know!

THE MPH CAPSTONE

The Council for Education in Public Health ([CEPH, 2021](#)) requires all Masters of Public Health (MPH) students to complete an Integrated Learning Experience (ILE), which we call the Capstone Project. CEPH also requires that students write a professional paper describing the Capstone Project.

What is the Capstone course?

The Capstone course (PHC 6940) is a 2-credit course that MPH students take in the final semester of their MPH program. Eligible students are enrolled in this course along with their Faculty Advisor-Mentor (FAM). The FAM is the instructor of record for their students.

The Capstone Project

The Capstone Project represents the student's culminating experience in which the MPH student synthesizes, integrates, and applies the skills they have acquired throughout the MPH program. *The Capstone Project must allow for demonstration of synthesis of at least two foundational competencies and at least two concentration competencies.*

Students, in consult with their FAM, select foundational (i.e., core) and concentration-specific competencies appropriate to the student's educational and professional goals; and then identify a suitable Capstone project addressing the identified MPH competencies. Examples of Capstone projects include but are not limited to:

- Literature review
- Secondary data analysis (analysis of existing data)
- Primary data analysis (collection and analysis)
- Program evaluation
- Community needs assessment
- Program proposal
- Policy analysis
- Research Proposal

The Capstone project idea, associated competencies, and timeline of activities (informed on by the PHC 6940 syllabus deadlines) are formalized into a proposal and contract between the student and the FAM, at the beginning of or before the Capstone semester. Within the course, students have access to varied resources and guidance to support them in writing their paper. The FAM should denote any additional or differing writing expectations to their advisees. These additional or differing expectations can be outlined in the proposal/contract or as each drafted section is written.

The Capstone Project serves as the basis for a professionally written paper and presentation. The Capstone Presentation is presented during the semesterly [Public Health Day](#). In preparation for Public Health Day, students complete a structured 'practice' presentation with their FAM (See Final Exam Milestone, below). Details on the paper and presentation requirements are outlined in the [PHC 6940 syllabus](#) (Fall 2023 or later) each semester.

Enrolling in Capstone

Prior to enrolling in MPH Capstone (PHC 6940), students must have successfully completed all public health core courses, all concentration core courses, and either completed the Applied Practice Experience (APE) or be approved to register for APE. Although students register for PHC 6940 in their final semester, students are encouraged to begin conceptualizing and working towards the project prior to the final semester. Once the Capstone semester has started, students will realistically only have about 3-months to finish their entire project.

Evaluation of the Capstone Report Deliverables

Throughout the Capstone Project, students write and submit (to Canvas) section drafts of the Capstone project written report. The faculty advisor reviews these drafts and provides feedback to the student. FAM also mark the drafts as complete (in Canvas) once the student has made sufficient progress on that section of the paper.

FAM should provide timely feedback designed to improve the quality and rigor of the paper, also ensuring that the selected competencies are being met. Students are expected to use feedback from their FAM to improve their written product and prepare for their Public Health Day presentation.

Rubrics for paper drafts are provided as a guide to the FAM. A formalized grading rubric is also provided for the FAM's final evaluation of the paper.

Final Exam Milestone

UF Graduate School requires all master-level degree programs to include degree requirements that reflect mastery of the field of study; this degree requirement is the final exam milestone. The Graduate School specifies the deadline for recording the outcome of the final exam milestone each semester.

The final exam milestone for the MPH Program is comprised of the Capstone Project itself along with a professional presentation of the project. As such, for the program to record a grade of "Satisfactory," the MPH student must 1) complete all course required draft submissions up to the final examine milestone deadline; and 2) receive approval from their FAM to present at Public Health Day. The approval for the presentation is given by the FAM based on the student's 'practice' presentation to their FAM. The presentation must occur during a virtual meeting between the student and FAM, and the meeting must be recorded by the student. The student submits the audio-visual recording of the meeting to the associated Canvas assignment before the deadline. If the student has passed, the FAM marks the assignment "Complete" denoting approval to present on Public Health Day.

Students must pass the Final Exam Milestone to graduate. If a student does not pass, please reach out to the Capstone Course Coordinator (Mrs. Telisha Martin) and MPH Director (Dr. Julia Varnes).

Public Health Day Presentations

All students present their Capstone project during Public Health Day. Starting 2023-24

academic year, spring “Public Health Day” will be encapsulated within PPHP Days (formerly PPHP Research Day), occurring during the month of April. A stand-alone Public Health Day will also occur in summer (last week of July to first week of August) and fall (late November). FAM are expected to attend and evaluate their MPH students’ presentations, as well as other MPH student presentations. All MPH students must receive presentation evaluation from at least two faculty members.

