



COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES

Master of Public Health Program

MPH Graduate Student Handbook

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | 2 |
| WELCOME TO THE MPH PROGRAM..... | 5 |
| HISTORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES (FORMERLY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH) | 5 |
| VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES | 6 |
| <i>Vision</i> | 6 |
| <i>Mission</i> | 6 |
| <i>Core Values</i> | 6 |
| <i>Goals</i> | 7 |
| MPH PROGRAM ACCREDITED BY THE COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH | 7 |
| <i>Goals of CEPH</i> | 7 |
| <i>Certification in Public Health (CPH) Through the National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE)</i> | 7 |
| <i>Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES, MCHES)</i> | 8 |
| MPH PROGRAM FACULTY AND STAFF | 8 |
| DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES CHAIR | 8 |
| MPH PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT..... | 8 |
| MPH PROGRAM DIRECTOR & GRADUATE COORDINATOR | 8 |
| MPH CONCENTRATION COORDINATORS & ADVISORS..... | 9 |
| MPH APPLIED LEARNING EXPERIENCE COORDINATOR AND PRACTICUM ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT | 9 |
| MPH FACULTY ROLES AND CONTACT INFORMATION | 10 |
| MPH PROGRAM POLICIES..... | 11 |
| MPH PROGRAM ADMISSIONS..... | 11 |
| <i>Provisional Admission Status</i> | 12 |
| <i>Full Time and Part Time Student Status</i> | 12 |
| <i>Non-Degree Students</i> | 12 |
| <i>Graduate Transfer Credit</i> | 13 |
| <i>Changes in MPH Concentration within the MPH Program</i> | 13 |
| <i>Maintaining Immigration Status</i> | 14 |
| MPH PROGRAM COMPLETION..... | 14 |
| <i>Leave of Absence</i> | 14 |
| <i>Academic Good Standing</i> | 14 |
| <i>Academic Probation/Dismissal</i> | 14 |
| <i>Course Repeat Policy</i> | 15 |
| <i>Degree Candidacy</i> | 15 |
| <i>Application for Graduation</i> | 16 |
| MPH ADVISING | 16 |
| <i>Course Scheduling</i> | 17 |
| <i>Advising Sheets for MPH Program Concentrations</i> | 17 |
| FACULTY/STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS..... | 17 |
| <i>Student Issues Within Courses</i> | 17 |
| <i>Student/Director/Chair of Communications</i> | 18 |
| <i>Campus Email</i> | 18 |
| GRADUATE GRADING SYSTEM..... | 18 |
| REMOVING THE "IN PROGRESS" GRADE DESIGNATION | 19 |
| REMOVING "NO GRADE" DESIGNATION | 19 |
| GRADE CHANGE POLICY | 19 |
| GRADE APPEALS POLICY | 19 |
| ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY | 19 |
| <i>Violations of Academic Integrity</i> | 20 |
| <i>Procedures for Handling Cases</i> | 20 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Penalties</i> | 21 |
| TUITION, FEES, FINANCIAL AID AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS | 22 |
| TUITION AND FEES | 22 |
| FINANCIAL AID | 22 |
| COURSE WITHDRAWAL/CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT STATUS AND FINANCIAL AID | 22 |
| GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS | 22 |
| <i>Department of Public Health Sciences GA Positions</i> | 23 |
| <i>Campus-Wide GA Positions</i> | 23 |
| MPH CURRICULUM | 24 |
| OVERVIEW..... | 24 |
| MPH COURSE FORMATS..... | 24 |
| <i>In-Person Course Format</i> | 24 |
| <i>100% Online Asynchronous Format</i> | 24 |
| <i>Summer and Winter Courses</i> | 25 |
| <i>International Study Abroad Courses</i> | 25 |
| <i>MPH Community-Engaged Learning (Service Learning) Requirement</i> | 25 |
| <i>Desire-to-Learn (D2L)</i> | 25 |
| MPH COURSES..... | 26 |
| <i>MPH Core Courses</i> | 26 |
| <i>MPH Concentration Courses and Competencies</i> | 28 |
| MPH APPLIED LEARNING EXPERIENCE (ALE) | 32 |
| GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS | 33 |
| DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS | 33 |
| <i>Graduate Certificate in Health Care Management</i> | 33 |
| <i>Graduate Certificate in Integrative Health</i> | 33 |
| <i>Graduate Certificate in Applied Mindfulness</i> | 33 |
| GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE DEPARTMENT:..... | 34 |
| <i>Graduate Certificate in Gerontology</i> | 34 |
| <i>Graduate Certificate in Urban and Regional Planning:</i> | 34 |
| <i>Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or Online Certificate in GIS:</i> | 34 |
| CAREER RESOURCES | 35 |
| UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES | 35 |
| THE WCU CAMPUS STORE | 35 |
| INFORMATION SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY DIVISION (IS&T)..... | 35 |
| LEARNING ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCE CENTER (LARC)..... | 36 |
| WRITING CENTER..... | 36 |
| TWARDOWSKI CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER..... | 37 |
| STUDENT RESOURCES | 37 |
| SYKES STUDENT UNION..... | 37 |
| LAWRENCE A. DOWDY MULTICULTURAL CENTER | 37 |
| GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT OFFICE | 38 |
| CENTER FOR WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY (CWGE)..... | 38 |
| INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN | 39 |
| CENTER FOR TRANS AND QUEER ADVOCACY..... | 39 |
| STUDENT SERVICES | 39 |
| STUDENT HOUSING | 39 |
| STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES | 40 |
| OFFICE OF WELLNESS PROMOTION..... | 40 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| COUNSELING SERVICES..... | 40 |
| OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY | 41 |
| OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMPLIANCE | 41 |
| VETERANS AFFAIRS..... | 41 |
| RESOURCE PANTRY..... | 42 |
| STUDENT SAFETY..... | 42 |
| EMERGENCY ALERT NOTIFICATION | 42 |
| EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS | 43 |
| WEATHER ALERT NOTIFICATION | 43 |
| CAMPUS RECREATION..... | 43 |
| STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS | 44 |
| WCU GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA)..... | 44 |
| WCU INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (IGSA) | 44 |
| MPH STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD (MPH SAB) | 45 |
| BLACK STUDENTS IN PUBLIC HEALTH (BSPH) | 45 |
| MPH PROGRAM ON SOCIAL MEDIA | 45 |
| PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS | 45 |
| DELTA OMEGA HONORARY SOCIETY IN PUBLIC HEALTH..... | 46 |
| PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (PPHA) | 46 |
| AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (APHA)..... | 46 |
| AMERICAN COLLEGE OF HEALTHCARE EXECUTIVES (ACHE)..... | 47 |
| ACHE OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA | 47 |
| NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION (NEHA) | 47 |
| SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION (SOPHE)..... | 47 |

WELCOME TO THE MPH PROGRAM

There are many paths leading to a career in public health. Whatever your prior training and experience or your future goals and aspirations, our intent is to share with you our common commitment to improving the health of the communities in which we live, work and play.

The Department of Public Health Sciences (DPHS) of West Chester University (WCU) provides a legacy of commitment to public health, combined with accessible, affordable graduate educational opportunities and excellent resources and services. Students benefit from the vast wealth of educational experience that the public health faculty provides in addition to the ongoing interaction with the community.

The faculty and staff in the DPHS have prepared this handbook for you, the new graduate student in the Master of Public Health (MPH) Program. The purpose of the handbook is to:

1. Provide you with information on the opportunities for graduate study within the Department of Public Health Sciences,
2. Explain important policies, procedures, and degree requirements in the MPH Program, and
3. Familiarize you with the Department of Public Health Sciences and the University. This handbook highlights information from the WCU Graduate Catalog along with MPH Program information you will need to be prepared to start your graduate studies at WCU.

We hope this handbook will answer many of your questions about our MPH Program. After reviewing the handbook, you may have additional questions about graduate academic administrative policies, university policies, and MPH course descriptions; please refer to the Graduate Catalog that is found on the [WCU website](#). For any other questions, please contact your academic advisor or program director/graduate coordinator.

Graduate students in the Department of Public Health Sciences have many opportunities to participate in student activities and to share in continuous improvement of programs. The full benefit of these opportunities is based upon a commitment to the highest levels of excellence in your graduate studies and professional lives.

