

Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Department of Global Health

Master of Public Health
Humanitarian Health & Disaster Response

Program Guide
2026-2027

Program Director:

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Mission:

The purpose of humanitarian action is to save lives, minimize suffering, and protect the integrity of the people, usually but not always in a short period of time. The mission of the Humanitarian Health and Disaster Response Program is to prepare a well-versed corps of health professionals to address health and related issues in humanitarian and disaster settings and public health emergencies. This program will equip students with necessary knowledge, attitudes and self-efficacy/skill sets to assess needs, design and implement programs, and contribute to better decision-making, performance efficiency, and sound policy making within aid system in humanitarian settings and during disasters and mass health emergencies.

Goals:

The overarching goals of the program are to train students to be public health practitioners and leaders in design, implementation, and evaluation of humanitarian and disaster response programs and policies through learning to:

- Understand and assess the fundamental causes of humanitarian situations and mass health emergencies and their public health challenges
- Understand and analyze the interdependence of health science, socio-political science, economics, and global governance in humanitarian and disaster situations
- Identify and apply common healthcare and socio-political tools and policies to assess and address the burden of a wide range of health and social conditions in humanitarian and emergency situations
- Produce data and evidence with scientific rigor, and assess the efficacy and effectiveness of wide range of social and health care interventions in humanitarian and health emergency settings
- Generate and use best local and global level evidence for sound healthcare and socio-political policy formulation and program management, and translate recommendations into actions that support on-the-ground humanitarian and disaster response programs
- Develop strong cultural sensitivity and cross- and inter-cultural competencies within diverse health and political systems in humanitarian aid
- Develop understanding of and assume leadership positions in humanitarian aid and disaster response industry and related disciplines
- Work with methodological rigor in and contribute to international-level priority setting, program design, implementation, and evaluation
- Communicate effectively the results of research and practice to a diverse group of stakeholders in humanitarian and health emergency settings

Program Competencies:

1. Apply multidisciplinary perspectives to identify, analyze, and address global health challenges.

Relevant courses:

- PUBH 6400 Global Health Frameworks
- PUBH 6410 Global Health Study Design
- PUBH 6467 Humanitarian and Disaster Response: Principle, Practice and Operational Challenges

2. Apply relevant quantitative tools to inform different audiences and public health topics

Relevant courses:

- PUBH 6412 Global Health Quantitative Research Methods

3. Interpret and critique research and best practices to inform the development of evidence-based solutions for global health and humanitarian challenges.

Relevant courses:

- PUBH 6468 Preparation and Response to Epidemics, Pandemics, Mass Health Emergencies, and Disasters
- PUBH 6480 Public Health in Humanitarian Settings

4. 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 6467 Humanitarian and Disaster Response: Principle, Practice and Operational Challenges

5. Explain and analyze major problems and challenges in humanitarian and disaster settings and strategies to address them.

Relevant courses:

- PUBH 6480 Public Health in Humanitarian Settings
- PUBH 6467 Humanitarian and Disaster Response: Principle, Practice and Operational Challenges
- PUBH 6468 Preparation and Response to Epidemics, Pandemics, Mass Health Emergencies, and Disasters

6. Describe the institutional landscape and the governance in the aid system, and the interrelationship of foreign policy and health outcomes in humanitarian settings

Relevant courses:

- PUBH 6480 Public Health in Humanitarian Settings
- PUBH 6467 Humanitarian and Disaster Response: Principle, Practice and Operational Challenges

7. Communicate public health and medical evidence on humanitarian and health emergency topics to a variety of audiences such as technical experts, lay population, policymakers, or other relevant stakeholders

Relevant courses

- PUBH 6467 Humanitarian and Disaster Response: Principle, Practice and Operational Challenges
- PUBH 6468 Preparation and Response to Epidemics, Pandemics, Mass Health Emergencies, and Disasters

8. Describe and address current main communicable, non-communicable, and other pathologies across the populations, geographic locations, and social and political contexts in the humanitarian and disaster settings.

Relevant courses:

- PUBH 6468 Preparation and Response to Epidemics, Pandemics, Mass Health Emergencies, and Disasters
- PUBH 6480 Public Health in Humanitarian Settings
- PUBH 6462 Nutrition and Food in Large Humanitarian Emergencies

Program Requirements:

Please make sure to follow the program guide for the academic year in which you matriculated into the program.

MPH students who select the MPH in Humanitarian Health and Disaster Response program enroll in Core Courses (19 credits), Program-Specific Courses (15 credits), program selective courses (6 credits) and general electives (5 credits).

