
UAB School of Public Health
Department of Health Behavior
MPH
Student Handbook
2015-16

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Introduction to the Program

Teaching, research, and service in the [Department of Health Behavior](#) are focused on disease prevention and health promotion. The Department offers Master of Public Health (MPH), Master of Science of Public Health (MSPH) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees.

Behavioral and social sciences in public health address the behavioral, social, and cultural factors related to individual and population health and health disparities over the life course. Research and practice in this area contribute to the development, administration and evaluation of programs and policies in public health and health services to promote and sustain healthy environments and healthy lives for individuals and populations. Students concentrating in behavioral and social sciences in public health learn how practical research and solutions help improve the health of individuals and communities. We focus on the use of data and theory to develop and evaluate programs that address behaviors that lead to disease and promote those that improve an individual's health as well as the public's health.

In the Department of Health Behavior you will find a dynamic, rewarding environment where faculty, students, and practitioners collaborate to improve public health, increase understanding of health behavior, and add to the knowledge base of our discipline. Faculty activities entail many community-based research and service programs funded by NIH and other federal agencies, state agencies, and foundations. Our research covers a variety of social and behavioral science areas including: obesity prevention and lifestyle interventions, addiction, physical activity; family and child health disparities; promoting positive youth development; sexual health risks including HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment; faith and spirituality; placebo interventions; mHealth; health communication and community based participatory research methods. You are strongly encouraged to become involved in these activities.

You will acquire knowledge and skills from many strategic areas. These include application of behavioral theories, data analyses, program planning and evaluation, communication, epidemiology, public health policy, and other core public health disciplines.

Mission of the UAB School of Public Health

The mission of the School of Public Health is to discover, teach, and apply knowledge to promote health and prevent disease in the human population. The school achieves this mission by bringing the various disciplines of public health together to educate individuals who will be working to improve the health of the school's constituent populations.

The goal of the curriculum at the UAB School of Public Health is to combine innovative teaching methods with hands-on, community-based experience to give you the depth of expertise required of the public health professional in the 21st Century.

Goal of the Health Behavior MPH Program

The primary educational goal of the Department of Health Behavior MPH program is to teach you to assess health behaviors and needs in specific populations and to develop, manage, and evaluate health promotion and disease prevention programs.

MPH/MSPH Programs offered by the Department of Health Behavior

MPH

The *MPH* program admits students with a bachelor's degree. Students in this track take 44-47 credit hours. The number of credit hours you are required to complete is determined before admission by examining your education and professional experiences. The MPH may be completed in four semesters.

MPH Fifth Year Program

The MPH Fifth-year program admits students who are juniors at UAB. Students in this track take 44-47 credit hours. You generally complete this program one year after you complete your undergraduate degree.

Coordinated MPH (Health Behavior)/PhD (Sociology or Psychology)

The Coordinated MPH (Health Behavior)/PhD (Sociology or Psychology) degree program is offered with the University of Alabama at Birmingham Departments of Psychology and Sociology and the University of Alabama Department of Psychology. This program will enable you to obtain an MPH in Health Behavior simultaneously with a PhD in psychology or sociology. To be considered for this program, you must first be admitted to the PhD program in psychology or sociology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham or psychology at the University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa). The MPH degree requires a minimum of 43-46 (sociology) or 42-45 (psychology at UAB) credit hours.

Coordinated MSN (School of Nursing)/MPH (Health Behavior)

The Coordinated MSN (School of Nursing)/MPH (Health Behavior) degree program is offered with the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing. This program enables you to obtain an MPH in Health Behavior simultaneously with a MSN from the School of Nursing. The MPH degree requires a minimum of 44-47 credit hours.

MSPH in Clinical Research (Health Behavior)

The MSPH in Clinical Research degree program is a post-medical degree-training program primarily aimed at fellows and faculty members interested in developing skills required for the conduct of clinical research. The MSPH degree requires a minimum of 41 credit hours.

MPH Program Objectives

The goal of the MPH program in Health Behavior is to prepare you with the knowledge and skills necessary to assess health behaviors and needs in specific populations and to develop, implement, and evaluate health promotion and disease prevention programs. The MPH Program is designed to prepare you for public health practice, research, or doctoral study.