History of Public Health Programs in the Department of Public Health Sciences (formerly Department of Health)

In 1999, the Master of Science (M.S.) in Health: Public Health Program was in its 17th year of providing quality graduate education in the Department of Health at West Chester University. Over the years, the health professions have experienced tremendous changes and challenges. The Department of Health faculty recognized these challenges and believed that a change in its degree offerings would enable us to enhance and expand the curriculum to effectively address the changing health needs of our local, regional, and national communities. Some of the issues in health care included managed care, providing health services for a growing aging population, community health promotion, disease prevention, health disparities and emergency preparedness in the face of a post-9-11 world. In 1999, the faculty in the Department of Health responded to these changes by creating an MPH degree program to effectively address the dynamic needs of our local, regional, national, and global communities. The University approved the revised graduate MPH curriculum in 1999. The MPH program explicitly added a population health focus to the range of graduate programs offered in the College of Health Sciences.

The Council on Public Health Education (CEPH) first accredited the MPH program in 2006. In 2006, the MPH program offered four concentrations in Community Health, Environmental Health, Health Care Administration, and Integrative Health. CEPH reaccredited the MPH program in 2014 under the directorship of Dr. Lynn Carson. In 2020, Dr. Stacie Metz assumed the MPH Program Director and Graduate Coordinator role. Currently, the MPH program offers three concentrations in Community Health, Environmental Health, and Health Care Management. The

success of the MPH program is a strong priority within the College of Health Sciences and within the Graduate School given the shortages in qualified public health workforce, increased regional workforce needs, and the rising job outlook.

The MPH degree builds upon a strong tradition of public health education at West Chester University. The Department of Public Health Sciences trains public health practitioners at both the undergraduate and graduate level. During the past three decades, faculty and students have been actively engaged in research and service in public health and provided service to a range of regional community health agencies such as the Alliance for Health Equity, Chester County Health Department, Montgomery County Health Department, Chester County Hospital, LCH Health and Community Services, Community Volunteers in Medicine, Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County, and the YMCA of Greater Brandywine. The MPH program enhances the university's strength in promoting public health and provides students with opportunities to engage in research and community service activities that benefit the health of the people within our region and beyond.

The revised MPH curriculum provides students with a solid foundation in the recognized core areas of public health. Students must complete 24 credits of core courses in foundations in public health, epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental health, health care management, research methods, social/ behavioral science, health policy, systems thinking, and interprofessional public health education. Additionally, students must complete 18 credits of courses within defined areas of specialization (concentrations) which prepares them for public health careers in community health, environmental health, or health care management. As a capstone experience, students complete a 4-credit, 200-hour Applied Learning Experience (I and II) practicum at a community practice site. The purpose of this experience is to allow students to employ newly acquired skills and knowledge to a current public health problem in a public health setting.

Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision

To achieve a just society where health is a human right.

Mission

The MPH program leverages the power of partnerships and engagement in research, education, and service to prepare diverse public health professionals that advocate and promote health, well-being, and human rights for all people.

Core Values

To promote the health of individuals and communities, public health professionals (students, staff, faculty, and others affiliated with the program) are invited to adopt and further the following core values of our program.

Community Engagement: We develop mutually beneficial partnerships regionally and globally to facilitate sustainable capacity building and engage community stakeholders in decision making processes.

Diversity and Inclusion: We commit to and support the diversity and inclusivity of individuals, institutions, and communities. We are working to address historical institutional racism and marginalization through public health efforts.

Human Rights and Justice: We respect human dignity by promoting human rights for all and addressing social, racial, economic, and environmental injustice in our practice at the behavioral, institutional, and systemic levels.

Interprofessional Collaboration: We address complex public health issues through ethical and professional practice, compassion, and collaboration with professionals from a range of disciplines.

Lifelong Learning: We are committed to evidence-based practice, seek opportunities for professional growth, and share our expertise with colleagues and the community.

Goals

To accomplish the MPH Program mission, we collectively monitor our Goals and their respective Objectives.

Education Goal: To prepare graduates with the knowledge and skills to pursue successful careers in the field of public health.

Research Goal: To model and engage graduate students in research and scholarly activity reflecting the theory and practice of public health.

Service Goal: To model and engage students in activities which promote and support service to the university, public health profession, and the community.

MPH Program Accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health

The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) is an independent agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit schools of public health and certain public health programs offered in settings other than schools of public health. These schools and programs prepare students for entry into careers in public health. The primary professional degree is the Master of Public Health (MPH), but other master and doctoral degrees are offered as well (CEPH, 2007). Our MPH Program is accredited by CEPH.

Goals of CEPH

The mission of the Council is "to assure quality in public health education and training to achieve excellence in practice, research and service, through collaboration with organizational and community partners." The Council's focus is the "improvement of health through the assurance of professional personnel who are able to identify, prevent and solve community health problems."

The CEPH goals are:

1. to promote quality in public health education through a continuing process of self-evaluation by the schools and programs that seek accreditation;
2. to assure the public that institutions offering graduate instruction in public health have been evaluated and judged to meet standards essential for the conduct of such educational programs; and
3. to encourage - through periodic review, consultation, research, publications, and other means improvements in the quality of education for public health. (CEPH, 2007)

Certification in Public Health (CPH) Through the National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE)

The NBPHE was established in September 2005 as an independent organization, to ensure that students and graduates from schools and programs of public health accredited by the Council on Education of Public Health (CEPH) have mastered the knowledge and skills relevant to contemporary public health. Students of CEPH-accredited schools and programs are eligible to sit for the CPH exam. The Certification in Public Health is the only credential of its kind for public health that demonstrates not only student's knowledge of key public health sciences, but also the student's commitment to the field through continuing education focused on emerging and

established public health issues. For more information about the CPH Exam, visit the [NBPHE website](#).

Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES, MCHES)

Health education practitioners are professionals who design, conduct, and evaluate activities that help improve the health of all people. These activities can take place in a variety of settings that include schools, communities, health care facilities, businesses, universities, and government agencies. Health educators are employed under a range of job titles such as patient educators, health education teachers, health coaches, community organizers, public health educators, community health workers, and health program managers. Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES, MCHES) are those who have met the standards of competence established by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing Inc. (NCHEC) and have successfully passed the CHES or MCHES examination. The CHES or MCHES designation after a community health practitioner's name is one indication of professional competency and commitment to continued professional development.

Students in the **Community Health Concentration** are eligible for the CHES or MCHES Exam as the required courses for this concentration prepare students for these exams. Students from other concentrations may be eligible for these exams if they take the required community health courses to prepare for the exams or if they graduated from an undergraduate public health program. For more information about the CHES or MCHES Exam, please ask a Community Health Concentration Advisor or visit the [NCHEC website](#).

MPH PROGRAM FACULTY AND STAFF

Department of Public Health Sciences Chair

The Chair provides the leadership for the Department of Public Health Sciences. The Chairperson serves as an advocate for the MPH program and works directly with the Dean of the College of Health Sciences to acquire appropriate funding and resources for program implementation. The Chairperson oversees all undergraduate and graduate programs in the Department of Public Health Sciences.

Dr. James Brenner | Phone: 610-436-2931 | Email: jbrenner@wcupa.edu | SECC 233

MPH Program Administrative Support

The Department Secretary provides administrative support for MPH Program and MPH faculty/students inclusive of enrollment support; office communications; fielding student questions of enrollment/registration, support services, and appropriate referral; updating Constant Contact email lists (current students, faculty, alumni, community partners); academic advisor assignment in RamPortal; student assignment to MPH Program Informational D2L site; and administrative support for MPH events.

Tammy Wyatt | Phone: 610-436-2245 | Email: twyatt@wcupa.edu | SECC 232

MPH Program Director & Graduate Coordinator

The MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator oversees all activities related to program management and its compliance with the CEPH accreditation standards. The Program Director/Graduate Coordinator ensures that the programs goals, objectives, and outcomes are met, and manages necessary program curriculum revisions, monitors assessment activities, and student recruitment and retention. They are responsible with reviewing and approving students' applications, providing general student advising, and ensuring meaningful interest holder engagement. The MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator provides support and referral to students experiencing an issue or seeking clarification on policies and procedures.

