

**Milken Institute
School of Public Health**

**CURRICULUM
GUIDEBOOK**

Table of Contents

Overview of the SPH Curriculum Committee	3
Curricular Recording Systems	3
Types of Curricular Changes	3
Course Changes	1
Course Approval Process.....	1
New Course Approval	1
Existing Course Modification.....	2
Topics Course.....	2
Program Changes.....	3
Program Approval Process	3
New Program Approval.....	4
Existing Program Modification	6
Submissions.....	6
Submitting to SPH Curriculum Committee	6
Submitting to CourseLeaf	7
Timeline.....	7
Appendix	10
FAQ.....	10
Resources.....	10

Questions?

Contact *Katherine Puskarz* (Katherine.Puskarz@gwu.edu),
Director of Academic Planning & Accreditation
Office of Academic Affairs, GWSPH

Overview of the SPH Curriculum Committee

The Milken Institute School of Public Health (SPH) Curriculum Committee is a schoolwide committee which provides faculty participation in academic decisions. The SPH Curriculum Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving the addition, revision or elimination of curricular offerings
- Reviewing existing courses, programs, curricular policies and requirements for currency and consistency
- Monitoring the quality of education
- Assessing the attainment of the stated curricular goals and objectives of the school

Committee membership includes one faculty member elected by each department and three representatives elected by schoolwide programs (e.g., undergraduate, MPH@GW, doctoral), all of whom are engaged in teaching, as well as other representatives as specified in the GWSPH Rules.

The SPH Curriculum Committee meets monthly to review all program and course submissions. See the [FAQ](#) for more information about when the curriculum committee meets.

Curricular Recording Systems

GW's official record of degree requirements, regulations, rules and programs are detailed in the [University Bulletin](#). It is updated annually. Previous years are archived for student reference. Bulletin content is sourced from two systems: (1) Bulletin pages (i.e., non-course and program information) are housed directly within the Bulletin; and (2) course descriptions and program requirements are populated from [CourseLeaf](#) (CL).

CL is an online platform used by GW to review and approve course and program changes, additions and deactivations. The system sends data to the Bulletin, Banner and DegreeMAP.

Both the Bulletin and CL need to be monitored and updated on an annual basis, at the very least. Curricular changes are not retroactive; generally, changes are implemented in the upcoming academic year. Deadlines for updates to CL and the Bulletin are posted to the GW Office of Academic Planning & Assessment [website](#).

Types of Curricular Changes

This chart distinguishes the types of curricular changes by the level of approval they require before implementation.

NOTE: Assessments are the mechanism by which linked competencies are attained. Assignments are the specific instructions on how to complete the assessment. For example, an assessment may be a policy brief focusing on equity. The assignment may restrict the topic of the policy brief to healthcare access.

Changes to	TIER 1 Course/Program Director/Department Approval Only	TIER 2 Departmental or Schoolwide Program¹ Curriculum Committee (+ Tier 1) Approval	TIER 3 SPH Curriculum Committee (+ Tiers 1 + 2) Approval	Tier 4 University Board of Trustees (+ Tiers 1 + 2 + 3) Approval
COURSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor • Updates made each term (e.g., due dates, current readings, guest lecturers, reorganizing modules, accounting for university holidays, etc.) • Scheduling (e.g., moving offering from fall to spring term)² • Assignment directions (linked competency and structure of assessment remain the same) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisites³ • Course title⁴ • University Bulletin course summary/ Course description • Fees • Format conversion (residential to online or vice versa)⁵ • Learning objectives (same topic, but modification of language other than verb) • New topics course • Course numbers changing one level (e.g., 1000 to 2000 or 2000 to 3000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New course (not topics) • Permanent course number for topics course • Credits • Course numbers jumping over a level (e.g., 1000 to 3000 or 6000 to 8000) • Learning objectives (addition or deletion; verb change) • Assessment directions (linked competency may or may not change)⁶ 	

¹ Schoolwide programs include BS in Public Health, DrPH, and MPH@GW

² If course is required in other programs, those other programs must be notified of the scheduling change.