The objectives of the MPH program in Health Behavior are to enable you to:

- understand and apply social and behavioral science theories as they relate to solutions to public health problems;
- critically examine health behavior literature;
- develop and implement theory and/or evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention programs;
- apply principles and procedures for evaluating health promotion and disease prevention programs; and
- develop, implement, and evaluate behavioral research.

Department of Health Behavior Faculty

Kevin Fontaine, Ph.D.	Professor & Chair
David Coombs, Ph.D., M.P.H.	Associate Professor, retired
Susan Davies, Ph.D.	Associate Professor
Frank Franklin, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D.	Professor Emeritus
Melissa Galvin, Ph.D., M.P.H.	Professor Emerita
Peter Hendricks, Ph.D.	Associate Professor
Connie Kohler, Dr.P.H.	Professor Emerita
Robin Gaines Lanzi, Ph.D., M.P.H.	Associate Professor & Director of Academic Programs
Greg Pavela, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor
Dori Pekmezi, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor

Faculty contact information and research interests can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Department of Health Behavior Staff

The Coordinator of Academic Programs for the Department of Health Behavior is:

Julie Brown, M.S. (205) 975-8075 jebrown@uab.edu

The Department of Health Behavior Administrative staff includes:

Karen Beeching	Project Coordinator II
Michael Turner	Office Services Specialist III

Our professional staff is dedicated to supporting students and faculty in the educational process. You can reach the staff in the Department of Health Behavior at (205)934-6020.

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MPH Coursework Requirements

Course Name	Term Course Available			Credit Hours
	Fall	Spr	Sum	
Core Requirement: 16 Hours*				
BST 601: Biostatistics I	X	X		3
ENH 600: Fundamentals of Environmental Health		X	X	3
EPI 600: Introduction to Epidemiology	X			3
HB 624: Advanced Theory**	X			3
HCO 600: Intro to Public Health Systems	X			3
PUH 695: Integrative Experience	X	X		1
Department Track Requirements: 9 hours				
HB 636: Intervention Development**		X		3
HB 641: Research Methods**	X			3
HB 643: Health Program Evaluation	X			3
Behavioral Science Electives: 12 hours***				
	X	X	X	3
	X	X	X	3
	X	X	X	3
	X	X	X	3
Public Health Requirements: 3-6 hours*				
PUH 627 or GRD 727: Writing and Reviewing Research	X	X	X	3-6
Internship: 3 hours				
HB 697: Internship	X	X	X	3
Total Credit Hours Earned for Degree			44-47	

* All MPH core courses, and the PUH writing course/s MUST be taken in the first three semesters of enrollment and PUH 695, Integrative Experience, MUST be taken in the final semester of enrollment.

**HB 624 is a pre-requisite for HB 636, and HB 641 is a pre-requisite for HB 643.

***A list of suggested behavioral science electives is in [Appendix B](#).

Recommended Course Sequence

Fall 1	Spring 1	Summer 1
BST 601 4 hours EPI 600 3 hours HB 624 3 hours HCO 600 3 hours HB 641 3 hours 16 hours	ENH 600 3 hours HB 636 3 hours PUH Course 3-6 hours Elective/s 3-6 hours 12-15 hours	HB 697 3 hours Electives 0-6 hours GRD Course 0-3 hours 3-12 hours
Fall 2		
HB 643 3 hours PUH 695 1 hour Electives 6 - 9 hours 10-13 hours		

Please note that the course sequence above is recommended, however it may change to meet your needs.

Academic Advising

Upon admission to the program, you are assigned an academic advisor. You will need to consult with Ms. Brown prior to registering for the first semester in the MPH program. In subsequent semesters you **must meet** with Ms. Brown before registering each semester to have the registration hold removed. Advisors are also available to provide guidance about course substitutions, internships, and research opportunities, and possible employment opportunities available upon program completion.