Capstone Roles & Responsibilities

Faculty Advisor-Mentor (FAM)

FAM work with their students in multiple capacities. Specific to the Capstone project, the faculty advisor will:

- Assist the student in identifying an appropriate Capstone project that can be completed in a timely manner.
- Assist the student in clarifying educational goals and competencies to be strengthened by completion of the Capstone project.
- Support the student in attaining IRB approval (when and if needed).
- Maintain regular communication with the student leading up to and throughout completion of the project.
- Review the student’s written paper drafts and provide feedback.
- Grade assignments that are graded as “Complete/Incomplete”
 - Grade of “Complete” indicates that the student has submitted the required materials AND is making sufficient progress in the completion of their project and writing of their paper (specific to that assignment).
- Communicate with the course coordinator (Mrs. Telisha Martin) if concerns arise related to the student or their project.
 - We need to know early, so we can intervene early!
- Attend a student-scheduled meeting to watch the practice presentation and make a determination of pass/no pass.
- Attend and serve as an evaluator/reviewer for Public Health Day(s).
- Review the Capstone Project syllabus each term for a full understanding of FAM responsibilities specific to Capstone course.
- Reach out to the MPH Director if you need additional guidance in understanding expectations.

Student

Student responsibilities include:

- Ensure timely identification of an appropriate Capstone project.
- Complete assignments and fulfill learning goals and identified competencies.
- Meet Capstone Project deadlines as outlined.
- Schedule, in advance, all meetings with the FAM.
- Incorporate FAM provided feedback into revisions of capstone deliverables.
- Notify their FAM if they need additional support or guidance.
- Respond to the additional Capstone-related needs or requirements put forth by the

FAM (e.g., if additional drafts are necessary).

- Communicate concerns or issues to the FAM and/or Capstone Course Coordinator.

Capstone Course Coordinator

The Capstone Course Coordinator is Mrs. Telisha Martin (MPH Associate Director & Senior Academic Advisor). The Coordinator will:

- Communicate with the MPH Program Director if concerns arise about a student that may jeopardize their satisfactory completion of the project or the course.
- Monitor the Canvas site to ensure communication between the student and FAM.
- Reach out to either the student and/or FAM if concerns arise.
- Respond to the needs of the student and FAM during the semester in which the student is enrolled in Capstone.
- Enter grades for all “point” graded assignments.
- Coordinate all scheduling and planning of Public Health Day(s).
- Communicate, in a timely manner, programmatic deadlines and needs that affect the Capstone course.

Important Notes:

- Until further notice, FAM do NOT need to enter a grade into the grading system for their advisees.

APPENDIX A: COMPETENCIES EXPECTED OF MPH STUDENTS

All students in the MPH Program are expected to master a set of public health competencies during their studies. Per the *CEPH 2021 Accreditation Guidelines*, the MPH Foundational Competencies “are informed by the traditional public health core knowledge areas, (biostatistics, epidemiology, social and behavioral sciences, health service administration and environmental health sciences), as well as cross-cutting and emerging public health areas.”

Learning objectives for the five MPH core courses were developed so to contribute to the competencies. The learning objectives also reflect the topics that will be covered in the Certification in Public Health (CPH) examination, which students are encouraged to take after graduation from the program. Additional competencies specific to each concentration were developed by the faculty, based on standards in the field.

MPH Foundational Competencies

Graduates of the MPH degree program are expected to be grounded in the following Foundational Public Health knowledge:

Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health

1. Apply epidemiological methods to 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 systemic 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, implementation, or critique 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 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 leadership/management principles to address a relevant issue
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 (non-academic, non-peer) 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. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health

Systems Thinking

22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than a standard narrative.

Concentration Competencies

Each concentration offers a unique curriculum of courses designed to ensure that students gain the skills necessary to become competent practitioners.

Biostatistics Competencies

1. Apply standard probability distributions to public health.
2. Apply and interpret common statistical descriptive and inferential methods, including confidence intervals and hypothesis tests in one-sample, two-sample, and multivariable regression settings.
3. Build and interpret appropriate multivariate regression models to analyze public health data.
4. Develop practical skills in using statistical software packages for data management and analysis of public health data.
5. Develop written reports based on statistical analyses.

Environmental Health Competencies

1. Examine the direct and indirect human and ecological health effects of major environmental agents.
2. Develop a quantitative risk assessment framework for environmental hazards
3. Apply knowledge of environmental legislation to case studies to determine jurisdiction and approach.
4. Apply approaches for assessing environmental exposures, including exposure assessment design and methods.
5. Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and appropriate communication when engaged in public health practice and research.

Epidemiology Competencies

1. Assess potential confounders in epidemiology studies.
2. Evaluate interaction, effect modification and mediation in epidemiology studies.
3. Evaluate the multifactorial etiology and pathophysiology of chronic diseases.
4. Apply criteria for identification, prevention, and control of infectious agents.
5. Manage, analyze, and interpret large-scale epidemiologic data.