³ If course is required in other programs, those other programs must be notified of the prerequisite revision. Notification of approval must be sent to the SPH Curriculum Committee.

⁴ If course is required in other programs, those other programs must be notified of the course title change. Notification of approval must be sent to the SPH Curriculum Committee.

⁵ Only applicable if the competencies remain the same and the assessments used to evaluate students remain the same. Notification of approval must be sent to the SPH Curriculum Committee.

⁶ Must be reviewed by the Director of Academic Planning & Accreditation to maintain accreditation standards

Changes to	TIER 1 Course/Program Director/Department Approval Only	TIER 2 Departmental or Schoolwide Program¹ Curriculum Committee (+ Tier 1) Approval	TIER 3 SPH Curriculum Committee (+ Tiers 1 + 2) Approval	Tier 4 University Board of Trustees (+ Tiers 1 + 2 + 3) Approval
PROGRAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequencing in sample schedules • Recommended electives (not selectives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions requirements • Program mission • Program selectives • Program director or leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New program proposals (except doctoral) • New concentrations • Program requirements (credits, etc) • Program-specific competencies⁷ • Other significant program changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New doctoral programs

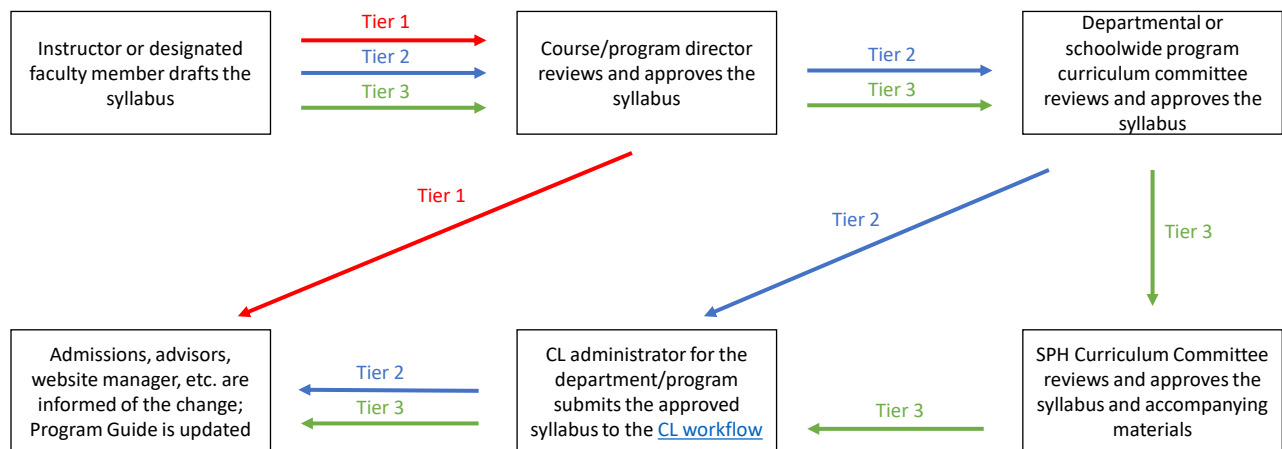
⁷ Must be reviewed by the Director of Academic Planning & Accreditation to maintain accreditation standards

Course Changes

Course Approval Process

The approval process may vary slightly depending on the type of curricular change. If a modification is in Tier 1 and therefore only requires course/program director approval, then the process ends after approval is obtained. If the course change is in Tier 2 then departmental or schoolwide program curriculum committee approval is needed in addition to course/program director approval. For changes that require only a notification to the SPH Curriculum Committee upon approval, the notification may be an email to the SPH Curriculum Committee leadership (currently Heather Hoffman and Scott Quinlan), and copying the Director of Academic Planning & Accreditation (Katherine Puskarz). If Tier 3 approval is needed, SPH Curriculum Committee approval occurs after the other two levels of approval.