Should you wish to change advisors, consent must be obtained from the new advisor before the change can be completed. Please see Ms. Julie Brown for the required paperwork. The *School of Public Health Change of Advisor* form can be obtained from [the School of Public Health Website](#). You must complete this form, obtain the appropriate signatures and submit it to the Office of Student Affairs for processing in order to change advisors.

If you have any questions about your program's course of study (i.e. course substitution / waiver, etc), please see Ms. Brown.

Program Completion

You are responsible for meeting deadlines for graduation. Graduation deadlines are available on the School of Public Health Academic Calendar. You must submit an *Application for Degree* form (see [Appendix D](#)) which can be obtained online on the [school's website](#). The *Application for Degree* form must be submitted to Ms. Brown no later than two weeks into the expected semester of graduation. *You are expected to be enrolled for at least three credit hours of graduate work in your final semester prior to graduation.*

Time Limitations

As a master student you are generally expected to complete all degree requirements within *five* years of matriculation. **Only one extension of this time limit can be requested when mitigating circumstances preclude completion of requirements within five years.** The recommendation for an extension should include a plan and timeline for completion. Courses taken more than five years before graduation may not be applied toward a degree without the approval of the graduate program director and graduate school dean.

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Internship Requirements

As a student in the MPH program, you are required to complete three credit hours of an internship experience. The internship is a field experience which bridges professional academic preparation and public health practice. It should be project-oriented and focus on an issue relating to public health. Knowledge and skills learned in coursework are applied in an agency setting under the supervision and guidance of an experienced public health specialist, who has been approved to serve as a MPH Internship preceptor. You may check with the schools internship coordinator [Mrs. Kimberly Hunter](#) (205/934-7791), or the school's [website](#) for internship opportunities. Learning objectives for the internship must be set based on the MPH School-wide and departmental competencies relevant to the student's course of study.

Faculty research projects are not appropriate venues for an internship, neither are positions which are primarily administrative or focused on data management.

Registering for internship experience

Before the hold on the internship course can be lifted, we require that the internship description and agreement form is completed and on file. This form is to be completed in the online internship database Intern Track. You can log in to this program with your Blazer ID and password at this [site](#). Your faculty advisor and site supervisor will also be required to sign off on this document, so it is important that you communicate with them as you complete the form, and do not wait until the deadline to register. A hyperlink allowing you to formally request the hold to be lifted will become active once all the signatures are on file.

You should register under your academic advisor for HB 697 – Internship in Health Behavior. For three credit hours, you are required to spend *a minimum of 180 hours* during the semester working for the agency. The internship must be completed in one semester, and all hours must be completed by the last day of exams. You are required to complete your core course work before registering for internship hours. Credit cannot be applied retroactively to work you have done prior to registering for the internship. Students should feel free to contact the Student Program Director ([Ms. Julie Brown](#)) or Internship Coordinator ([Ms. Kimberly Hunter](#)) if you have any questions or problems during the internship.

Grading and Requirements

The internship is a pass/fail course. Your grade will be assigned by your faculty advisor based on the completion of all the components below. All forms related to the MPH internship will be completed in the InternTrack program.

- Internship Description and Agreement Form
- Midpoint Meeting Form, and confirmed meetings with the faculty advisor and site supervisor
- Final student evaluation
- Final student paper
- Completion of poster and attendance at the internship poster session
- Evaluations (Midpoint and Final) from the site supervisor
- Any additional product required by your internship site

Midpoint meeting: You will be required to complete a midpoint form halfway through your internship. This is to prompt your reflection on the internship to that point, and steps to make the remainder of the internship a success. You will set up times to individually meet with your faculty advisor and site supervisor; use the midpoint form as a guide for your conversation. If you are not able to meet in person, discussions via telephone, email, or Skype will be accepted. Your faculty advisor and site supervisor will need to confirm the meeting took place in the Intern Track system.

Internship Poster Session: At the end of the internship, prior to the end of exams for that semester, a poster session will be held to showcase the internships completed during that semester. You will receive additional instructions on creating your poster prior to the event. Attendance is mandatory, as it is a required component to the internship experience. Limited exceptions will be made for students completing internships out of the state or country or that are completing the MPH program online.