Population Health Management

1. Integrate systems thinking theory to incorporate multiple stakeholders at state and local levels to address a public health issue.
2. Create an evaluation plan for a public health initiative.
3. Apply principles and theory of budget preparation, managerial accounting, and financial management to organizations in the health sector.
4. Develop a survey instrument that validly examines public health research questions and produces data that addresses health implications and their relationship to policy and contexts.
5. Conduct an economic analysis of a major health policy issue.

Social and Behavioral Sciences

1. Evaluate public health social and behavioral science research so that research decisions, strengths and limitations are addressed.
2. Integrate social and behavioral science theories and concepts in the development of interventions/solutions to public health problems.
3. Design and conduct a community needs assessment.
4. Design, implement and evaluate a public health intervention.
5. Design and develop effective communication products that convey health information to diverse audiences that increase recipients' knowledge and positively impact attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Public Health Practice

Select two concentration competencies from any of the other concentrations.

Note: Public Health Practice (PHP) concentration students take concentration core courses across multiple (at least two) concentrations. To identify appropriate concentration competencies for PHP concentration students, to consider the concentration-specific courses and electives that the PHP student has taken. Select appropriate competencies based on those.

APPENDIX B: General Guidance on Timeline for Capstone Project Completion

This is a general guideline. Some students may want to get started earlier and some may identify their project topic a little later. No matter the student's actual timeline, we recommend starting the Capstone semester with the project idea solidified. The student's failure to keep up with Capstone deadlines will result in delayed graduation.

For Spring (May) graduates

- August/September prior: Student discusses capstone project ideas with FAM
- October-November: Finalize project topic and type
 - o Projects requiring IRB approval should be solidified earlier as the student must have submitted for IRB approval prior to the start of the Capstone semester.
- November/December: Work on Capstone Project Proposal, obtaining FAM signature prior to assignment deadline
 - o Once FAM approval is secured, the student may begin working on their Capstone Project.
- Early-to-mid January: Student submits the signed Proposal & Contract to Canvas. (Course Coordinator to grade)
- Late January/Early February:
 - o Student submits the written introduction/background draft section to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Mid-February:
 - o Student submits the written methods section to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Early-March:
 - o Student submits the written results section to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Mid-March:
 - o Student submits written discussion section to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Late March:
 - o Student completes practice presentation with FAM
 - o FAM marks practice presentation as complete/incomplete (indicating pass/no pass)
- Early April
 - o Student submits Near Final Draft to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Mid-April: Public Health Day presentations
- Late April:
 - o Final Capstone Paper is due

- FAM grades final paper and posts completed rubric to comments in the Canvas assignment.

Summer (August) graduates

- December prior: Student discusses capstone project ideas with FAM
- January-February: Finalize project topic and type
 - Projects requiring IRB approval should be solidified earlier as the student must have submitted for IRB approval prior to the start of the Capstone semester.
- March/April: Work on Capstone Project Proposal, obtaining FAM signature prior to assignment deadline
 - Once FAM approval is secured, the student may begin working on their Capstone Project.
- Early-to-mid May: Student submits the signed Proposal & Contract to Canvas. (Course Coordinator to grade)
- Late May:
 - Student submits the written introduction/background draft section to Canvas
 - FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Mid-June:
 - Student submits the written methods section to Canvas
 - FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Late June:
 - Student submits the written results section to Canvas
 - FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Mid-July:
 - Student submits written discussion section to Canvas
 - FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Mid-to-Late July:
 - Student completes practice presentation with FAM
 - FAM marks practice presentation as complete/incomplete (indicating pass/no pass)
- Late July
 - Student submits Near Final Draft to Canvas
 - FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Early August: Public Health Day presentations
- Early August:
 - Final Capstone Paper is due
 - FAM grades final paper and posts completed rubric to comments in the Canvas assignment.

For Fall semester (December) Graduates

- April/May: Student discusses capstone project ideas with FAM
- June-July: Finalize project topic and type
 - o Projects requiring IRB approval should be solidified earlier as the student must have submitted for IRB approval prior to the start of the Capstone semester.
- July to early August: Student works on Capstone Project Proposal, obtaining FAM signature prior to assignment deadline
 - o Once FAM approval is secured, the student may begin working on their Capstone Project.
- Late August: Student submits the signed Proposal & Contract to Canvas. (Course Coordinator to grade)
- Mid-September:
 - o Student submits the written introduction/background draft section to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Early-October:
 - o Student submits the written methods section to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Mid-October:
 - o Student submits the written results section to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Late October:
 - o Student submits written discussion section to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Early November:
 - o Student completes practice presentation with FAM.
 - o FAM marks practice presentation as complete/incomplete (indicating pass/no pass)
- Mid-November:
 - o Student submits Near Final Draft to Canvas
 - o FAM reviews and provides feedback
- Late November: Public Health Day
- Early December:
 - o Final Capstone Paper is due
 - o FAM grades final paper and posts completed rubric to comments in the Canvas assignment.