Figure 1. Course Approval Process



New Course Approval

The decision to develop a new course is at the discretion of the department or schoolwide program, however, they must document the following which will be submitted to the SPH Curriculum Committee along with the draft syllabus:

- An identified instructor who will teach the new course (may be tentative or identified plan to do an instructor search)
- A justification for the course (e.g., student feedback, enrollment data, missing curricular content, rationale for a new course rather than a revision to an existing course, etc.)
- An explanation on how this course will fit into the program
- A decision as to whether this course is suitable for students in other programs

If a new course is to be used in multiple programs, all programs are involved in the development and approval process. When drafting a course syllabus, the instructor or

designated faculty member must use the current course [syllabus template](#). The syllabus should follow these guidelines:

- Course title does not contain colons or acronyms and be a max of 150 characters
- Bulletin description is 250 characters or less, lists the main concepts of the course and avoids phrases such as "This course will cover" or "this course explores" as those phrases take up valuable characters
- Dated for the first term it will be taught
- Course number is added⁸
- Course learning objectives use Bloom's Taxonomy language
- Program or accreditation competencies are listed and linked to assessments
- [Workload](#) accurately calculates to a minimum of 37.5 contact hours per credit
- Course meets for the [required number of weeks](#). This is particularly important for a 15-week undergraduate class, which must include 14 weeks of class meetings with the "final" as week 15, to be scheduled during the university exam period. The final may be a traditional final exam, take-home exam, or paper due date, presentation or other final graded assignment or activity
- Syllabus adheres to university [policies, procedures and guidelines](#)
- Most recent [syllabus appendix](#) is attached

New topics courses are approved only at the department level until a permanent course number is assigned. See [Topics Course](#).

Existing Course Modification

The procedure to modify an existing course is dependent on the type of modification (see [Types of Curricular Changes](#) above).

Changes to an existing course must be submitted using the most up-to-date [syllabus template](#) and must include all of the previously described components, even if the original syllabus was approved without having these components.

Topics Course

Topics courses are experimental or trial courses, or even temporary courses, approved by the departmental curriculum committee. Each department has a designated course number to use for topics courses (e.g., graduate level PUBH 6x99). Multiple topics courses may be offered simultaneously, distinguished by section number and course topic in parentheses. Generally, topics course are not developed for online delivery due to the high production costs.

A topics course should be offered no more than two times using the temporary course number (e.g. PUBH 6x99). After a topics course is offered two times, a decision to discontinue the content or make it a permanent course is made by the instructor, program director and department. If the decision is to make the content permanent, the [New Course Approval](#) guidelines listed above must be followed (minus the rationale). When brought to the SPH

⁸ The department's CL administrator can assist in identifying a permanent course number. Deactivated course numbers cannot be used.

Curriculum Committee, enrollment data and course evaluations/student feedback are also required.