For complete internship requirements please review the [syllabus](#) on the UAB School of Public Health website.

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Useful Information

Departmental Office Policies and the names of key personnel and places are outlined below. Other helpful documents are the [SOPH Catalog](#), the [SOPH Academic Calendar](#) and the [UAB Graduate School Catalog](#).

Office Policies

Phones:

Phones are available for student use in the Ryals Building first floor lobby near the elevators.

Mail:

Faculty mailboxes are in the departmental reception area. You may leave material for faculty in these boxes.

Reserving Conference and Classrooms and Equipment (e.g., pointer, laptop):

Conference* and classrooms are to be reserved through [25 Live](#). Equipment is to be reserved for use and will be addressed by the MITS Department. Contact information for MITS: Phone: (205) 934-7731; Location: Ryals 127

*The Health Behavior Conference Room can be reserved through the HB office staff.

People and Places

Dean's Office:

[Max Michael, M.D.](#) is Dean of the School of Public Health.

Office of Student and Academic Services:

[Ms. Cheryl Johnson](#) is Director of the Office of Student and Academic Services. Her number is (205) 934-4996.

Internships & Career Services:

[Ms. Kimberly Hunter](#) is the Student Engagement and Internship Coordinator for the School of Public Health. Her number is (205) 934-7791.

Financial Aid:

[Pheandrea Jackson, M.A.](#) (205.934.1961) is the Financial Aid Coordinator for the School of Public Health.

The UAB Office of Student Financial Aid number is (205) 934-8223.

Registration:

You will register by computer through [BlazerNet](#). Before registering you must meet with Ms. Julie Brown to receive their Registration Access Code (RAC).

Other Useful Phone numbers:

Barnes & Noble Blazer Bookstore	(205) 996-2665
International Scholar and Student Services	(205) 934-3328
Graduate School	(205) 934-8227
Key Control	(205) 934-3708
Lister Hill Library	(205) 934-2230
Mervyn Sterne Library	(205) 934-6364
Student Health Services	(205) 934-3580
Student Housing	(205) 934-2092
UAB Parking	(205) 934-3513
UAB Police	(205) 934-4434
Emergency	911
Escort Service	(205) 934-8772

Public Health Student Association Representative:

Public Health Student Association (PHSA) elections are typically held during the fall term for departmental representatives. Students from each department elect one to two representatives. [Ms. Kimberly Hunter](#) is the staff advisor. Her number is (205) 934-7791.

Computer and Network Access

Computers are available for your use in the Computer Resource Lab (CRL) located on the first floor in the Ryals Building. **You need to obtain an access account and an e-mail address (Blazer ID) by contacting the CRL staff at (205) 934-7731.** Hardware and software support for the CRL is provided by the CRL staff. You must advise the Director of Student Programs, in Health Behavior of your e-mail address. You can e-mail the information to jebrown@uab.edu. **It is your responsibility to ensure that the department has your current UAB e-mail address and telephone number.** This will enable you to receive important information from the Department regarding School and University deadlines as well as research, internship, and employment opportunities.

Professional Meetings

Student involvement in national public health organizations, as well as attendance at national professional meeting, is encouraged. Below is a list of recommended organizations in which you are encouraged to participate.

- Alabama Public Health Association www.alphassoc.org
- American Association of Cancer Education www.aaceonline.com
- American College of Preventive medicine www.acpm.org
- American Diabetes Association www.diabetes.org
- American Evaluation Association www.eval.org
- American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children www.apsac.org
- American Psychological Association www.apa.org
- American Public Health Association www.apha.org
- Association for Prevention Teaching & Research www.aptrweb.org
- Association for Psychological Science www.psychologicalscience.org
- International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect..... www.ispcan.org
- Society for Adolescent Health & Medicine www.adolescenthealth.org
- Society for Research in Child Development www.srcd.org
- Society of Behavioral Medicine www.sbm.org
- Society of Public Health Educators www.sophe.org
- The Obesity Society www.obesity.org

Seminars

There are a variety of other seminars that take place on campus. In the department we offer monthly seminars: Mid-Day Monday/Tuesday Topics. We also have a monthly journal club led by [Dr. Dori Pekmezi](#). Please look for announcements on the bulletin boards in the student lounge and outside the department suite and via emails from Ms. Julie Brown. If you wish to present, please contact Ms. Brown for additional information.