Graduation Requirements:

All students accepted to this MPH program must follow the policies and regulations outlined in the [GW Bulletin](#) and the [GWSPH Student Handbook](#). This includes, but is not limited to:

- Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Minimum Course Grades
- Continuous Enrollment
- Maximum Time to Degree
- Required Minimum Degree Credits
- Transfer Credit Policy
- CITI Training
- Integrity Quiz and Plagiarism
- Professional Enhancement (PE) Hours
- Interprofessional Education (IPE) Experience
- Applied Practice Experience (Practicum)
- Culminating Experience (e.g., CE)

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Master of Public Health Humanitarian Health and Disaster Response Program-at-a-Glance 2026-2027

Course#	Required Core Course 19 credits	Credits	Semesters Offered	
			Residential	Online
PUBH 6000	MPH Applied Practice Experience	0	Fall, Sp, Sum	n/a
PUBH 6002	Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	3	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
PUBH 6003	Principles & Practices of Epidemiology	3	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
PUBH 6007	Social & Behavioral Approaches to Public Health	2	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
PUBH 6009	Fundamentals of Public Health Program Evaluation	2	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
PUBH 6011	Environmental & Biological Foundations of Public Health	3	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
PUBH 6012	Fundamentals of Health Policy	2	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
PUBH 6021	Essentials of Public Health Practice & Leadership 1	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
PUBH 6022	Essentials of Public Health Practice & Leadership 2	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
PUBH 6023	Interprofessional Education Experience	0	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
PUBH 6418	GH Culminating Experience I	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	n/a
PUBH 6419	GH Culminating Experience II	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	n/a
Total	Core Credits	19		
Course #	Required Program-Specific Courses 15 Credits	Credits	Semesters Offered	
			Residential	Online
PUBH 6400	Global Health Frameworks	2	Fall	Sp2
PUBH 6410	Global Health Study Design	1	Fall, Sp	
PUBH 6412	Global Health Quantitative Research Methods	3	Sp, Fa	
PUBH 6416 OR PUBH 6423	Ethical & Cultural Issues in Global Health Research & Programs OR Ethics in Public Health Practice & Policy	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	
PUBH 6462	Nutrition & Food in Large Humanitarian Emergencies	1	Spring	
PUBH 6467	Humanitarian & Disaster Response: Principle, Practice & Operational Challenges	3	Fall	
PUBH 6468	Preparation & Response to Epidemics, Pandemics, Mass Health Emergencies, & Disasters	2	Fall	
PUBH 6480	Public Health in Humanitarian Settings	2	Fall	Sum
Total	Total Required Program-Specific Credits	15		
Course#	Selective Courses 6 credits Choose from list below	Credits	Semesters Offered	
			Residential	Online
PUBH 6045	National & Global Public Health Systems	1	Spring (1 st half)	
PUBH 6047	Systematic Reviews to Synthesize Evidence in Public Health Practice	1	Fall/Spring	
PUBH 6132	Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene (WASH) in Low-Income Countries	2	N/A	Sp2
PUBH 6423	Ethics in Public Health Practice & Policy	1	Summer	

PUBH 6447	Global Health Policy Analysis	2	Spring	
PUBH 6465	Reproductive Health & Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings	2	Spring	
PUBH 6478	Health System Quality Measurement in Global Health	2	Fall	
PUBH 6492	Global Health Programs & Approaches to the Control of Chronic Diseases	2	Fall	Sp 1
EMSE 6305	Crisis & Emergency Management	3	Fall	
EMSE 6325	Medical & Public Health Emergency Management	3	Spring	
Total	Total Selective Credits	6		
Course#	Elective Courses 5 credits Choose from list below	Credits	Semesters Offered	
			Residential	Online
EMSE 6310	Information Technology in Crisis & Emergency Management	3	Spring	
EMSE 6820	Program & Project Management	3	Fall	
PUBH 6262	Introduction to Geographical Information Systems	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	
PUBH 6263	Advanced GIS	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	
PUBH 6435	Global Health Program Design & Implementation	2	Sp, Sum	
PUBH 6436	Global Health Program Management & Leadership	2	Fall, Sum	
PUBH 6440	Global Health Economics	2	Spring	
PUBH 6441	Global Health Organizations & Regulations	3	Fall	
PUBH 6442	Comparative Global Health Systems	2	Fall	
PUBH 6445	Quantitative Methods for Impact Evaluation	3	Spring	
PUBH 6455	Global Vaccinology	3	Summer	Sp1, Sum
PUBH 6461	Ethics & Accountability in Humanitarian Settings	1	Spring	
PUBH 6482	International Food & Nutrition Policy	2	Spring	
PUBH 6484	Prevention & Control of Vector Borne Diseases	2	Spring	
PUBH 6486	Global Health Programs & Approaches to the Control of Infectious Diseases	2	Fall	Sp1
PUBH 6493	Fundamentals of Supply Chain Management in Developing Countries	2	Spring	
PUBH 6501	Program Evaluation	3	Fall, Sp	
PUBH 6563	Global Child Health	2	Fall	Sp2
PUBH 6850	Introduction to SAS for Public Health Research	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	
PUBH 6851	Introduction to R for Public Health Research	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	
PUBH 6852	Introduction to Python for Public Health Research	1	Fall, Sp, Sum	
PUBH 6853	Use of SAS for Data Management & Data Analysis	3	Fall, Sp	
IAFF 6118 through IAFF 6182	Varies	3	Fall	
	Any PUBH graduate level course may be substituted for an elective course above. Other course(s) with advisor's advanced approval	1-3	Fall, Sp, Sum	All
Total	Elective Credits	5		
Total	Degree Credits	45		

