

Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Joint Law/Public Health Programs (administered by the GWSPH Hirsh Health Law and Policy Program)

Program Guide

2026-2027

Program Director:

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Mission:

The Hirsh Health Law and Policy Program of the Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH) offers unique educational opportunities to law students, practicing lawyers and health professions students. Endowed by Harold and Jane Hirsh and home to GW's joint degree programs in law and public health, the program is designed to foster an interdisciplinary approach to the study of health policy, health law, public health and health care. The Hirsh Program's overall goal is to advance a greater understanding regarding how the law influences and shapes all facets of health care and public health, as well as how the transforming health systems affect areas of the law. At the same time, the program seeks to achieve the pragmatic objectives of readying law degree candidates and practicing lawyers for the broad range of health law- and policy-related careers that are available today.

Established in 1997, the Hirsh Program is structured to allow students to take maximum advantage of its location in Washington, DC, the center of the national health policy and law debate. The program is designed to provide a solid grounding in individual and population health, from the health care and public health systems themselves to extensive coursework in advanced health policy and law. The program serves Juris Doctor (JD) and Master of Laws (LLM) candidates as well as lawyers pursuing health law careers and all manner of health profession students.

Goals:

The Hirsh Program's overall goal is to advance a greater understanding regarding how the law influences and shapes all facets of health care and public health, as well as how the changing system affects traditional areas of the law. At the same time, the program seeks to achieve the pragmatic objectives of readying law degree candidates and practicing lawyers for the broad range of health law-related careers that are available today.

Graduates of the joint law/public health programs routinely accept positions at leading law firms, federal and state agencies, consulting firms and universities in D.C. and other cities. The breadth of placements regularly attained by graduates in both the public and private sector illustrates the opportunities afforded under the program. Once in their chosen field of practice, alumni of the program recognize that their joint studies in policy, law and public health are an invaluable asset on the job. Alumni in the practice of health law, on the one hand, report that their training in the GWSPH enables them to understand the myriad aspects of the health care and public health systems, including their structure, financing and terminology. On the other hand, alumni who spend their days as public health professionals indicate that their training in the law earns them added respect from their employers and added credibility from the health care

providers, agencies and companies with which they interact.

Program Details:

GW Law students may enroll simultaneously in the following residential Master of Public Health (MPH) and Certificate programs at the Milken Institute School of Public Health:

- JD/MPH (8 JD credits are applied toward the MPH and up to 12 MPH credits may be applied toward the JD)
- LLM/MPH (8 LLM credits are applied toward the MPH and up to 6 MPH credits may be applied toward the LLM)
- JD/Public Health Certificate (2 JD credits are applied toward the MPH and up to 6 MPH credits may be applied toward the JD)
- JD/Health Policy Certificate (Both schools allow up to 6 credits to be applied toward the other's program)
- LLM/Public Health Certificate (2 JD credits are applied toward the MPH and up to 6 MPH credits may be applied toward the JD)
- LLM/Health Policy Certificate (Both schools allow up to 6 credits to be applied toward the other's program)

Find additional information on the program webpage [here](#).

MPH Requirements

The MPH degree consists of 45 credits. JD and LLM students need to complete 37 credits of GWSPH MPH coursework. To earn the MPH degree, the remaining credits (8) will be applied Law coursework. MPH core coursework is required and cannot be substituted with Law school coursework. There are 15 residential MPH program disciplines from which Law students may choose. The Program Director will determine how Law courses will apply based on the selected MPH program.

JD candidates selecting joint degree studies in one of the more science-oriented MPH disciplines, such as epidemiology or biostatistics, should anticipate the possibility of a slightly longer course of study than students who select a less scientific area, such as health policy; this can result because of American Bar Association accreditation rules that limits the types of courses that are allowed to be transferred to the Law School. Full-time JD-MPH students should generally assume a 4-year course of study, though this can shift depending in large part on how many (if any) MPH courses students elect to take during the summer sessions. Full-time LLM/MPH candidates should anticipate completing their joint degrees in approximately 2 years. Part-time JD and LLM candidates pursuing joint degrees will have longer courses of study.

The MPH degree includes a required, supervised Practicum or Applied Practice Experience (APEX). The Hirsh Program offers extensive assistance in locating internships in congressional offices, federal agencies and the hundreds of national health organizations located in and throughout the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Through its affiliation with the Department of Health Policy and Management at the GWSPH, the program also engages in extensive law-related health policy research, often offering joint degree students paid or unpaid training opportunities during their period of study. Please visit the [Department's website](#) for a description of the types of research in which it engages.

Certificate Requirements

GW Law students not interested in adding a Master degree to their studies may instead elect one of two Graduate Certificate programs: Public Health or Health Policy.

The Public Health Graduate Certificate (a generalist certificate) is 15 credits. The course of study for the

Health Policy Graduate Certificate consists of 18 credits. For the Public Health Certificate, 2 credits of Law coursework may be applied; for the Health Policy certificate, 6 credits of Law coursework may be applied.

Full-time JD candidates can complete a graduate certificate during their regular course of study in the Law School. Full-time LLM/certificate candidates typically complete the program in one and one-half years.

Joint Law/Certificate students may be eligible to transfer into an MPH program. In the event a joint Law/graduate certificate student is accepted into a MPH degree program, credits from the Graduate Certificate programs may be transferred to the MPH degree program.

Admissions and Tuition:

Applicants to the joint law-public health degree/certificate program may apply for admission to GWSPH at the time they apply to the GW Law School or after admission to the GW Law School. JD candidates who do not apply concurrently to the GW Law School and GWSPH are encouraged to file the MPH or Certificate application by the end of March of their first year of law school. LLM candidates are encouraged to apply to GWSPH at the time they apply to the GW Law School or during their first semester on campus.

Applicants to the joint law-public health programs must complete the application processes for both the GW Law School (JD/LLM) and for GWSPH (MPH/Certificate). Admission to the joint degree program requires admissions acceptances from both schools. However, because admission to each school is separate and distinct, applicants who are accepted by one school but not the other are free to enroll in the school to which they have been accepted and complete all coursework required for a degree (no cross-credits will be applied).

Applications for both programs are available as follows:

- Law School: <https://www.law.gwu.edu/jd-admissions>
- GWSPH: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions>. Whether applying simultaneously to both Schools or as a current GW Law student, applicants must complete the SOPHAS Application as indicated at the GWSPH website.

GWSPH coursework taken while enrolled as a full- or part-time JD or LLM candidate is charged at the Law School tuition rate. The GWSPH tuition and fees rate are charged for semesters when no Law School courses are taken, including summers. Lawyers pay the GWSPH tuition and fees rate.