Professional Behavior

Availability of faculty member:

Please give the professor advance notice for meetings. Faculty members have many other responsibilities along with teaching. *Unless a faculty member has specified office hours during which you may drop in without an appointment, it is in everyone's best interest that you make an appointment.* If a face-to-face visit is not necessary, you may find it easier and more convenient to communicate with faculty and staff via e-mail. Health Behavior faculty e-mail addresses and phone numbers are included in [Appendix A](#) of this handbook.

Lead time for review of papers:

Unless the faculty member tells you otherwise, expect that it will take *ten to fourteen* business days for a CAREFUL review of any written paper that is submitted. ***You may contact faculty member(s) receiving the paper to determine if they prefer hard copy or electronic file.***

Required Paperwork:

You are responsible for initiating all paperwork and obtaining faculty signatures related to advising (e.g. drop and add courses), applications for degree, committee appointments, etc. Deadlines are published on the [UAB Graduate School](#) website. **Faculty members may not be available to sign forms at the last minute.** Please allow **several days** to obtain signatures.

Honor Code:

As a student in the UAB School of Public Health, you are subject to the [SOPH Student Honor Code](#). You are responsible to understand the contents of the Honor Code and to abide by it.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is the undocumented use of other authors' words, texts, images, and ideas that don't come from your own head. Making up sources, altering numbers, statistics, or just a few words of a document is considered plagiarism. Poor documentation or paraphrasing of a source is also considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is taken seriously; any violations will be punished to the full extent allowable under the SOPH Honor Code. Please review the [student honor code](#) .

Disability Statement:

Any student with a disability that may need accommodations in order to successfully complete all requirements of this course should visit the [Office of Disability Support Services](#), located in the 9th Avenue Office Building at 1701 9th Avenue South. This office is responsible for registering students and in ensuring the University's compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the American with Disabilities Act. Once registered, this office will then inform course master of all courses in which you are enrolled of your status and the specific nature of any accommodations you may require. If you require such an accommodation you should discuss this with the course master and assure that the appropriate correspondence is sent from the *Office of Disability Support Services*.

Appendix A: Department of Health Behavior Faculty Research Interests and Contact Information

Name	Research Interests	Campus Address	Telephone	UAB E-Mail
David Coombs, Ph.D. (Retired)	Mental Health Issues/Suicide Prevention; Community-Based Interventions	RPHB 227	(205) 305-9210	dcoombs@uab.edu
Susan Davies, Ph.D., Associate Professor	Using comprehensive evaluation strategies, cognitive-behavioral theory, qualitative methods, and community engagement research to identify and address antecedents to unintended pregnancy, HIV/STI's, maternal depression, and violence among men and boys, particularly among youth and families living in poverty.	RPHB 227	(205) 975-8049	sdavies@uab.edu
Kevin Fontaine, Ph.D., Professor & Chair	Obesity Treatment; Primal Lifestyle for Health and Fitness; Resistance Exercise; Placebo Effects; Ketogenic diets	RPHB 241C	(205) 975-8397	kfonta1@uab.edu
Frank A. Franklin, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., (Emeritus)	Nutrition Problems and Policies, Pediatrics, School Nutrition Promotion Programs , International Nutrition	RPHB 227	No office phone	frankln@uab.edu
Melissa Galvin, Ph.D., M.P.H. (Emerita)	Community Participatory Research, Hepatitis; Senior Citizens, Health Communications	RPHB 227	(205) 934-6020	mgalvin@uab.edu
Peter Hendricks, Ph.D., Associate Professor	Addiction, Novel Interventions, Clinical Trials, Expectancies, Motivation, Positive Psychology	RPHB 434E	(205) 934-6020	phendricks@uab.edu
Connie Kohler, Dr.P.H. (Emerita)	Tobacco, Chronic Disease, Health Communication, Entertainment-education	RPHB 227	(205) 975-6020	ckohler@uab.edu
Robin Gaines Lanzi, Ph.D., M.P.H., Associate Professor, Graduate Program Director	Reducing family and child health disparities and promoting positive youth development through the advancement of new research methodologies and strategies and the use of technology to improve the health and well-being of children and families. A central theme throughout her research is "putting research into practice" through multiple pathways, including a focus on community based participatory research (CBPR) in the design, planning, implementation, and dissemination of findings.	RPHB 227	(205) 934-8071	rlanzi@uab.edu
Greg Pavela, Ph.D. Assistant Professor	My work examines the environmental determinants of health and obesity and emphasizes the importance of early life conditions to later health. Specifically, I seek to understand how environmental exposures "get under the skin" to affect human adiposity; 2) improve causal inferences about the effects of social determinants on adiposity; and 3) describe the reciprocal relationship between human health and the social environment.	RPHB 227	(205) 934-6020	pavela@uab.edu
Dori Pekmezi, Ph.D., Assistant Professor	Chronic Disease Prevention, Health Communication, Physical Activity, Health Disparities	RPHB 227	(205) 934-6020	dpekmezi@uab.edu