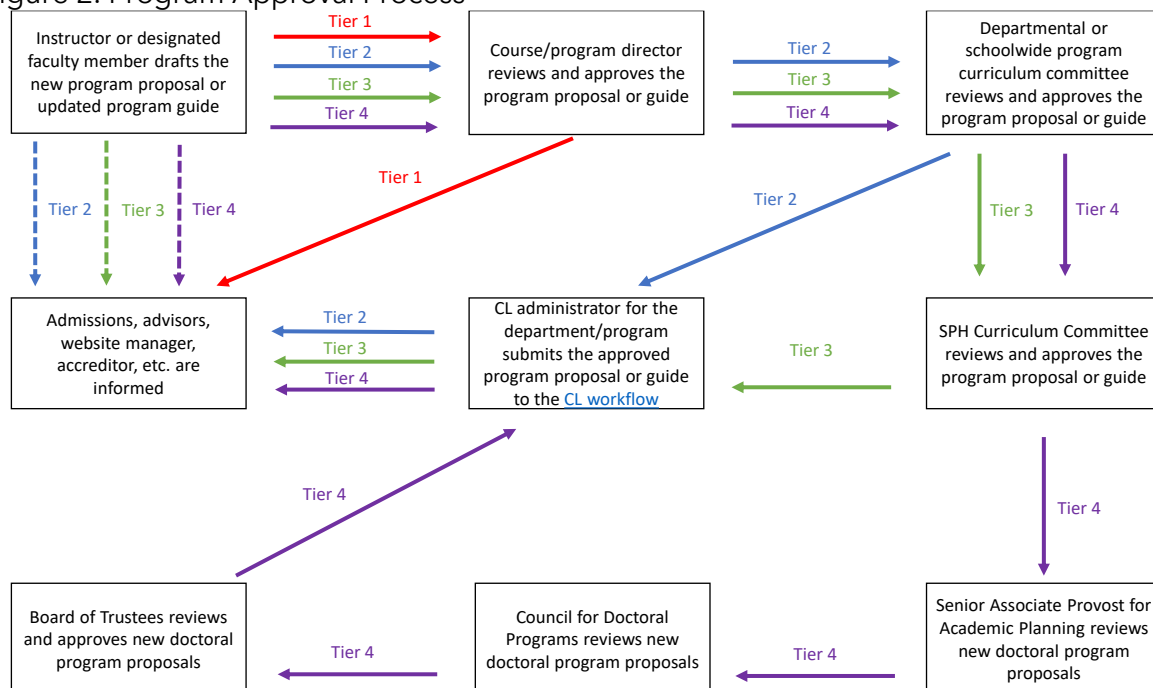
Program Changes

Program Approval Process

The approval process may vary slightly depending on the type of curricular change. If a modification is in Tier 1 and therefore only requires course/program lead approval, then the process ends after approval is obtained. If the program change is in Tier 2, departmental or schoolwide program curriculum committee approval is needed in addition to program lead approval. If Tier 3 approval is needed, SPH Curriculum Committee approval occurs after the first two levels of approval. New doctoral programs (Tier 4) have additional approval requirements at the university level. If the proposed program changes impact advising, Admissions, etc., programs are expected to work with those offices to prepare to implement the change. See [Timeline](#) below.

[Certificate, combined and executive/professional programs](#) have additional university guidelines and policies. These programs cannot be approved unless they have followed these guidelines and policies.

Figure 2. Program Approval Process



** Dashed line represents the need for programs to work with Admissions, academic advisors, etc *before* Tiers 2-4 proposals approval. Oftentimes deadlines for admissions, marketing and recruitment are in advance of program approval.

New Program Approval

The timeline from concept to implementation of a new program is a two-year process. Not only do program proposals need to be approved, but the accompanying new and modified course syllabi require approval as well. Retroactive approvals are not granted. New programs cannot be publicized to current or prospective students until the program has been approved in CL.

New doctoral programs undergo additional review and approval. The Senior Associate Provost for Academic Planning & Assessment (Cheryl Beil) reviews and submits the proposal program to the Council of Doctoral Programs. The council meets biannually in the fall and spring. Finally, all doctoral programs are reviewed and approved by the GW Board of Trustees.

New programs require a program proposal. The content of this proposal is outlined below. Doctoral programs have added proposal components (bolded). New concentrations within existing programs do not require a full proposal.

