

Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) 2025-2026

*Note: All curriculum revisions will be updated
immediately on the website
<http://publichealth.gwu.edu>*

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Program Overview

The mission of the school-wide, interdisciplinary DrPH program is to educate public health thought leaders and practitioners ready to shape public health policy and practice discourse to lead organizational and societal change in the U.S. and worldwide. This is a public health leadership training program that delivers practice-based curriculum to equip public health leaders with skills for the development, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs and policies and resolve complex systematic problems. The DrPH program training utilizes health policy and global health opportunities exclusive to Washington, D.C. to prepare our students for senior-level public health leadership roles in the U.S. and globally. Focusing on leadership and practice, we are providing curriculum flexibility to meet the diverse needs of our students through rigorous course work in global health; environmental & occupational health; health policy & management; prevention & community health; exercise & nutrition; biostatistics, and epidemiology.

Program Requirements

All Milken Institute School of Public Health (SPH) DrPH students are required to have completed a master's or professional degree prior to admissions to the DrPH. In this 48-credit doctoral program, students will take 35 credits of required coursework and an additional 13 credits are applied to the dissertation proposal preparation and dissertation portfolio project.

DrPH Competencies

The DrPH curriculum aligns with the current Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) criteria, including 20 foundational DrPH competencies. In addition to these, the GWSPH DrPH program has identified five program-specific competencies. The five GW-specific competencies listed below are identified with an asterisk (*).

Data & Analysis

1. Explain qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods and policy analysis research and evaluation methods to address health issues at multiple (individual, group, organization, community and population) levels

2. Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue
3. Explain the use and limitations of surveillance systems and national surveys in assessing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programs and to address a population's health
4. Apply implementation science approaches to improve uptake of evidence for decision-making*

Leadership, Management & Governance

5. Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders and other partners
6. Communicate public health science to diverse stakeholders, including individuals at all levels of health literacy, for purposes of influencing behavior and policies
7. Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values and potential contributions from multiple professions and systems in addressing public health problems
8. Create a strategic plan
9. Facilitate shared decision making through negotiation and consensus-building methods
10. Create organizational change strategies
11. Propose strategies to promote inclusion and equity within public health programs, policies and systems
12. Assess one's own strengths and weaknesses in leadership capacities, including cultural proficiency
13. Propose human, fiscal and other resources to achieve a strategic goal
14. Cultivate new resources and revenue streams to achieve a strategic goal

Policy & Programs

15. Design a system-level intervention to address a public health issue
16. Integrate knowledge of cultural values and practices in the design of public health policies and programs
17. Integrate scientific information, legal and regulatory approaches, ethical frameworks and varied stakeholder interests in policy development and analysis
18. Propose interprofessional team approaches to improving public health
19. Integrate leadership frameworks into practices, programs, and/or policies to address public health challenges*
20. Understand how to apply a health equity lens in all aspects of public health practice, including assessments, programs, policies, and/or services*
21. Apply the core elements of a policy analysis to issues in health policy (health services and public health policy)*

Education & Workforce Development

22. Assess an audience's knowledge and learning needs
23. Deliver training or educational experiences that promote learning in academic, organizational or community settings
24. Use best practice modalities in pedagogical practice

25. Develop workforce strategies that consider human motivation, adult learning principles, organizational factors, and available resources*

Course Distribution Summary

- Total Credits = Minimum 48
- Foundational Coursework = 35 credits
- Dissertation Portfolio = 13 credits (*highlighted courses below*)