Appendix B:

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE ELECTIVE COURSES FOR HEALTH BEHAVIOR MASTER'S STUDENTS

This is not an exhaustive list of appropriate electives. Other behavioral science courses may be taken as electives with the approval of your advisor. School of Public Health course descriptions may be found in the [School of Public Health Catalog](#). Courses from departments outside of the School of Public Health may be found in The [Graduate School Catalog](#). This is a tentative list and schedule.

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH BEHAVIOR

- HB 602: Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- HB 603: Obesity Prevention & Intervention
- HB 605: Physical Activity in Public Health
- HB 627: GIS for Public Health
- HB 630: Health Communications
- HB 635: Communities, Family, & Health
- HB 638: Public Health Aging
- HB 660: Adolescent Health: A Social and Behavioral Perspective
- HB 692: Principles and Practices of Community Organization

DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

- EPI 603: Injury – Epidemiologic Principles
- EPI 613: Cancer and Epidemiology
- EPI 621: AIDS/HIV & STD's
- EPI 635: Genetics in Public Health
- EPI 708: Tropical/Infectious Disease

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATION AND POLICY

- HCO 608: Reproductive Health
- HCO 611: Child Health and Development: Womb to Young Adulthood
- HCO 617: International Children's Rights and Social Justice: Global Perspectives
- HCO 619: Social Work in Public Health
- HCO 628: Qualitative & Mixed Methods Research in Public Health
- HCO 631: Public Health Demography
- HCO 670: Social and Ethical Issues in Public Health
- HCO 677: Patient-Based Outcomes Measurement

Appendix C:

**Department of Health Behavior
MPH Curriculum Planning Sheet**

Name: _____

Banner ID: _____

All MPH core courses MUST be taken in the first two semesters of enrollment and PUH 695, Integrative Experience, MUST be taken in the final semester of enrollment.

Course Name	Term Course Available			Credit Hours	Term /Year Taken	Grade
	Fall	Spr	Sum			
Core Requirement: 17 Hours						
BST 601: Biostatistics I	X	X		4		
ENH 600: Fundamentals of Environmental Health		X	X	3		
EPI 600: Introduction to Epidemiology	X			3		
HB 624: Advanced Theory	X			3		
HCO 600: Introduction to Pub Hlth Systems	X			3		
PUH 695: Integrative Experience	X	X		1		
Department Track Requirements: 19 hours						
HB 636: Intervention Development		X		3		
HB 641: Research Methods	X			3		
HB 643: Health Program Evaluation	X			3		
Behavioral Science Electives: 12 hours						
Elective	X	X	X	3		
Elective	X	X	X	3		
Elective	X	X	X	3		
Elective	X	X	X	3		
Public Health Requirements: 3-6 hours						
PUH 690: Writing & Reviewing Research	X	X	X	3-6		
Internship: 3 hours						
HB 697: Internship	X	X	X	3		
				44-47		

Student Signature

Advisor Signature

Appendix D:

