

Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**Milken Institute School of Public Health
Department of Global Health**

MPH in Global Health Policy and Systems

2025-2026

Program Director

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Global Health Systems Focus

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Mission

At the master's Program in Global Health Policy and Systems, we prepare future leaders to tackle global and domestic health challenges. This innovative program focuses on health policy and systems (HPS), a multidisciplinary field that, according to the World Health Organization, is dedicated to understanding and enhancing how societies organize themselves to achieve collective health goals.

In our program, you will explore the intricacies of health policy, including the decisions, plans, and actions to fulfill healthcare objectives within various societies. You will learn to address the health challenges of interdependent nations, regions, and sectors with multiple cultures, levels of development, capacities, and coexistent values. Global health policy involves translating rigorous evidence and diverse stakeholder input into effective, equitable, and culturally appropriate collective action to address complex health challenges worldwide. You will also delve into health systems, studying the organizations, people, and actions that interact to promote, restore, or maintain health. By examining the interactions among stakeholders in policy and implementation processes, you will gain insights into how health systems respond and adapt to policies. By evaluating the reasoning and evidence underlying policies and programs, you will acquire analytical skills to explain how policies, practices, resource flows, networks, power dynamics, and mental models shape the performance and quality of health systems.

The program integrates disciplines like public health, economics, sociology, political science, public policy, and epidemiology to understand health systems landscapes comprehensively. Such an integrative approach will empower you to confidently tackle issues ranging from global governance to service delivery, quality, and equity in low- and middle-income countries.

A major focus of HPS is its application in analyzing global health governance. You will learn how to inform policy decisions at local, national, and global levels, evaluate the effectiveness of health policies and programs, and assess how power and interests shape global health organizations and regulations. Our curriculum emphasizes the importance of navigating complex challenges such as achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC), improving the performance of Primary Healthcare Systems, and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), health policy and systems practice and research are vital for enhancing health systems governance, creating effective and equitable policy frameworks, and, most importantly, effective interventions pertinent to the local needs of the population. Our faculty has decades of collective experience addressing the unique challenges of health policy and systems in multiple countries and will help equip you with the knowledge and skills necessary to build coalitions, design context-appropriate global health organizations, and establish accountability mechanisms that improve health outcomes.

Graduates of this program will be well-prepared for diverse career opportunities in global health organizations. Potential roles include Health Policy Analysts or Health Systems Advisors at multilateral finance organizations and bilateral Official Development Aid agencies, Global Health Officers at multilateral health organizations and

national agencies, and many more within philanthropic organizations, governments, international NGOs, and consulting firms.

This program will prepare you to genuinely impact the world by providing a solid foundation, among others, in policy analysis, systems evaluation, health diplomacy, and health systems strengthening. Join us in shaping the future of global and domestic health through innovative approaches that harness data analytics, design inclusive health policies, and evaluate adaptable and evolving health systems.

Program Description

Global Health Policy and Systems (GHPS) seeks to describe the actors, institutions, and interests that give rise to the global health architecture and explain how such actors, institutions, and interests interact to create global health outcomes. The program also aims to explain why nation-states, intergovernmental organizations, supranational institutions, global corporate and non-state actors, and global issue networks interact and contribute to the emergence of global patterns of health and disease.

This program offers several classes on two themes: global health policy and global health systems. The former focuses on acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to develop effective and sustainable health policies and interventions in global health settings. The latter focuses on explaining the performance of health systems and designing transformative changes in global health settings, prioritizing primary healthcare systems.

Program Requirements

Comprising a total of 45 credits, students in the GHPS program are required to complete a set of MPH core courses (19 credits), GHPS core courses (15 credits), selective courses (4 credits), and electives (7 credits).

Competencies

Students in the GHPS program will be able to:

1. Apply multidisciplinary perspectives to identify, analyze, and address global health challenges. Relevant courses:
 - PUBH 6400 Global Health Frameworks
2. Identify and analyze evidence to design cultural and equity-specific global health policies in the appropriate context for the national, regional, and/or global health system or institutions. Relevant courses:
 - PUBH 6417 Cross-Cultural Approaches for Global Health Practice
 - PUBH 6442 Comparative Global Health Systems
3. Explain the governance, organization, and policymaking of the current global health system architecture. Relevant courses:
 - PUBH 6450 Global Health Diplomacy
 - PUBH 6441 Global Health Organizations & Regulations
4. Interpret and analyze health policies and health systems for health diplomacy. Relevant courses:
 - PUBH 6450 Global Health Diplomacy
5. Explain global health actors' engagement and negotiation processes as they seek to influence policy change. Relevant courses:
 - PUBH 6417 Cross-Cultural Approaches for Global Health Practice
6. Apply relevant quantitative tools to inform different audiences and public health topics. Relevant courses:
 - PUBH 6412 Global Health Quantitative Research Methods
7. Analyze the ethical issues of global health programs, policies, and research. Relevant courses:
 - PUBH 6416 Ethical and Cultural Issues in Global Health Research and Programs
 - PUBH 6423 Ethics in Public Health Practice and Policy