Dr. Stacie Metz | Phone: 610-436-2101 | Email: smetz@wcupa.edu | SECC 228

MPH Concentration Coordinators & Advisors

The MPH Concentration Coordinators also serve as concentration advisors. They are responsible for administration of the program concentrations, including management of concentration program learning objectives and outcomes; curriculum revisions, updates, and management of concentration specific course evaluations; graduation clearances; and, advising of students in their concentrations (e.g., course selection, suggestions for academic improvement, career guidance, etc.). Students on academic probation must seek out their advisor. Students are assigned a faculty advisor upon admission into the MPH Program on a specific concentration.

Students who are enrolled in our Accelerated BS Public Health to MPH Program regardless of concentration are assigned to Advisor Dr. Erin Knight. However, accelerated students are welcome to reach out to concentration advisors, other faculty, or the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator for professional development opportunities or career guidance.

| Community Health | Environmental Health | Health Care Management | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | Student last names starting with: A-L | Student last names starting with: M-Z |
| Dr. Ramona Stone 610-436-6975 rstone@wcupa.edu SECC 226 (Co-Advisor Dr. Stacie Metz) | Dr. Melanie Vile 610.436.2360 mvile@wcupa.edu SECC 277 | Dr. Harry Holt 610-436-2124 hholt@wcupa.edu SECC 229 | Dr. Gopal Sankaran 610-436-2300 gsankaran@wcupa.edu SECC 227 |
| Accelerated BS Public Health to MPH (all concentrations) | | | |
| Dr. Erin Knight 610-436-2113; eknight@wcupa.edu ; SECC 269 | | | |

MPH Applied Learning Experience Coordinator and Practicum Administrative Support

The Applied Learning Experience (ALE) Coordinator provides support and advising during the entire applied learning experience practicum process of HEA 649 ALE I (1-credit, practicum preparation) and HEA 650 ALE II (3-credit, 200-hour practicum). The ALE Coordinator coordinates four virtual ALE events per year that all students are invited to attend: Spring Alumni Panel on ALE experiences and ALE Graduating Student Poster Sessions at the end of each Spring, Summer, and Fall semester.

The College of Health Sciences Administrative Assistant of Clinical Experiences works closely with the Academic Affairs Agreements and Contracts to ensure that practicum affiliation agreements are completed in a timely manner during the HEA 649 ALE I preparatory 1-credit course semester.

| ALE Coordinator & ALE Faculty Advisor | Administrative Assistant of Clinical Experiences |
|--|--|
| Dr. Ramona Stone 610-436-6975 rstone@wcupa.edu SECC 226 | Heather Showers 610-436-2999 hshowers2@wcupa.edu SECC 379E |

MPH Faculty Roles and Contact Information

The following descriptions of faculty roles are provided to students for a better understanding of the organizational structure of the MPH Program. In other words, “who does what” in the MPH Program - who is responsible for program administration, advising, and instruction and helping students successfully complete the MPH Program.

| MPH Faculty Member | Role in the MPH Program | Contact Information |
|---|--|--|
| DR. STACIE METZ Professor BA, Bloomsburg University MA, Towson University MPH, MSW, PhD Saint Louis University | Program Director & Graduate Coordinator Chair, Program Committee Co-Chair, Core Course Committee Co-Chair, Community Advisory Board Co-Chair, Public Health Workforce Committee Co-Editor, MPH Connections Newsletter Community Health Faculty & Advisor | 610-436-2101 smetz@wcupa.edu SECC 228 |
| DR. RAMONA STONE Professor BA, Babes-Bolyai University MS, Technical Univ., Cluj-Napoca (RO) PhD, University of Louisville MPH, Harvard School of Public Health | Community Health Concentration Coordinator Applied Learning Experience Coordinator Chair, Community Health Concentration Committee Chair, MPH Assessment Committee Chair, Research Committee Chair, ALE Committee Community Health Faculty & Advisor Core Faculty | 610-436-6975 rstone@wcupa.edu SECC 226 |
| DR. MELANIE VILE Assistant Professor BS, MS, Villanova University PhD, University of Notre Dame | Environmental Health Concentration Coordinator Chair, Environmental Health Concentration Committee Environmental Health Faculty & Advisor Core Faculty | 610-436-2360 mvile@wcupa.edu SECC 277 |
| DR. HARRY HOLT Associate Professor BA, Indiana University of Pennsylvania JD/MBA, Case Western Reserve University PhD, Pennsylvania State University Licensure: Law | Health Care Management Concentration Coordinator HCM Graduate Certificate Coordinator Chair, Health Care Management Concentration Committee Health Care Management Faculty & Advisor Core Faculty MPH Student Advisory Board Faculty Advisor | 610-436-2124 hholt@wcupa.edu SECC 229 |
| DR. ZEINAB MOHAMAD BABA Assistant Professor MS, College of Public Health, Univ. of Iowa DrPH, Drexel University Certification: CPH | BS Public Health Program Director | 610-436-2164 zbaba@wcupa.edu SECC 278 |
| DR. CHIWONESO TINAGO Associate Professor BS, William Carey University MPH, University of Southern Mississippi PhD, University of South Carolina | Delta Omega Public Health Honorary Society Beta Xi Chapter Faculty Advisor Community Health Faculty Core Faculty | 610-436-2776 ctinago@wcupa.edu SECC 223 |
| DR. LORENZO CENA Associate Professor BS, Brigham Young University MS, Iowa State University PhD, University of Iowa | Environmental Health Faculty BS Environmental Health Sciences Program Director | 610-436-2623 lcena@wcupa.edu SECC 231 |

| MPH Faculty Member | Role in the MPH Program | Contact Information |
|--|--|--|
| DR. SHARON DEJOY Associate Professor BA, Columbia University MPH, PhD, University of South Florida Certification: CPH | Community Health Faculty Core Faculty | 610-436-3531 sdejoy@wcupa.edu SECC 274 |
| DR. ERIN KNIGHT Assistant Professor BA, University of Virginia, Charlottesville MPH, University of Minnesota PhD, University of Delaware | Chair, Community Service Committee Chair, Accelerated BS Public Health to MPH Committee Co-Chair, Core Course Committee Health Care Management Faculty Core Faculty | 610-436-2113 eknight@wcupa.edu SECC 269 |
| DR. NENE OKUNNA Associate Professor BSC, Nnamdi Azikiwe University MPH, MPPA, PhD, University of Massachusetts, Amherst | Health Care Management Faculty | 610-436-2185 nokunna@wcupa.edu SECC 270 |
| DR. GOPAL SANKARAN Professor MB, BS, Maulana Azad Medical College, University of Delhi, India MD, All India Institute of Medical Sciences MPH, DrPH, University of California, Berkeley Certifications: MNAMS, CHES | Health Care Management Faculty & Advisor Core Faculty Co-Editor, MPH Connections Newsletter | 610-436-2300 gsankaran@wcupa.edu SECC 227 |

MPH PROGRAM POLICIES

MPH Program Admissions

All the information needed for admission into the MPH Program is found on the [Graduate School website](#). West Chester University's policy for graduate studies includes that the highest possible grades do not guarantee admission to graduate school, nor do low grades automatically disqualify a candidate. Our policy is that no applicant should be admitted unless we expect that applicant to do well enough to graduate and have no serious academic problems. Graduate admission decisions are made using a variety of criteria including the undergraduate grade point average, letters of reference, an applicant's goal statement, and resume/CV. Individuals who have questions about their admissibility are encouraged to contact the Graduate School and/or the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator.

The Dean of the Graduate School must give official acceptance. Only written notice from the Dean constitutes approval of admission. Correspondence with a department or an individual faculty member does not constitute an admission promise or guarantee. Space must be available in the program. Requirements to resolve academic deficiencies are to be met prior to registering for graduate courses. Individual departments may have more rigorous requirements.

MPH Program draws a variety of students representing a wide array of health and non-health related undergraduate majors. Moreover, the MPH Program at West Chester University has a very diverse group of students, including many international students from across the world. Due to visa requirements, international students can only apply for admission to the Environmental Health concentration, which is offered in a hybrid

format. The US Department of Homeland Security will not approve Student VISAs for international students planning on enrolling in online degree programs. Therefore, the MPH Community Health concentration and Health Care Management concentration are not available for enrollment for international students.