1. Executive Summary
2. Justification/Rationale
 - a. Purpose of the new program
 - b. Comparison to comparable GW programs, if applicable
 - i. Explain how the program would complement and coexist with these programs. If replacing a current GW program, identify the program being replaced and describe the differences between the existing and proposed programs and the benefits of the new program
 - c. Market research/explanation of the demand
 - i. Compare to similar programs locally/regionally/nationally
 - ii. Explain development in response to an initiative by a local, state, or federal government entity, if applicable
 - iii. Compare similar offering at other schools of public health (use the [ASPPH Program Finder](#) to find accredited schools)
 - iv. Explore websites from professional organizations, if applicable
 - d. Market analysis
 - i. Sources and estimations of prospective students
3. Program outcomes
 - a. Mission
 - b. Program overview
 - c. Program goals
 - d. Graduate outcomes
 - i. Expected employment opportunities including career titles and skills
 - ii. Examples of jobs, careers, and/or professional certifications for which students will be prepared and qualified upon completion of the program
 - iii. Prospective job market outlook for graduates of the program (or further education, if applicable)
4. Faculty Resources

- a. Discussion of added resources/allocation of existing faculty resources needed, if applicable
 - b. Impact on current teaching (e.g., current faculty versus need for additional faculty)
 - c. Expertise available among the current full-time faculty
 - i. Research profile and publications of faculty who would contribute to the program, with emphasis on their qualifications to provide mentoring appropriate to the goals of the program
 - ii. Charts identifying existing faculty who will be involved or all department faculty including information such as name, rank, and summary of research interests. Relevant faculty from outside the department, if applicable, should also be included
 - d. Additional areas of expertise/new positions (faculty and staff) required to offer the program
 - e. **Doctoral Programs Only:** CVs for primary faculty
 - f. **Doctoral Programs Only:** Overall teaching effort required
5. Admissions requirements/criteria
- a. All requirements for admission to the program (e.g., course and degree prerequisites, standardized test scores, GPA requirements)
6. Enrollment projections (Year 1-4)
7. Curriculum
- a. Curricular Outline
 - i. Courses and credit allocations
 - ii. New courses and modifications to existing courses⁹
 - b. Program-specific competencies/learning outcomes
 - i. Use Bloom's Taxonomy
 - ii. Must have approval of Director of Academic Planning & Accreditation
 - c. [Curriculum map](#)
 - i. ALL required courses are listed.
 - ii. New certificate programs require a curriculum map only if they are not connected to a degree program.
 - d. Draft program guide
 - e. **Doctoral Programs Only:** Specific coursework or requirements
 - i. Research methods
 - ii. Ethical and professional skills training
 - f. **PhD (Research Degree) Programs Only:**
 - i. How training of students to perform scholarly and original research will be achieved
 - ii. Requirements for and mentoring of dissertation research
 - iii. Dissertation credits (should be no less than 6 credits and no more than 24 credits)
 - g. **Professional Doctorate Programs Only:**
 - i. How training of students in relevant professional skills will be achieved
 - ii. Requirements for and mentoring of a culminating project/dissertation or activity
8. Bulletin Description

⁹ Must undergo curriculum committee review separately from the program review

9. **Doctoral Programs Only:** Facilities, staff, and graduate student support resources, as applicable:
 - a. Increased demand on the university's academic and administrative computing resources
 - b. Any net additions to the space currently available to the academic unit proposing the program (lab space and/or office space)
 - c. Special classroom and/or other special facility needs
 - d. Computer facilities
 - e. Staffing requirements (e.g., program coordinator/other administrative support)
 - f. Graduate student support requirements (tuition awards, stipends, graduate teaching and research assistantships needed for the program to be viable)
10. **Doctoral Programs Only:** Business plan
 - a. Projected incremental enrollments and revenue (tuition, special fees)
 - b. Projected incremental expenditures
 - i. Faculty salaries (full- and part-time)
 - ii. Non-faculty staff salaries
 - iii. Fringe benefits
 - iv. Student financial support (e.g., amount department will contribute using funds from grants or other sources)
 - c. Expenses for special events or activities or travel

Existing Program Modification

Revisions to existing programs (including doctoral programs) do not require a program proposal, additional documentation or approval from the university. New concentrations to an existing program are considered revisions to an existing program. Revisions to programs cannot be publicized to current or prospective students until the revised program has been approved in CL.

