Public Health Program Preparation at the University of Oregon

What is Public Health?

- Public health professionals aim to protect and improve the health of communities through outreach, education, and research. An emphasis on the prevention of health problems distinguishes public health from other health fields.

- Public health has numerous areas of emphasis, such as nutrition, health administration, biostatistics, epidemiology, health promotion, environmental health, international health, biomedicine, and more.

- A multi-disciplinary field, public health draws professionals from a variety of backgrounds and undergraduate majors.

- Public health organizations tend to seek individuals who can employ strengths in creativity and critical thinking to solve problems in new ways.

- Although graduate study isn’t required, an advanced degree in public health increases opportunities for career flexibility and advancement.

- Graduate programs tend to have an experimental component of the curriculum, allowing students to apply their knowledge and gain additional professional experience while earning their degree.

Examples of Career Opportunities

- Epidemiologist
- Tropical Disease Specialist
- Communications Specialist
- College Health Coordinator
- Community Health Activist
- Health Administrator
- Public Health Educator
- Environmental Health Technician
- Public Health Inspector

Examples of Public Health Employers

- Disaster Relief Organization
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- National Institute of Health (NIH)
- Academic Institutions
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- Consumer Product Safety Commission
- Not-for-profit Organization

Types of Public Health Degrees

- MHA: Master of Health Administration
- MHS: Master of Health Science
- MPH: Master of Public Health
- MPHE: Master of Public Health Education
- MS: Master of Science
- DrPH: Doctor of Public Health
- PhD: Doctor of Philosophy
- ScD: Doctor of Science
- Dual Degree Programs (MPH/MD, MPH/PA)
Public Health Program Application Preparation

- Admission requirements vary depending on the degree type, program, and focus area. Applicants should spend time researching different programs to help establish an academic plan.

- Nutrition, epidemiology, environmental health, and biomedical public health programs commonly require prerequisites in science and math.

- Completing the prerequisites (if any) is just one aspect of the process. Applicants must also have a well-rounded application consisting of experience (volunteer work, job shadowing, undergraduate research, life experience, etc.), letters of recommendation, GRE scores (program and degree type dependent), and a strong statement of purpose.

- Each program provides specific prompts for the statement of purpose. Check individual websites for this information.

- Experience within the public health field, whether paid or volunteer is a crucial component of a competitive application.

Possible Prerequisites

- Applicants must research individual programs to find prerequisite coursework. Health Professions Advisors are available to help develop an academic plan tailored to specific graduate study goals.

- Students interested in public health commonly take courses in biology, human physiology, math, statistics, sociology, psychology, international studies, anthropology, and environmental science.

Online Resources

Health Professions Program Website  
What is Public Health?  
American Public Health Association  
Centralized Application Service for Public Health  
Exploring Health Careers  
http://healthprofessions.uoregon.edu  
http://whatispublichealth.org  
http://apha.org  
http://sophas.org  
http://explorehealthcareers.org

Campus Resources

☐ Student Organizations (Students for Global Health) ☐ Academic departments
☐ Holden Center ☐ Undergraduate research
☐ Service Learning Program ☐ TLC study support
☐ Peer Health Education ☐ TLC GRE preparation
☐ Global Education Oregon ☐ HPP workshops
☐ Career Center

Advising

For more information and individualized academic planning, call or visit the Teaching and Learning Center (541-346-3226, 68 PLC) to schedule an appointment with a health professions advisor.