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Course Distribution Summary				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total credits required for graduation = 45• Required MPH core courses = 19 credits• Program-specific core courses = 15 credits• Selective courses = 4 credits• Elective courses = 7 credits				
Required MPH Core Courses 19 credits				
		Credits	Semester(s) offered	Online
PUBH 6002	Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	3	Fall, Spring, Summer	All
PUBH 6003	Principles and Practice of Epidemiology	3	Fall, Spring, Summer	All
PUBH 6007	Social and Behavioral Approaches to Public Health	2	Fall, Spring, Summer	All
PUBH 6009	Fundamentals of Program Evaluation (Prerequisite: PUBH 6007)	2	Fall, Spring, Summer	All
PUBH 6011	Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health	3	Fall, Spring, Summer	All
PUBH 6012	Fundamentals of Health Policy	2	Fall, Spring, Summer	All
PUBH 6021	Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership I	1	Fall, Spring, Summer	All
PUBH 6022	Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership II (Prerequisite: PUBH 6021)	1	Fall, Spring, Summer	All
PUBH 6023	Interprofessional Education Experience Prerequisite: all core courses above except PUBH 6009 and 6022	0	Fall, Spring, Summer	All
PUBH 6418	GH Culminating Experience I: Proposal Development (Prerequisite: PUBH 6002, 6003, 6400, 6412). (Co-requisite: 6416 OR 6423, 6417, 6441, 6315 OR 6447).	1	Fall, Spring, Summer	-
PUBH 6419	GH Culminating Experience II (Prerequisite: PUBH 6418, 6416 OR 6423, 6417, 6441, 6315 OR 6447)	1	Fall, Spring, Summer	-
PUBH 6000	MPH Applied Practice Experience (Prerequisite: PUBH 6002, 6003, 6012, 6021, 6400, 6416 OR 6423, 6417)	0	Fall, Spring, Summer	-
Program-Specific Core Courses 15 Credits				
		Credits	Semester(s) offered	
PUBH 6400	Global Health Frameworks	2	Fall (Year 1)	Fall, Spring
PUBH 6045	National and Global Public Health Systems	1	Spring	-
PUBH 6412	Global Health Quantitative Research Methods	3	Fall, Spring	-

	(Prerequisite: PUBH 6002)			
PUBH 6416 Or PUBH 6423	Ethical & Cultural Issues in Global Health Research & Programs or Ethics in Public Health Practice and Policy	1	Fall, Spring, Summer	-
PUBH 6417	Cross-Cultural Approaches for Global Health Practice	1	Fall	-
PUBH 6441	Global Health Organizations and Regulations (Prerequisite: PUBH 6400)	3	Fall (Year 2)	-
PUBH 6442	Comparative Global Health Systems	2	Fall	All
PUBH 6450	Global Health Diplomacy	2	N. A.	Fall, Spring
Selective Courses 4 credits (We highly encourage to take all 4 credits under one of the two themes below)				
Theme 1 - Global Health Policy		Credits	Semester(s) offered	Online
PUBH 6447	Global Health Policy Analysis	2	Spring	
PUBH 6440 Or PUBH 6466	Global Health Economics Or Or Health Financing in Low- and Middle-Income Countries	2	Spring	-
Theme 2 - Global Health Systems		Credits	Semester(s) offered	Online
PUBH 6475	Theory-Building in Health Systems Research	2	Fall	-
PUBH 6478	Health System Quality Measurement in Global Health	2	Fall	-
Elective courses 7 credits (We highly encourage you to take all theme courses between the selectives and electives)				
Theme 1 - Global Health Policy		Credits	Semester(s) offered	Online
PUBH 6447	Global Health Policy Analysis	2	Spring	
PUBH 6440 Or PUBH 6466	Global Health Economics Or Or Health Financing in Low- and Middle-Income Countries	2	Spring	-
Theme 2 - Global Health Systems		Credits	Semester(s) offered	Online
PUBH 6445	Theory-building in health systems research	2	Fall	-
PUBH 6478	Health system quality measurement in global health	2	Fall	-
Other elective options		Credits	Semester(s) offered	Online
PUBH 6047	Systematic Reviews to Synthesize Evidence in Public Health Practice	1	Fall, Spring	-
PUBH 6262	Introduction to Geographical Information Systems	1	Fall, Spring, Summer	-
PUBH 6410	Global Health Study Design	1	Fall, Spring	-
PUBH 6411	Global Health Qualitative Research Methods (Prerequisite: PUBH 6410)	2	Spring, Summer	
PUBH 6422	Injury and Global Public Health	1	Summer Institute	
PUBH 6435	Global Health Program Design and Implementation (Prerequisite: PUBH 6400)	2	Spring, Summer	
PUBH 6436	Global Health Program Management and Leadership	2	Fall, Summer	

PUBH 6445	Quantitative Methods for Impact Evaluation	3	Fall	
PUBH 6480	Public Health in Complex Emergencies	2	Fall	Fall, Sp2
PUBH 6481	Global Mental Health	2	Spring	
PUBH 6482	International Food and Nutrition Policy (Prerequisite: PUBH 6400)	2	Spring	
PUBH 6486	Global Health Programs and Approaches to the Control of Infectious Diseases	2	Fall	Fall, Spring
PUBH 6492	Global Health Programs and Approaches to the Control of Chronic Diseases	2	Fall	
PUBH 6575	Communication Skills for Public Health Professionals	1	Fall, Spring	
IAFF 6502 or IAFF 6503 (or another skills course)	Formal Briefing, or Alternative Analysis: The Red Team Approach, or Analyzing International Economic Data, or Non-Profit Management, or Public Speaking, Negotiating Skills, or The role of an Embassy.	varies	Fall, Spring (diverse)	
PPPA 6056	Regulatory Comment Clinic	3	Spring	
PPPA 6062	Community Development Policy	3	Fall	
IAFF 6198	International Trade and Investment Policy	3	Fall	
ECON 6284	Survey of International Macroeconomics and Finance Theory and Policy	3	Fall, Spring	
	Other electives: Other SPH or GWU graduate level course(s) with advanced advisor's approval via petition varies		Fall, Spring, and Summer	Varies
Total		45		

Graduation Requirements

1. **Graduate Credit Requirement:** 45 graduate credits are required.
2. **Course Requirements:** Successful completion of the Core Courses Program-Specific Courses, Selective Courses, and Electives Courses are required.
3. **Applied Practice Experience (APEX) Requirement:** Students are required to fulfill all requirements of the Applied Practice Experience (Practicum) to receive credit for PUBH 6000.
 - The Applied Practice Experience (APEX) may be satisfied with either a practicum or, for experienced public health professionals, through an expedited portfolio review (EPR).
 - The practicum is a planned, supervised, and evaluated practice experience that aims to provide students with an opportunity to synthesize, integrate, and apply practical skills, knowledge, and training learned through courses to gain applied experience in a professional public health work environment, and to work on public health practice projects that are of particular interest to you. Information about the Practicum will be introduced through school-wide Practicum Information Sessions held by the Office of Applied Public Health and through meetings with your department practicum staff and faculty.
 - During the practicum, you will work at least 120 hours in the field under the supervision of the site preceptor who has agreed to supervise your work directly. Students are required to fulfill all requirements of the 120-hour practicum to receive credit for PUBH 6000.
 - If you have had prior work experience, you will find that the practicum provides the opportunity to hone skills or gain new experience in a different area. However, suppose you have substantial public health experience relevant to your department/track, including 5+ years of full-time public health work for students after your undergraduate degree or 3+ years of full-time work for students already with a graduate degree before beginning the MPH. In that case, you may be able to satisfy the APEX requirement through an EPR instead of doing the practicum with advanced approval by your department's practicum team.
 - Before completing the 120-hour practicum experience, Global Health Policy and Systems students must fulfill the prerequisites: 6002, 6003, 6012, 6021, 6400, and 6416 OR 6423.
4. **Interprofessional Education Experience (IPE):** Students must enroll and participate in an authorized IPE activity (PUBH 6023). All MPH students are required to select an IPE experience from a host of options provided throughout your enrollment as a MPH. The IPE is a one-time, case-based, or activity-based learning experience. It requires a 3-hour live session and a review of materials ahead of time. The IPE experience is a way to experience working with people from other professions/programs outside of public health. Students will have many opportunities to register for this zero-credit (no fee) IPE course (PUBH 6023- *Interprofessional Education Experience*) and receive credit upon completion. Students must complete 20 credits of coursework -or- the entire MPH Core Curriculum before enrolling in the IPE. [More information is available here.](#)
5. **Grade Point Requirement:** A 3.0 (B average) program grade point average is required.
6. **Time Limit Requirement:** The degree must be completed within five years.
7. **Transfer Credit Policy:** Up to 12 graduate credits not applied to a previous degree may be transferred to the MPH upon approval. Credits must have been earned from an accredited institution in the last 3 years with a grade point of 3.0 or better.
8. **CITI Training requirement:** All students must complete training regarding human subject protection regulation and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). You must complete the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) Course in The Protection of Human Research Subjects to fulfill this requirement.
9. **Integrity Quiz & Plagiarism Requirement:** All students must review the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity and take the quiz within their first semester. The Code of Integrity

and step-by-step instructions can be found here: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/integrity>

10. **Professional Enhancement requirement:** Students must participate in eight 8-hour per degree program of advisor pre-approved Public Health-related lectures, seminars, and symposia related to their field of study. Students must submit documentation of Professional Enhancement activities to the Office of Student Records. The documentation consists of the Professional Enhancement Form <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/forms>.

GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY AND SYSTEMS SCHEDULE EXAMPLE 1: This schedule is fast paced and suggested for students who are confident in their academic and quantitative abilities. This schedule allows for students to spend their final spring semester working domestically or abroad.

1 st year Fall		1 st year Spring		1 st year Summer	
	Credits		Credits		Credits
6400 Global Health Frameworks	2	6412 Global Health Quantitative Research Methods	3	6003 Principles and Practice of Epidemiology	3
6002 Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	3	Selective	2	6022 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership II	1
6012 Fundamentals of Health Policy	2	6450 Global Health Diplomacy	2	6009 Fundamentals of Program Evaluation	2
6007 Social & Behavioral Approaches to Health	2	Selective	2	6000 MPH Applied Practice Experience	0
6416 OR 6423 Ethics course	1	Elective(s)	2		
6417 Cross-Cultural Approaches for Global Health Practice	1	6045 National and Global Public Health Systems	1		
6021 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership I	1				
Total semester credits	12	Total semester credits	12	Total semester credits	6
2 nd year Fall		2 nd year Spring		2 nd year Summer	
6011 Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health	3	6419 GH Culminating Experience II	1	Many students choose to finish their CE or practicum hours over the summer.	
6441 Global Health Organizations and Regulations	3	6023 Interprofessional Education Experience	0		
6442 Comparative Global Health Systems	2	Elective(s)	2		
6418 GH Culminating Experience I: Proposal Development	1				
Elective(s)	3				
Total semester credits	12	Total semester credits	3		

GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY AND SYSTEMS SCHEDULE EXAMPLE 2: This schedule is slower paced and recommended for students who are working more, just returning to school, or would generally enjoy a slower paced program.

1 st year Fall		1 st year Spring		1 st year Summer	
	Credits		Credits		Credits
6400 Global Health Frameworks	2	6003 Principles and Practice of Epidemiology	3	6011 Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health	3
6002 Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	3	Selective	2	6007 Social & Behavioral Approaches to Health	2
6012 Fundamentals of Health Policy	2	Elective(s)	2	6023 Interprofessional Education Experience	0
6416 OR 6423 Ethics course	1	Selective	2		
6417 Cross-Cultural Approaches for Global Health Practice	1	6045 National and Global Public Health Systems	1		
6021 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership I	1				
Total semester credits	10	Total semester credits	10	Total semester credits	5
2 nd year Fall		2 nd year Spring		2 nd year Summer	
6412 Global Health Quantitative Research Methods	3	6009 Fundamentals of Program Evaluation	2	6419 GH Culminating Experience II	1
6441 International Health Organizations and Regulations	3	6418 GH Culminating Experience I: Proposal Development	1		
6442 Comparative Global Health Systems	2	Elective(s)	3		
Elective(s)	2	6450 Global Health Diplomacy	2		
6000 MPH Applied Practice Experience	0	6022 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership I	1		
Total semester credits	10	Total semester credits	9	Total semester credits	1

GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY AND SYSTEMS SCHEDULE EXAMPLE 3: This schedule is recommended for part-time students. We recommend this schedule to students who will be working full-time while attending the program part-time.

1 st year Fall		1 st year Spring		1 st year Summer	
	Credits		Credits		Credits
6400 Global Health Frameworks	2	6412 Global Health Quantitative Research Methods	3	6007 Social & Behavioral Approaches to Health	2
6002 Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	3	6012 Fundamentals of Health Policy	2	6003 Principles and Practice of Epidemiology	3
6021 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership I	1	6416 OR 6423 Ethics course	1		
		6045 National and Global Public Health Systems	1		
Total semester credits	6	Total semester credits	7	Total semester credits	5
2 nd year Fall		2 nd year Spring		2 nd year Summer	
6009 Fundamentals of Program Evaluation	2	Selective	2	6011 Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health	3
6417 Cross-Cultural Approaches for Global Health Practice	1	6450 Global Health Diplomacy	2	6022 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership II	1
6441 Global Health Organizations and Regulations	3	Selective	2	Elective(s)	2
Total semester credits	6	Total semester credits	6	Total semester credits	6
3 rd year Fall		3 rd year Spring		3 rd year Summer	
6418 GH Culminating Experience I: Proposal Development	1	6419 GH Culminating Experience II	1		
Elective(s)	3	Elective(s)	2		
6442 Comparative Global Health Systems	2	6023 Interprofessional Education Experience	0		
6000 MPH Applied Practice Experience	0				
Total semester credits	6	Total semester credits	3		