When submitting program changes in CL, an updated [curriculum map](#) and program guide are required. As a reminder, the curriculum map must include all required courses in the program regardless of department or school. If the department does not have access to the existing curriculum map, please contact the Director of Academic Planning & Accreditation.

Submissions

As the review and approval process takes time, faculty should plan when to submit their materials for review and approval at each level well in advance. See [Timeline](#) below.

Submitting to SPH Curriculum Committee

The SPH Curriculum Committee meets once per month during the year. At least 8 days prior to the scheduled meeting, the chair of the departmental or schoolwide program curriculum committee forwards the materials below to the chair of the SPH Curriculum Committee (currently Heather Hoffman).

- Approved program proposal, new course syllabus or program guide for new concentrations
- Approved modified program guide or course syllabus (two copies)

- Copy 1: Version with track changes labeled as such¹⁰
- Copy 2: Version with track changes accepted labeled as such
- [Curriculum Committee Action Form](#) summarizing key changes and rationale for those changes and identifying other program(s), course(s) or department(s) impacted by the change
- Other required materials (e.g., student enrollment and feedback for topics courses)

Decisions made by the SPH Curriculum Committee are disseminated by the committee chair and/or department representatives following each meeting. Departments are responsible for notifying other program directors and/or departments regarding changes that may affect their programs and students.

Submitting to CourseLeaf

Once the final level of approval is obtained, CL administrators may submit their changes to CL. Approved materials should be submitted no later than 60 days after being approved at the final stage.

The Office of Academic Planning & Assessment has [strict guidelines](#) on how to submit to CL. For assistance, administrators and faculty may contact the Director of Academic Planning & Accreditation (Katherine Puskarz) or the Senior Managing Academic Editor (Gina Harris). As a reminder, any course submission requires an updated syllabus with all components outlined in the [New Course Approval](#) alone. All new courses created as part of a new program must be submitted *before* a new program is submitted to CL. Any program submission requires an updated curriculum map and program guide, consistent with what is outlined in [New Program Approval](#) above.

Depending on the program or course being reviewed in CL, the workflow of approvals vary. It's vital that submissions are processed in a timely manner to ensure that they are received by the Office of Academic Planning & Assessment prior to deadlines. Generally, submissions take four or more weeks to go through all stages of CL approval (longer during peak periods of March to June).

Timeline

Curriculum changes and new programs are effective for the upcoming academic year; they are never retroactively applied. New curricula are automatically applied to students who matriculate in the fall term of the new academic year and the new curricula are followed by these students *unless* they subsequently elect to follow a newer curriculum, should one become available. Students who matriculated at an earlier time are "grandfathered" into the older curricula and may elect to remain in the older curricula or move to the new curricula.

Course changes may be implemented in each academic term. Generally, for a new course to launch, the syllabus must be drafted at least 8 months in advance of the implementation term (even more if it is for a fall term launch). Program changes may only be implemented in the fall term. New programs generally take 2 years from draft to implementation.

¹⁰ All formatting changes should be accepted before submitting.

Table 1. Sample Timeline for New Course (Fall Launch)

AY 1	
September to October	Course syllabus drafted Course syllabus reviewed and approved by course lead/program director
November	Course syllabus reviewed and approved by department or schoolwide program curriculum committee
December	Course syllabus reviewed and approved by SPH Curriculum Committee
January	Approved syllabus submitted to CL (if applicable, program also updated in CL after program changes approved at appropriate tier level)
February to March	Program guide updated and sent to Director of Academic Planning & Accreditation Bulletin pages updated (those that do not pull in content from CL) Academic advisors updated with new course information
April to July	GWSPH website updated with new program information ¹¹ Current students advised about new course offering Course prepared for launch in fall term
AY 2	
August	Course launched (fall term)

Table 2. Sample Timeline for Existing Course (Spring Launch)

AY 1	
May to June	Course syllabus drafted Revised course syllabus reviewed and approved by course lead/program director
July	Revised course syllabus reviewed and approved by department or schoolwide program curriculum committee
AY 2	
August	Revised course syllabus reviewed and approved by SPH Curriculum Committee Approved syllabus submitted to CL
September to October	Academic advisors updated with new course information
November to December	GWSPH website updated with new program information ¹² Current students advised about new course offering Revisions to course prepared for implementation in spring term
January	Revised course offered (spring term)

Table 3. Sample Timeline for a New Residential Non-Doctoral Program (Fall Launch)

AY 1	
September to December	Program proposal developed by designated faculty member(s) with input from Admissions, Academic Planning & Accreditation, Student Services, etc. Program director identified

¹¹ GWSPH website is updated immediately after university approval

¹² GWSPH website is updated immediately after university approval

January	Program proposal reviewed and approved by department or schoolwide program curriculum committee Approved program guide is shared with the Assistant Dean for Student Services and Director of Admissions
February	Program proposal reviewed and approved by SPH Curriculum Committee Approved program proposal submitted CL (new courses need to be submitted before program in CL) Marketing and recruitment decisions solidified with Admissions (including effective start date, "elevator speech", college fairs, etc.)
March	GWSPH website updated with "Coming Soon" information (Marketing, Department, Admissions) Emails to prospective students introducing or redirecting them to the new program (celebratory tone) drafted Admissions provided with <i>Viewbook</i> description
April to May	New program code assigned SOPHAS and the GWSPH website updated with new program information ¹³ Prospective students emailed with letters drafted in March Current students emailed with advising information and confirmation that they will continue to be supported until graduation.
June to July	Recruiting materials created (video and other content that highlights new program, benefit to students, career outcomes, etc.) Consensus meeting held with new program team, advisors and Admissions to ensure message alignment
AY 2	
August	Recruitment and enrollment team members trained with prepared talking points Program directors and faculty updated on the admissions and curricular plan Recruitment launched Application review process determined (SOPHAS updated)
September to December	Prospective students recruited for following academic year
January to July	Prospective students recruited Applications reviewed Students admitted
AY 3	
August	Students start in the new program

NOTE: Additional steps are needed for approval of doctoral programs. This extends the timeline by an additional 4-6 months.

¹³ GWSPH website is updated immediately after university approval

Appendix

FAQ

When does the SPH Curriculum Committee meet?

The SPH Curriculum Committee meets the third Tuesday of each month. Agenda items are due at least 8 days prior to the scheduled meeting and should be sent to the committee chair (currently Heather Hoffman).

Why do new programs have to be created so far in advance?

New program proposals (graduate and undergraduate) are time-consuming to develop and get through the review and approval process. Any new doctoral programs have additional levels of scrutiny, which further extends the timeline.

I made a change to selective options in my program. Do I really need to resubmit a new curriculum map?

It depends. If your curriculum map is outdated, YES you must update the curriculum map and resubmit.

I made a change to the number of course credits. Why do I have to submit a new syllabus?

Course credits are documented on the syllabus. Plus, the workload statement may also need to be adjusted to reflect the change in contact hours. Remember to date the syllabus with the expected effective term.

How do I submit in CL?

Contact your department's CL administrator.

Resources

GWSPH Faculty Resources: <https://publichealth.gwu.edu/services/faculty/academic-resources>

GW Office of Academic Planning & Assessment: <https://academicplanning.gwu.edu/>

CL Course Approval Process: <https://academicplanning.gwu.edu/course-approval-process>

CL Program Approval Process: <https://academicplanning.gwu.edu/program-approval-process>

Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Mapping: <https://academicplanning.gwu.edu/forms-guides-and-other-resources>

Proposing a New Doctoral Program: <https://academicplanning.gwu.edu/proposing-new-doctoral-program>