REQUIRED COURSE WORK

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Semester
PUBH 8730	Doctor of Public Health Immersion	2 credits	Fall 1
PUBH 8700	DrPH Seminar and Introduction to DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEX)**	3 credits	Fall 1
PUBH 8706	Leadership Principles and Practice I	3 credits	Fall 1
PUBH 8731	Applied Public Health Methods I: Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation	3 credits	Fall 1
PUBH 8732	Applied Public Health Methods II: Mixed Methods	3 credits	Spring 1
PUBH 8703	Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study I for DAPEX and Dissertation Proposal Development	1 credit	Spring 1
PUBH 8710	Public Health Project Management and Social Entrepreneurship	3 credits	Spring 1
PUBH 8714	Leadership Principles and Practice II	3 credits	Spring 1
PUBH 8705	Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study II for DAPEX and Dissertation Proposal Development	1 credit	Summer 1
PUBH 8716	Education and Workforce Development Approaches for Public Health Leaders	3 credits	Summer 1
PUBH 8722	Public Health Policy Analysis	3 credits	Summer 1
PUBH 8707	Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Development**	3 credits	Fall 2
PUBH 8718	Public Health Communications and Marketing	3 credits	Fall 2
PUBH 8720	Social Change and Collective Impact	3 credits	Fall 2
PUBH 8709	Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Proposal Defense	3 credits	Spring 2
PUBH 8724	Organizational Leadership and Change Management	3 credits	Spring 2
PUBH 8733	Applied Public Health Methods III: Evidence for Decision-Making	3 credits	Spring 2
PUBH 8711	Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEX and Dissertation Implementation	1 credit	Summer 2
PUBH 8713	Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Development	1 credit	Fall 3
PUBH 8715	Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense	0 credit	Spring 3
PUBH 6080	Pathways to Public Health***	0 credits	Year 1

TOTAL PROGRAM 48 CREDITS

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (UPON COMPLETION OF REQUIRED COURSEWORK -- SUMMER 2 MAY/JUNE)	
<p style="text-align: center;">SPH NON-ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENCE(S) - (MINIMUM 8 HOURS) 2. CITI TRAINING 3. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY QUIZ 	

****DAPEX/Dissertation** courses with didactics PUBH 8700 and PUBH 8707. ***Prior to the start of PUBH 8707***, students are required to have done the following:

1. Identified a DAPEx partner organization
2. Identified a preceptor
3. Identified their Dissertation Committee Chair
4. Developed a strong abstract
5. Submitted a draft practice plan to their 8707 instructor
6. Met with the 8707 instructor

*****All incoming students** will be required to successfully pass the free, zero credit, online course (PUBH 6080) within the first 2-weeks of matriculation. There is no fee for this course. See information about Pathways to Public Health on the website in the Academic Advising section. Course must be completed by September 15th.

<p>Milken Institute School of Public Health</p> <hr/> <p>THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY</p>	<p>Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) 2025-2026</p> <p>DrPH Sample Sequencing Guide for Full-time versus Part-time Study</p> <p><i>Note: DrPH courses are offered 1 time per year only</i></p>
<p>Full-Time (3 years) <i>(3 terms per year for 3 years)</i></p>	<p>Part-Time (3.5 - 4 years) <i>Strongly prefer FT for first Fall Term as this maintains core course sequencing</i></p>
<p>Fall Yr 1: 11 credits <i>8700, 8706, 8730, and 8731</i></p>	<p>Fall Yr 1: 8 credits <i>8700, 8706, and 8730</i></p>
<p>Spring Yr 1: 10 credits <i>8710, 8732, 8714 and 8703 – Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study I for DAPEx Proposal Development</i></p>	<p>Spring Yr 1: 7 credits <i>8710, 8714, and 8703 – Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study I for DAPEx Proposal Development</i></p>
<p>Summer Yr 1: 7 credits <i>8716, 8722 and 8705 – Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study II for DAPEx Proposal Development</i></p>	<p>Summer Yr 1: 7 credits <i>8716, 8722 and 8705 – Dissertation Portfolio: Independent Study II for DAPEx Proposal Development</i></p>
<p>Fall Yr 2: 9 credits <i>8718, 8720 and 8707 – Dissertation Portfolio: Proposal Defense Planning</i></p>	<p>Fall Yr 2: 9 credits <i>8720, 8731 and 8707 – Dissertation Portfolio: Proposal Defense Planning</i></p>
<p>Spring Yr 2: 9 credits <i>8724, 8733 and 8709 – Dissertation Portfolio: Proposal Defense Comp Exam- May</i></p>	<p>Spring Yr 2: 6 credits <i>8709 and 8732</i></p>
<p>Summer Yr 2: 1 credit <i>8711 – Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEx</i></p>	<p>Summer Yr 2: 1 credit <i>8711 – Dissertation Portfolio: DAPEx</i></p>
<p>Fall Yr 3: 1 credit <i>8713 – Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation</i></p>	<p>Fall Yr 3: 4 credits <i>8718 and 8713 - Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation</i></p>
<p>Spring Yr 3: 0 credit <i>8715 - Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense</i></p>	<p>Spring Yr 3: 6 credits <i>8724, 8733 and 8715 – Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense Comp Exam- May</i></p>
<p>Summer Yr 3: <i>Continuous Enrollment/Research (continued as needed)</i></p>	<p>Summer Yr 3: <i>Continuous Enrollment/Research (continued as needed)</i></p>
	<p>Yr 4: <i>Continuous Enrollment/Research (continued as needed)</i></p>