**The Department of Global Health
MPH, Humanitarian Health and Disaster Response
Course Mapping Example
2026-2027**

The following are advising tips relating to course sequencing:

- All full-time students must take PUBH 6400 Global Health Frameworks, PUBH 6021 Leading Self and Teams in Public Health, PUBH 6480 Public Health in Complex Emergencies, and PUBH 6003 Principles and Practice of Epidemiology during their first fall semester. These are prerequisites to many required and elective courses.

The Humanitarian Health and Disaster Response program contains a total of 5 elective credits that must be chosen from the list of elective courses provided in the program guide or approved by your advisor. Elective courses are often offered once per year, so students should plan which courses to take in advance. The ‘Elective Course(s)’ credits listed in the below course maps indicate the suggested distribution of these elective credits, but students can choose to distribute them however they feel fit. Students are advised to work with their advisor when deciding on electives.

Proposed course map 1: Allowing students to complete the program in 5 semesters.

1 st year Fall		1 st year Spring		1 st year Summer	
	Credits		Credits		Credits
6480 Public Health in Complex Emergencies	2	6011 Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health	3	6009 Fundamentals of Program Evaluation	2
6400 Global Health Frameworks	2	6412 Global Health Quantitative Research Methods	3	6003 Principles and Practice of Epidemiology	3
6467 Humanitarian and Disaster Response: Principle, Practice and Operational Challenges	3	6012 Fundamentals of Health Policy	2	Elective	2
6002 Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	3	6462 Nutrition and Food in Large Humanitarian Emergencies	1		
6021 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership 1	1	6007 Social and Behavioral Approaches to Public Health	2		
6416 Ethical and Cultural Issues in GH Research and Programs	1	Elective	1		
Total semester credits	12	Total semester credits	12	Total semester credits	7
2 nd year fall		2 nd year spring		2 nd year Summer	
6478 Health System Quality Measurement in Global Health (Selective)	2	6419 Culminating Experience Part II	1	Students often opt to work on their Culminating Experience over the summer	
6465 Reproductive Health and Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings (Selective)	2	6023 Interprofessional Education Experience	0		
6132 WASH in Low-Income Countries (Selective)	2	PUBH 6000 MPH APEx	0		
6410 Global Health Study Design	1				
Elective	2				
6022 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership 2	1				
6468 Preparation and Response to Epidemics, Pandemics, Mass Health Emergency, and Disasters	2				
6418 Culminating Experience Part I	1				
Total semester credits	13	Total semester credits	1		

Proposed course map 2: Slower speed, allowing students to continue into their second summer. Most students will probably follow this.

1 st year Fall		1 st year Spring		1 st year Summer	
	Credits		Credits		Credits
6480 Public Health in Complex Emergencies	2	6007 Social and Behavioral Approaches to Public Health	2	6011 Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health	3
6400 Global Health Frameworks	2	6012 Fundamentals of Health Policy	2	Elective(s)	2
6002 Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	3	6412 GH Quantitative Research Methods	3	6003 Principles and Practice of Epidemiology	3
6467 Humanitarian and Disaster Response: Principle, Practice and Operational Challenges	3	6462 Nutrition and Food in Large Humanitarian Emergencies	1		
6021 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership 1	1	6416 Ethical and Cultural Issues in GH Research and Programs	1		
		Elective	1		
Total semester credits	11	Total semester credits	10	Total semester credits	8
2 nd year Fall		2 nd year Spring		2 nd year Summer	
6492 Global Health Programs and Control of Chronic Diseases (Selective)	2	6418 Culminating Experience Part I	1	6023 Interprofessional Education Experience	0
6478 Health system quality measurement in Global Health (Selective)	2	6009 Fundamentals of Public Health Program Evaluation	2	6419 Culminating Experience II	1
6465 Reproductive Health and Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings (Selective)	2	Elective	2		
6022 Essentials of Public Health Practice and Leadership 2	1	PUBH 6000 MPH APEx	0		
6468 Preparation and Response to Epidemics, Pandemics, Mass Health Emergency, and Disasters	2				
6410 Global Health Study Design	1				
Total semester credits	10	Total semester credits	5	Total semester credits	1