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT SEQUENCING:

1. The full-time and part-time sequences listed in this document are suggested schedules and are subject to change based on course availability and pacing of students. Students should consult with their academic advisor to ensure they are following the most up-to-date sequence and are taking the appropriate courses during a given semester.
2. Most courses are offered once each year, so students are encouraged to follow this sequencing guide as closely as possible. Part-time students should pay close attention to the part-time sequencing outlined above and work closely with their advisors to determine their course sequence each semester and throughout the program.
3. Students become eligible to sit for the comprehensive exam after all required coursework has been completed. The comprehensive exam will be administered once a year in May; specific dates to be determined annually. Students may retake the comprehensive exam up to one time. Students must successfully complete the comprehensive exam prior to defending their dissertation.
4. GW students are required to be registered for coursework every fall and spring semester until they have successfully completed all program requirements to remain in active status. It is not required to be registered in the summer term to maintain active status. In the DrPH program, this requirement also pertains to the defense, final approval, and submission of the dissertation. Students must be registered in PUBH 8715 (Dissertation Portfolio: Dissertation Defense) or continuous enrollment/research (may be a nominal fee) in the term in which the dissertation is defended, including the summer term, if that is when the defense is scheduled.
5. DrPH students are required to take eight courses related to the DrPH Dissertation Portfolio. These courses are structured and sequenced to guide students through the dissertation process, which includes the conceptualization, development, and defense of their DrPH Applied Practice Experience (DAPEX); writing up this experience in a dissertation format; and successful completion of their dissertation defense. Students can begin their DAPEX after successfully completing their proposal defense and the proposal is approved by the student's Dissertation Committee.
6. The DrPH program is designed for full time students to complete all requirements within 3 years and part time students within 3.5 to 4 years. However, all students must complete all DrPH requirements within 7 years of matriculation, including official leaves of absence.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Credits.** Successful completion of all required coursework; minimum 48 credits total credits required.
- 2. Grade Point Average.** A minimum program grade point average of 3.0.
- 3. Timeline.** The degree must be completed within seven years of matriculation. Degrees are awarded each semester, though formal commencement ceremonies –including the doctoral hooding ceremony– only occur in May. Students are eligible to participate in graduation activities only after they have completed all degree requirements, including a successful dissertation defense and have no financial obligations to the University.
- 4. Doctoral Applied Practice Experience (DAPEX).** Successfully complete all requirements for the DAPEX.
- 5. Comprehensive examination.** Students become eligible to sit for the comprehensive exam after all required coursework has been completed. Upon successful completion of the exam, students officially enter the doctoral candidacy phase of the program. Students are not permitted to defend their dissertation prior to passing the comprehensive exam. The exam may be repeated, up to one time, upon approval.
- 6. Dissertation Portfolio.** Throughout the program, the focus is on maintaining the Portfolio sequence as closely as possible, even for part-time students. The successful oral defense and submission of the dissertation portfolio is required.
- 7. Dissertation Portfolio: Proposal Defense.** Doctoral candidates prepare a written proposal with guidance from their dissertation advisor and committee. Each DrPH candidate gives an oral presentation and defense to the committee who determines the student's readiness to commence their DAPEX and dissertation.
- 8. Professional Enhancement.** All GWSPH students must complete a minimum of 8 hours of professional enhancement activities. This can be accomplished through participation in seminars, workshops, professional meetings and other appropriate functions. Documentation of attendance to the event should be submitted to the GWSPH Office of Student Records at gwsphrecords@gwu.edu.
- 9. Integrity Quiz & Plagiarism.** In the first semester as a DrPH student, all students should review the George Washington University's Code of Academic Integrity, take the quiz and submit documentation to the GWSPH Office of Student Records at gwsphrecords@gwu.edu
- 10. CITI Training requirement.** All students are required to complete training regarding human subject protection regulation and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). To fulfill this requirement, you must complete the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) Course in The Protection of Human Research Subjects and then send to GWSPH Office of Student Records at gwsphrecords@gwu.edu. Please save this for future reference for your DAPEX and Dissertation Portfolio.