The minimum requirements for admission in our MPH program include:

1. A baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited in the United States or its equivalent from a school in another country.
2. An undergraduate cumulative GPA of 2.80. Provisional acceptance may be possible under some circumstances for applicants who do not meet this standard.
3. Undergraduate Statistics Requirement
 - a. An undergraduate statistics course (MAT 121 or other) is required as a prerequisite for HEA 520 Public Health Epidemiology. If a student is unsure if a statistics course meets the requirement, please request a review by forwarding your course description and/or syllabus to Dr. Stacie Metz, MPH Program Director & Graduate Coordinator (smetz@wcupa.edu).
 - b. Students may begin the MPH Program (without the undergraduate statistics requirement) if other academic requirements are met, however, students will not be able to enroll in HEA 520 Public Health Epidemiology until they submit a copy of a transcript of the completed course to the MPH Program Director.
 - c. We strongly encourage students to complete the undergraduate statistics prerequisite course as soon as possible so as not to delay graduation.

Provisional Admission Status

An applicant who has academic deficiencies may be granted provisional status. The MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator and faculty advisor will identify a specific course plan to encourage success. Admission to degree study does not constitute admission to degree candidacy. After a student has satisfactorily fulfilled certain course requirements specified in the degree program and has completed 12 to 15 semester hours of work, the student must apply for admission to Degree Candidacy.

Full Time and Part Time Student Status

Students can enter the program with part-time (2-year plan) or full-time (3-year plan) status. Students who maintain part-time status are registered for approximately 3-6 credits per semester. Students who maintain full time status are registered for 9-12 credits per semester. To maintain financial aid status, students are required to register for a minimum of 4.5 credits per fall/spring semester.

Non-Degree Students

Students often begin their graduate college careers by enrolling in courses in non-degree status for personal and professional growth. Students may enroll in graduate-level courses on a non-degree basis after having earned a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution. "Non-degree" is an academic term for "not formally accepted into a degree program." Non-degree students may schedule up to nine credits of coursework on a non-matriculated basis. Non-degree students are permitted to enroll in any graduate course in which they possess the prerequisite coursework and/or can demonstrate, prior to enrollment, minimum performance competencies. Non-degree students may also be required to seek permission from the instructor. Students enrolling in courses under this policy are expected to meet the minimum GPA required for graduate work and are encouraged to seek the academic guidance of the graduate coordinator in their intended discipline. Completing courses on a non-degree basis does not guarantee admission, and credits earned may not necessarily be applied to a degree program later. Non-degree students are not eligible to receive financial aid. Additional coursework may be taken only after the student has applied and been accepted as a matriculated student into one of the categories described above.

Students should begin the formal application process immediately after they have decided to pursue a graduate degree at West Chester University. For additional information, contact the [Graduate School](#) at 610-436-2943 or GradAdmissions@wcupa.edu.

Graduate Transfer Credit

Credits earned through previous graduate study at another college or university may transfer credit under certain circumstances. Up to twelve (12) semester hours of graduate credit from MPH or related-graduate programs may be transferred for credit toward the MPH core and/or concentration courses at West Chester University. Only grades of “B” or better will be accepted for transfer. Transfer credit must carry a letter or numerical grade of “B” or better and cannot be a pass/fail course. Apply for a [Transfer of Graduate Credit Request](#) or a [Transfer of Credit Pre-Approval Request](#) on the [Graduate School Forms site](#). The acceptance of transfer credit is based on review and approval by the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator and MPH Concentration Coordinator.

The following conditions are the minimum requirements for acceptance of transfer credit:

1. The credits must have been earned at an accredited graduate school.
2. The courses taken must be approved by the department or program in which the applicant intends to enroll at West Chester University and by the Dean of the Graduate School.
3. The maximum number of credits number of transfer credits that may be applied to a student's degree/program shall not exceed 30 percent of the total required. The grade earned for courses to be transferred must be B or better.
4. An official transcript and a course catalog description or syllabus must be submitted. Transcripts must be sent directly to the Graduate School by the institution that granted the credits.
5. Current WCU students who wish to take course work at other institutions for credit at West Chester University must obtain approval from their MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator and the Dean of the Graduate School prior to enrollment.

Changes in MPH Concentration within the MPH Program

Students may decide to change their concentration after the start of the program. All students will need to complete the MPH core courses, regardless of current concentration status. If students decide to change concentrations, it should be done early in the program before completing several required courses in the student's original concentration. Students will need to meet with the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator and an advisor in the new concentration to ensure a smooth transition from the current concentration to the new concentration. It is important to note that required courses in the current concentration may not fit the requirements of the new concentration. Additional courses may be needed to meet the requirements of the new concentration.

To formally request a change in concentration, students will need to complete the [Change/Remove Concentration Form](#) on the [Graduate School Forms site](#). Students need to enter the name of their current concentration and the name of the new concentration. The online form is submitted directly to the Graduate School and the request is sent to the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator for approval. Once approved, students will receive an email from the Graduate School confirming the outcome of the request. Upon the confirmation, a new concentration-specific advisor will be assigned.

Maintaining Immigration Status

It is important for students and exchange visitors to understand the concept of immigration status and the consequences of violating that status. Being aware of the requirements and possible consequences will make it more likely that you can avoid problems with maintaining your status. Every visa is issued for a particular purpose and for a specific class of visitor. Each visa classification has a set of requirements that the visa holder must follow and maintain. Those who follow the requirements maintain their status and ensure their ability to remain in the United States. Those who do not follow the requirements violate their status and are considered “out of status.” Failure to maintain status can result in arrest, and violators may be required to leave the United States. Violation of status also can affect the prospect of readmission to the United States for a period of time. A major responsibility of all international students is to maintain their immigration status. For common international student FAQs, see the [Global Engagement Office International Student FAQs](#). Specific policies for maintaining immigration status are found on the [Global Engagement Office website](#).

MPH Program Completion

The program at West Chester University is 46-credit hour MPH degree. To be eligible to receive a graduate degree, graduate students must complete all required courses and achieve the minimum number of 46 credits with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.

All requirements for the master’s degree including course work and the Applied Learning Experience I and II must be completed **within six years of admission into the MPH Program**. It is important to note that MPH Concentration advising sheets offer two recommended course rotations to complete the degree within two or three years. Students have the option of taking one course a semester, but this may jeopardize the ability to complete the program within the six-year time limit. If a student needs additional time to complete the program due to extenuating circumstances, contact the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator for guidance and complete a [Petition for Exception to University Policy \(for Graduate Students\)](#) on RamPortal (see hyperlink for instructions).

Leave of Absence

A maximum of two consecutive semesters of non-enrollment are permitted before a student must enroll or request a Leave of Absence. Students may formally submit the [Leave of Absence Form](#) to ensure they remain an active student. Approved leaves of absence do not release the student from the six-year time limitation stipulated for the completion of degree requirements. If a student needs additional time to complete the program due to extenuating circumstances, contact the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator for guidance and complete a [Petition for Exception to University Policy \(for Graduate Students\)](#) on RamPortal (see hyperlink for instructions).

If a student does not file a formal Leave of Absence form and is no longer an active student, students may request readmission to the program in which they were previously enrolled by completing the Graduate School’s [Readmission Request Form](#) and reach out to the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator for assistance.

Academic Good Standing

Students must maintain a 3.00 cumulative GPA to remain in good standing in the MPH Program.

Academic Probation/Dismissal

Academic Probation. Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation. Graduate students must raise their GPA to 3.00 by the end of the next semester (or full summer term) in which they register. An additional probationary semester may be granted at the discretion of the graduate dean. If a student fails to meet the conditions of academic probation, they will be dismissed. Graduate

students on academic probation are not eligible for graduate assistantships. Students holding graduate assistantships who fail to maintain a 3.00 cumulative GPA will have their assistantships revoked or will not have them renewed.

Dismissal. Graduate students earning a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or lower will be dismissed from their graduate program without a probationary period. Graduate students admitted provisionally who fail to meet the provisions of admission are subject to dismissal. Additionally, a graduate student earning an F/Z grade in any course will be dismissed. An F/Z earned at West Chester University may not be made up at another institution of higher learning for the same course. Students dismissed from the university may apply for re-admission. The original program reserves the right to refuse to re-admit the student.

- Students dismissed from the university may apply for re-admission by submitting the Graduate School's [Petition for Exception to University Policy \(Graduate Students\)](#). Students are encouraged to seek support and guidance from their academic advisor and the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator.
- All grades recorded determine the student's academic standing, even if a student changes degree program. Students dropped from a graduate program due to unsatisfactory work will not be permitted to take courses for credit towards a graduate degree in that department beyond the semester in which they are dropped.
- Students dismissed from the university are not eligible for graduate assistantships. Students holding graduate assistantships will have their assistantships revoked or will not have them renewed.

As a reminder, to be eligible to earn a graduate certificate or degree, graduate students must complete all requisite courses and credits with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00.

Course Repeat Policy

Graduate students may repeat up to two courses, which are being applied to their degree. Courses may be repeated only once. Both grades earned for a course will remain on the student's record; however, the most recent grade (whether it is higher or lower) will be used in the GPA calculation. This policy also applies to courses taken at the undergraduate level and applied to the graduate degree or certificate program or taken as a prerequisite for the program (such as WCU MAT 121 Statistics). Students who wish to repeat a course more than one time should complete the Graduate School's [Petition for Exception to University Policy \(Graduate Students\)](#). Students are encouraged to seek support and guidance from their academic advisor and the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator.

Degree Candidacy

Degree candidacy application must be made immediately upon completion of 12-15 semester hours of course work. To be eligible for degree candidacy, students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0. The forms are available online or through the Graduate School.

1. Every student must file an online application for admission to degree candidacy with the Dean of the Graduate School ([Degree Candidacy Application](#)).
2. When the application has been evaluated by the department and by the Dean of the Graduate School, a letter of acceptance or rejection will be sent to the student.
3. Upon notice of acceptance, degree candidates must confer with their advisors to continue with their previously established program of study.

Application for Graduation

Each candidate for a graduate degree must [Apply to Graduate on RamPortal](#). An automatic fee of \$99 will be added to their account. Students will apply to graduate the semester prior to their official graduation date according to this timeline.

- May graduation - February 1
- August graduation - June 1
- December graduation - October 1

Students who complete course requirements in the summer are eligible to walk in the May or December Graduation Ceremony. International students walk in May prior to their August graduation date. The Graduate School and Commencement team will email you details about the Graduate Student commencement ceremony. When students officially graduate in August (with successful completion of degree requirements) and participate in the May or December Graduation Ceremony, the final graduation clearance occurs in September and diplomas are issued at that time.

For questions about commencement, visit the [Commencement website](#) or contact commencement@wcupa.edu.

MPH Advising

Upon admission to the program, each student is assigned an academic advisor based upon the student's concentration selection. All advisors hold five student consultation hours, generally a mix of in-person and virtual via Zoom. During advisement periods, students are encouraged to meet with their assigned advisor by scheduling advising appointments. Students meet with their academic advisors on a regular basis to develop or modify program plans to meet the requirements for graduation. Advisors are also available to guide students to appropriate university support services and to discuss professional development and career plans.

Advisors are available during the fall and spring semesters. During the winter or summer semesters, please reach out to the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator for assistance. It is recommended that students meet with advisors during the fall/spring semesters to resolve advising issues as students should not expect quick responses to questions when advisors are not readily available during the winter/summer months.

A list of **FACULTY ADVISORS** with phone numbers, email addresses, and office room numbers are found below.

| Community Health | Environmental Health | Health Care Management | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | Student last names starting with: A-L | Student last names starting with: M-Z |
| Dr. Ramona Stone 610-436-6975 rstone@wcupa.edu SECC 226 (Co-Advisor Dr. Stacie Metz) | Dr. Melanie Vile 610-436-2360 mvile@wcupa.edu SECC 277 | Dr. Harry Holt 610-436-2124 hholt@wcupa.edu SECC 229 | Dr. Gopal Sankaran 610-436-2300 gsankaran@wcupa.edu SECC 227 |
| Accelerated BS Public Health to MPH (all concentrations) | | | |
| Dr. Erin Knight 610-436-2113 eknight@wcupa.edu SECC 269 | | | |

We also hold a **virtual group advising session** twice a year in late February and late September. The MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator reviews common policies and procedures and any substantive changes to the course rotation. This first 30 minutes is followed by concentration break-out sessions with Concentration Coordinators who will discuss concentration curriculum updates and tips on professional development and career preparation. Zoom email invitations will be sent via email in our MPH Student Announcements.

| Semester/s Scheduling for: | Approx. Group Advising Sessions: | Approx. Registration Date |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Spring semester | End of September in the prior year | Early-to-mid October the prior year |
| Summer and Fall semester | End of February | Early-to-mid March |

Course Scheduling

It is the responsibility of the student to meet with their academic advisor individually or via the group advising sessions to plan their course schedule. The academic advisor will help the student select courses in appropriate sequence to meet MPH Program requirements. Registration for each fall/spring semester begins approximately mid-semester and students should plan on meeting with academic advisors early in the semester to select courses for the next semester.

RamPortal is the WCU online student portal, where students can view and manage their academic records. Graduate students who are accepted and matriculated (with deposit paid) have access to RamPortal. Students will need to establish a username and password for access. View [RamPortal Tutorials](#) to navigate registration, browse classes, scheduling, term tasks, update personal information, drop or withdraw from a class, and accept financial terms & conditions.

Advising Sheets for MPH Program Concentrations

Each MPH Concentration has an advising sheet that lists the required core and concentration courses. Additionally, each sheet contains recommended course sequences to complete the program as a full-time (2-year) or part-time (3-year) student. International students in the Environmental Health concentration, as noted on the advising sheet, are required to follow the full-time (2-year) plan with the two in-person core courses in addition to the six concentration courses to maintain visa regulations. The course sequences are recommended in the designated format to enable students to complete courses with prerequisite requirements for Applied Learning Experience I and II. It is the student's responsibility to check with their academic advisors to ensure that courses are scheduled in appropriate sequence for successful completion of course work. Advising sheets for each concentration are available on the MPH's webpage under Academics, the D2L MPH Program Informational Site, or through the student's assigned academic advisor.

Faculty/Student Communications

The MPH faculty maintains open lines of communication with students. Faculty and advisors are available to assist students with course selections, career advice and guidance for improving academic performance. The MPH faculty understands that students at the graduate level have commitments outside of the classroom including family and employment responsibilities. If problems arise, we prefer that student be proactive and work with course instructors and advisors to resolve issues/problems as soon as possible. We ask that students follow these guidelines for effective faculty/student communication in the MPH Program:

Student Issues Within Courses

At times, a student may have an issue within a course that needs to be resolved so the student can move forward. If a student is having issues or problems in a particular course, we ask that the student meet with the course instructor to resolve the issue. Students may wish to seek support and guidance from the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator. If the issue is not resolved after discussion with the course instructor, the student and course instructor will meet with the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator. If the issue is not resolved at this point, a meeting will be arranged with the Department Chair, the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator, the course instructor, and the student.

Student/Director/Chair of Communications

The MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator and Department Chair are available to meet with students to discuss issues/problems if they cannot be resolved through the course instructor or academic advisor. We ask students to follow professional protocol when trying to resolve issues or concerns in courses and advisement. Academic advisors and course instructors are contacted as the first step in the process, the second step is contact with the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator and finally the Department Chair. Email is the easiest way to contact the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator Dr. Stacie Metz (smetz@wcupa.edu) or the Department Chair Dr. Jim Brenner (jbrenner@wcupa.edu).

Campus Email

Students are expected to check their West Chester University Email account. Many important university notices are sent to students via WCU email. Faculty are expected to correspond with students through their WCU email addresses. Students can forward their WCU email to their personal email accounts. Students should contact Academic Computing Services to establish the forwarding system for WCU email.

GRADUATE GRADING SYSTEM

The following **grading system** applies to graduate students:

| Grade | Quality Points | Interpretation |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| A | 4.00 | Superior graduate attainment |
| A- | 3.67 | |
| B+ | 3.33 | Satisfactory graduate attainment |
| B | 3.00 | |
| B- | 2.67 | |
| C+ | 2.33 | Attainment below graduate expectations |
| C | 2.00 | |
| C- | 1.67 | |
| F | 0 | Failure |
| Z | 0 | Failure |
| IP | | In Progress |
| NG | | No Grade |
| W | | Withdrawal |
| Y | | Administrative Withdrawal |
| AU | | Audit |
| M | | Military Withdrawal |
| Grading System Grad | | |

West Chester University does not recognize a grade of D for graduate study. Therefore, any grade below a C- in a graduate course is considered a failure and carries zero quality points.

- IP (In Progress) is given to indicate work in progress and will be used only for protected courses (theses, practicums, internships, recitals, and research reports); see "Removing 'In Progress' Designation."
- NG (No Grade) is given when a student fails to complete course requirements by the end of a semester and a time extension is granted by the instructor; see "Removing 'No Grade' Designation. A 'W' (Withdrawal) is given when a student withdraws from a course between the end of the first and the end of the 14th-class week of the semester or the equivalent in summer sessions.
- Y (Administrative Withdrawal) is given under appeal when there are nonacademic mitigating circumstances, and there is documentation that the student never, in fact, attended class.
- M (Military Withdrawal) In accordance with PA House Bill No. 1460: A grade of "M" will be given for military students and spouses who must withdraw due to military obligation. PA National Guard and other reserve

components called to active duty (for reasons other than for training) and their spouses will receive a grade of M when unable to complete classes due to activation for military obligations. Students are required to notify the Registrar's Office to receive a non-punitive M grade and will be required to provide appropriate documentation.

- Z Grade A grade received when a student stops attending a course and fails to officially withdraw from it. The grade is counted the same way that an F would count toward the cumulative average and Academic Standing. The grade assigned to the student must reflect the percentage equivalent of the plus, minus, and straight grades earned in a course.

Removing the "In Progress" Grade Designation

IP grades indicate work in progress and will be used only for protected courses (these, practicums, internships, recitals, and research reports). Students must complete course requirements as stipulated by the professor and not later than the end of the 14th week of the *second* subsequent semester or the IP grade will convert to an F. An IP grade may not be replaced with a NG.

Removing "No Grade" Designation

NG grades will be given when a student fails to complete course requirements by the end of a semester and a time extension is granted by the professor. Students must complete course requirements as stipulated by the professor and not later than the end of the 14th week of the subsequent semester or the NG grade will convert to an F at the end of the semester.

Grade Change Policy

Course grades are awarded by the professor of record and reported to the university registrar. These grades, other than NG or IP, are considered final, but may be changed at the discretion of the faculty member. Any change submitted after that date requires approval of the Provost or their designee. Appropriate justifications for changing a final course grade include but are *not limited* to: (1) computational error, (2) completion of course work missed during the semester, or (3) other.

Grade Appeals Policy

The Grade Appeals Policy applies only to questions of student evaluation. Since appeals involve questions of judgment, the Grade Appeals Board will not recommend that a grade be revised in the student's favor unless there is clear evidence that the final grade awarded for the class was based on prejudiced or capricious judgment or was inconsistent with official University policy. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) for cases where the grade appeal involves a grade given for academic dishonesty. Grades are awarded by the faculty member of record and can only be changed by said faculty member unless the Provost directs otherwise following the procedure found in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Contact the MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator for support and assistance with the [Grade Appeal process](#).

Academic Integrity Policy

Any situation involving a violation of academic integrity is of major concern to the University. Faculty members preserve and transmit the values of the academic community through example in their own academic pursuits and through the learning environment that they create for their students. They are expected to instill in their students a respect for integrity and an understanding of the importance of honesty within their chosen profession. Faculty must also take measures to discourage student academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Commitment to maintaining and encouraging high standards of academic integrity is demonstrated in many ways. One way is through the establishment of policies and procedures governing violation of the standards of academic integrity. The following policies, procedures, and definitions are intended to help faculty meet these responsibilities.

1. First, the instructor has both the right and the responsibility to demand academic honesty of all students. A grade certifies both knowledge and a standard of academic integrity. It is essential that the instructors retain the right to set the minimum academic penalty for academic dishonesty in a course, subject to the appeal rights of a student.
2. Second, cheating is not just a matter between an instructor and student in a specific course. While it is the right and duty of the instructor to set minimum penalties for dishonesty in a particular course, the University is responsible for the minimum standards of academic integrity and achievement on which degrees are based. It is the University that permits students to remain members of the academic community and finally certifies that students have attained sufficient academic credit and exhibited acceptable standards of conduct to entitle them to a degree.
3. Third, students accused of academic dishonesty have the right to have their case heard in a fair and impartial manner, with all the safeguards available within the bounds of due process.

Violations of Academic Integrity

Violations of the academic integrity standards of West Chester University fall into five broadly defined categories:

1. Fabrication: Fabrication is the use of invented information or the falsification of research, information, citations, or other findings.
2. Cheating: Cheating is an act or an attempted act of deception by which a student seeks to misrepresent their mastery of the information or skills being assessed. It includes, but is not limited to, using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
3. Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, other academically dishonest acts such as tampering with grades; or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a test that has not yet been administered; or disrupting or interfering with the ability of others to complete academic assignments. It also includes violations of the Student Code of Conduct, as they relate to the academic environment.
4. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Facilitating academic dishonesty includes helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
5. Breach of Standards of Professional Ethics: In certain degree programs, students will be instructed on and provided with that profession's code of ethics (e.g., [American Public Health Association \(APHA\) Public Health Code of Ethics](#), American Nurses Association Code for Nurses). Under some circumstances, if a student is found to have violated that professional code, that violation may be considered a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy.

Procedures for Handling Cases

Faculty are responsible for determining the grades earned in their courses, and they are the first step in determining if a violation of academic integrity has occurred. They are also the first individuals to determine what penalty should be levied. A faculty member responsible for assigning final grades in a course may acquire evidence, either directly or through information supplied by others, that a student violation of academic integrity may have occurred. After collecting the evidence available, the faculty member will meet with the student to present the evidence of an alleged violation and request an explanation.

If the faculty member accepts the student's explanation, no further action is taken. If the faculty member determines that a violation has occurred, the faculty member informs the student, within five class days of their decision, using the appropriate form, of the penalty that will be imposed. The faculty member will also inform the

student of their rights to file an appeal within 10 class days of the faculty member's decision.

Once a faculty member has charged a student with academic dishonesty, the student may not withdraw from the course to avoid a grade penalty or to prevent the filing of the Report of Violation of Academic Integrity. Any student who withdraws from a course before the charge is made may be re-registered for the course so that appropriate action can be taken.

The faculty member fills out and forwards a copy of the Report of Violation of Academic Integrity, together with any additional supporting documentation, to their department chairperson. In departments that have a departmental Academic Integrity Board, the faculty member will forward the information to the departmental board. The department chair (or chair of the departmental board) will forward the information to the Dean of The Graduate School. If the faculty member is the department chair and there is no departmental board, the report will be sent directly to the Dean of The Graduate School. The report includes: The nature of the charge/evidence against the student; A brief summary of the meeting with the student; The faculty member's decision; The right of appeal to the department chair (or departmental board).

If the student is subsequently found **not guilty** of the charge, the student may either: remain in the course without penalty, or withdraw from the course regardless of any published deadlines.

If the student is found **guilty** of violating the student Academic Integrity Policy, the student may not withdraw from the course and will receive the sanction imposed by the instructor or other academic authority.

Penalties

All acts of academic dishonesty violate standards essential to the existence of an academic community. Most offenses are properly handled and remedied by the faculty member teaching the course in which they occur. The penalties that may be assessed by the faculty member include the following:

- Completion of alternative work, with or without a grade reduction
- A reduced grade (including "F" or zero) for the assignment
- A reduced grade (including "F") for the entire course

A grade of "F" for the course, due to a violation of academic integrity, will result in automatic dismissal from the University. Students dismissed under these circumstances are considered ineligible for readmission to another academic program at West Chester University. Whatever the penalty, the report describing the incident and recording the decision will be kept by the Dean of The Graduate School until the student has graduated and the degree has been awarded. Individual departments may establish a "zero tolerance" policy for their majors. Students must be clearly informed of such a policy by those departments. The purpose of this record keeping is to ensure that students who violate the University's student Academic Integrity Policy a second time are dealt with appropriately. A second violation will result in automatic expulsion from the University.

TUITION, FEES, FINANCIAL AID AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Tuition and Fees

For assessing tuition and fees, part-time students are enrolled in six (6) or fewer credits. Full-time students are those who are enrolled in nine (9) or more credits during fall and spring semesters. Graduate students enrolled for more than fifteen (15) credits per semester are charged additional fees for every credit over 15. In state residents' tuition and fees are lower than out of state residents' tuition and fees. For up-to-date information on tuition and fees at any given time, contact the [Office of the Bursar](#) at 610-436-2552 or the [Office of Financial Aid](#) at 610-436-2627.

Financial Aid

The purpose of financial aid at West Chester University is to provide financial assistance and counseling to students who can benefit from further education, but who cannot obtain it without such assistance. Financial assistance consists of gift aid in the form of scholarships or grants and self-help aid in the form of employment or loans. The main responsibility for meeting educational expenses rests with students. Financial aid is a supplement to family contributions and is to be used for educational expenses. Eligibility for financial aid, except for some assistantships and scholarships, is based on demonstrated financial need. Family income, assets, and family size influence the demonstrated financial need of the student. Direct questions concerning financial aid to the [Office of Financial Aid](#).

The Department of Public Health Sciences has a limited number of scholarships or awards. The availability of awards varies by emphasis area. For more information on scholarships, awards, and graduate assistantships, visit the [MPH program website](#) and view the *Financial Support & Assistantships* and *Professional & Career Development* menu options.

Course Withdrawal/Change in Enrollment Status and Financial Aid

Students who officially withdraw or change their enrollment status may be entitled to a refund of certain fees, in accordance with University policy (see "[Refund Information](#)" section). If the student has been awarded financial aid for the semester in which the withdrawal or enrollment change occurs, a portion of the refund will be returned to financial aid program funds. When funding is returned, the student may owe a debit balance to the University. The student should contact the [Office of the Bursar](#) to plan to pay the balance.

Financial aid refunds due to withdrawals or enrollment changes are processed in accordance with federal, state, and awarding agency guidelines and regulations. A student considering withdrawal, or an enrollment status change, should consult the [Office of Financial Aid](#) to determine the impact of that action on current and future financial aid. To submit an online course withdrawal form, please visit RamPortal.

Graduate Assistantships

A graduate assistantship is an opportunity to gain professional experience in research and/or service on campus while earning a tuition waiver and stipend. MPH students may apply to both Department of Public Health Sciences and campus-wide graduate assistant (GA) opportunities. To be eligible for a GA position, students must matriculate into the MPH program and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0. The application process is different for positions within the Department of Public Health Sciences and across the campus; hence, please see below for more information.

Department of Public Health Sciences GA Positions

All matriculated MPH students with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 are invited to complete an electronic application to be considered for an internal Department of Public Health Sciences graduate assistant (DPHS GA) position.

- **Review Cycle:** The call for DPHS GA applications begins in January for academic year (fall and spring semesters) and fall semester-only positions, *and* in October for spring-only positions. The call for applications will be in *MPH Student Announcement* emails. Individual DPHS faculty members with open GA positions review all applicant materials and put forward a ranking of their top candidates. Students who are selected will receive an award letter from the Graduate School. Applications of students not selected will continue to be considered for all future DPHS GA position openings during their academic career, unless noted otherwise.
- **Application:** Students are asked to complete and submit the [electronic internal DPHS GA application in REDCap](#). The application will ask for the following information: (1) basic student information, (2) program status and position format preferences (in-person, remote, or combination), (3) experience with specific professional skills, (4) open-ended short answer questions, and (5) resume/CV upload.
- **Position Availability and Hours:** Most internal DPHS GA positions are hired in April-May for the next full academic year (Fall and Spring semesters). There are fewer positions available starting in Spring. Most DPHS GA positions are 3-credit (5-hr/week) positions with some 6-credit (10-hr/week) positions available. Due to the limited number of DPHS GA positions, the application process is competitive. We recommend applying for both DPHS and campus-wide GA positions at the same time. You may accept more than one GA position if offered.
- **Compensation:** For university compensation package details, [please refer to the Graduate School GA FAQ](#).
- **Questions?** Contact Dr. Stacie Metz, MPH Program Director/Graduate Coordinator.

Campus-Wide GA Positions

Since our Department of Public Health Sciences GA position availability is limited, we highly recommend that students also apply for GA positions across the WCU campus. These positions external to our department are available for viewing at our WCU [Twardowski Career Development Center website](#). For more details about campus-wide GA positions, view the [Graduate School's Graduate Assistantships' website](#).

- Current matriculated students (those with WCU login credentials) must apply for GA positions through [Handshake](#). Students must login to view available positions and submit applications through Handshake. Once logged into Handshake and select Job Type On-Campus Student Employment. GA opportunities will specifically have Graduate Assistant in the title. If you have questions about logging into Handshake or searching for available campus-wide GA positions, contact the Career Development Center at cdc@wcupa.edu.
- Newly admitted students (those without WCU login credentials) can view available GA positions [can view available GA positions here](#). Students must email application materials to the contact person listed for the position. Please note that students cannot be formally offered a GA position until they are fully matriculated into the MPH program by paying their deposit.

MPH CURRICULUM

Overview

The MPH Program curriculum provides students with a strong foundation in the recognized core areas of public health. All students must complete 24 credits of core courses in foundations in public health, epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental health, health care management, research methods, social/ behavioral science, health policy, systems thinking, and interprofessional public health education. Students will also participate in a 4-credit, 200-hour practicum, called the Applied Learning Experience (ALE).

The MPH Program offers three elective concentrations, each with its own course requirements: (1) Community Health, (2) Environmental Health, and (3) Health Care Management. Within each concentration, students complete 18 additional credits of courses within defined areas of specialization which prepares them for public health careers in community health, environmental health, or health care management.

At the end of the program, as a capstone experience, students participate in a 4-credit and 200-hour Applied Learning Experience (I and II) practicum at a community agency, under the supervision of a public health professional with an MPH degree or at least five years of public health experience. This practicum is a planned, supervised and evaluated learning experience. The purpose of ALE I and II is to introduce students to an agency to experience how this agency works on community/public health problems. This practicum allows students to integrate core MPH foundational and concentration competencies with selected specialties and to employ newly acquired skills and knowledge to a current public health problem in a community setting.

MPH Course Formats

All courses in the MPH Program are scheduled for fall and/or spring semesters. In-person courses are offered Mondays-Thursdays from 4:25-7:10pm to accommodate working students. Starting in Fall 2025, the Applied Learning Experience I and II (HEA 649 and 650) are the only two courses offered over the summer. Scheduling varies from one year to another.

In-Person Course Format

Courses offered in the traditional format are scheduled for 15 weeks. In-person classes meet one day a week for 3 hours during Fall and Spring semesters. Class times are 4:25pm-7:10pm, Monday through Thursday. Only two core courses are available in the in-person format – HEA 520 Public Health Epidemiology (Fall, Thursdays 4:25-7:10pm) and HEA 526 Biostatistics for Public Health (Fall, Mondays 4:25-7:10pm). These two core courses also have a 100% online asynchronous section in the Spring semesters. All Environmental Health concentration courses are offered in-person.

100% Online Asynchronous Format

The **MPH in Community Health and the MPH in Health Care Management are both offered 100% online asynchronous** with the option for students to take up to 6 credits of the core coursework in-person (HEA 520 and 526). The **MPH in Environmental Health is offered as hybrid** in which the six concentration courses are in-person with an option to enroll in the two in-person core courses (HEA 520 and 526). The remaining core coursework is in the 100% online asynchronous format. It is important that **International Students in the Environmental Health concentration** follow the recommended course plans (see advising sheets) to ensure compliance with the requirement of in-person to online course ratio every semester. International students are required to enroll in a minimum of 9 credits per Fall or Spring semester, with at least 6 credits of in-person coursework.

Distance education uses technology to facilitate learning without the limitation of time or place. Online courses require full use of Desire2Learn (D2L) digital submission and interactive facilities, as well as a WCU e-mail account. D2L is accessible from the [WCU homepage](#), choose the D2L tab, and enter your username and password (same as your WCU email account). Zoom (offered through WCU) offers possible visual means with which to connect to the instructor and fellow students; therefore, a computer camera peripheral and external/internal microphone is strongly recommended. Technical assistance is available through the WCU IT Help Desk Support at 610-436-3350 or D2L after-hours hotline at 1-877-325-7778. See the [Distance Education website](#) for more information.

Summer and Winter Courses

Pending on the need for extra sections, a few required core and concentration courses may be offered during summer/winter sessions. This condensed format allows students to be immersed in the course and provides time for trips to regional organizations and study abroad opportunities. Starting Fall 2025, the only summer courses available for enrollment include HEA 649 ALE I (1-credit) and HEA 650 ALE II (3-credit, 200-hour practicum).

International Study Abroad Courses

MPH students have opportunities to participate in study abroad with faculty across the university who offer courses with a public health-related emphasis in Africa, South and Central America; more opportunities are being developed every year. Topic areas range from community health to environmental issues. These courses are scheduled throughout the academic year with most opportunities offered during spring and summer semesters. To find out more, contact the [Global Engagement Office's Education Abroad team](#).

MPH Community-Engaged Learning (Service Learning) Requirement

The MPH Program provides students the opportunity to engage in community service to enable students to cultivate professionalism and conscious responsibility toward the profession along with the goals of public health through service to communities, agencies, underserved populations, and organizations. Students will need to complete a Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) Requirement during their time in the MPH Program. Within each concentration, a specific course will include the CEL requirement. For students who wish to volunteer in our region, contact the [Center for Civic Engagement & Social Impact](#) for support in identifying an organization.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

The West Chester University utilizes Desire to Learn (D2L) platform for course delivery and student assessment. The D2L is a family of software applications designed to enhance teaching and learning. It is an intuitive and easy-to-use software for instructors and students alike. At WCU, students can access their courses on D2L for course materials (e.g., syllabi, PowerPoints and outlines, activities, discussion boards, course announcements, course evaluations and other resources). Each instructor provides the material that is appropriate for their courses on D2L. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the course materials posted on their D2L site. Students will need to check their D2L accounts daily, throughout the semester. Faculty may also communicate with students through the WCU email system. Students are asked to regularly check their WCU emails. Additionally, faculty will make announcements in class if there is a new development or change in the program that needs to be quickly communicated to the MPH students.

D2L is accessible from the [WCU homepage](#), choose the D2L tab, and enter your username and password (same as your WCU email account). Zoom (offered through WCU) offers possible visual means with which to connect to the instructor and fellow students; therefore, a computer camera peripheral and external/internal microphone is strongly recommended. Technical assistance is available through the WCU IT Help Desk Support at 610-436-3350 or D2L after-hours hotline at 1-877-325-7778. See the [Distance Education website](#) for more information.

MPH COURSES

Students should refer to the [Graduate Catalog](#) for a complete listing of course numbers and descriptions of MPH core and concentration courses.

The MPH Program has a set of competencies for the core courses and the program concentrations. Students should become familiar with the core foundational and concentration competencies as these competencies provide the foundation for professional standards in the MPH Program. All students, regardless of their concentrations, need to meet the following MPH Foundational Competencies, primarily addressed in the MPH Core Courses, and the Concentration Competencies specific to their chosen specialization.

MPH Core Courses

All MPH candidates are required to take the following core courses to gain an understanding of 1) the multidimensional factors affecting public health, 2) the organization, financing, delivery, and administration of health services, and 3) methods for monitoring, analyzing, and assessing public health needs:

MPH CORE COURSES (28 Credits)

| Course | Online Format | In Person Format (4:25-7:10 PM) | Credits |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------------|---------|
| HEA 503 Foundations in Public Health | Fall/Spring | ---- | 1 |
| HEA 516 Health Care Management | Fall/Spring | ---- | 3 |
| HEA 520 Public Health Epidemiology* | Spring | Fall (Thursday) | 3 |
| HEA 526 Biostatistics for Public Health | Spring | Fall (Monday) | 3 |
| ENV 530 General Environmental Health | Fall/Spring | ---- | 3 |
| HEA 605 Utilizing Systems Thinking in Public Health | Fall/Spring | ---- | 1 |
| HEA 615 Policy in Public Health | Fall/Spring | ---- | 3 |
| HEA 632 Social and Behavior Aspects of Public Health | Fall/Spring | ---- | 3 |
| HEA 647 Interprofessional Practice in Public Health | Fall/Spring | ---- | 1 |
| HEA 648 Research Methods in Public Health | Fall/Spring | ---- | 3 |
| HEA 649 Applied Learning Experience I** (Preparatory course for practicum) | Fall/Spring/Sum | ---- | 1 |
| HEA 650 Applied Learning Experience II*** (200-hour practicum) | Fall/Spring/Sum | ---- | 3 |

*Course prerequisite: MAT121 or equivalent, **Prerequisites: HEA520 & HEA526, ***Prerequisite: HEA649

NOTE: Both HEA 520 Public Health Epidemiology and HEA 526 Biostatistics for Public Health will only be offered in the Fall as in-person and the Spring as online.

MPH Foundational Competencies

MPH Foundational Competencies define what a successful student in the Master of Public Health program in the Department of Public Health Sciences at West Chester University should know and be able to do upon completion of the MPH core and concentration courses.

| MPH Foundational Competencies |
|---|
| Evidence Based Approach to Public Health |
| 1. Apply epidemiological methods to settings and situations in public health practice |
| 2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context |
| 3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate |
| 4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice |
| Public Health & Healthcare Systems |
| 5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health, and regulatory systems across national and international settings |
| 6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequalities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community, and societal levels |
| Planning & Management to Promote Health |
| 7. Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health |
| 8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs |
| 9. Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention |
| 10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management |
| 11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs |
| Policy in Public Health |
| 12. Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence |
| 13. Propose strategies to identify relevant communities and individuals and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes |
| 14. Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations |
| 15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity |
| Leadership |
| 16. Apply principles of leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue |
| Communication |
| 17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges |
| 18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors |
| 19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation to a non-academic, non-peer audience with attention to factors such as literacy and health literacy |
| 20. Describe the importance of cultural humility in communicating public health content |
| Interprofessional Practice |
| 21. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health. |
| Systems Thinking |
| 22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative |

Foundational Public Health Knowledge

To meet the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) Accreditation Criteria D1: MPH Foundational Public Health Knowledge, a 1-credit foundational course in public health (HEA 503) is required for all MPH students. The MPH Program ensures that all MPH graduates are grounded in foundational public health knowledge and it is recommended to complete within the first year of the program. Grounding in foundational public health knowledge is measured by the student's achievement of the learning objectives listed below.

The following foundational public health knowledge objectives are addressed in the **HEA 503 Foundations in Public Health** course:

Profession & Science of Public Health

1. Explain public health history, philosophy, and values
2. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services
3. Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health
4. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the U.S. or other community relevant to the school or program, with attention to disparities among populations, e.g., socioeconomic, ethnic, gender, racial, etc.
5. Discuss the science of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.
6. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge

Factors Related to Human Health

7. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population's health
8. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population's health
9. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health
10. Explain the cultural, social, political, and economic determinants of health and how the determinants relate to population health and health inequities
11. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease
12. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health, and ecosystem health (e.g., One Health)

MPH Concentration Courses and Competencies

All MPH candidates are required to take a total of 18-credit concentration courses. Students may choose one of the following three concentrations within the MPH Program: Community Health (100% online asynchronous), Health Care Management (100% online asynchronous), or Environmental Health (hybrid).

To meet the needs of the concentration areas, each concentration has its own set of competencies. These competences have been adapted from each concentration's professional affiliations.

Community Health Concentration

Rewarding career opportunities are available for graduates of the MPH Community Health Concentration. Graduates complete the concentration with knowledge and skills that are adaptable to many settings including: federal/state/local governmental organizations (such as health departments), nonprofit/voluntary health agencies, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, health maintenance organizations, and worksite settings. The terms community health educator/specialist, public health program administrator, clinical research coordinator, and health education/promotion specialist are often used to describe the job titles for graduates. Some students also pursue post-MPH fellowships and doctoral programs (PhD and DrPH).

For more information on this concentration, visit the [Community Health website](#) or contact Community Health Concentration Coordinator Dr. Ramona Stone at 610-436- 6975 or rstone@wcupa.edu. A combination of skills and the ability to work as a member of a team ensures success at working in a number of settings and the following concentration courses prepare graduates for their future careers and CHES certification.

The MPH in Community Health is 100% online asynchronous. Students have an option to take the two core courses (HEA 520 Epidemiology and HEA 526 Biostatistics) in person.

Community Health Concentration Competencies

Upon completion of the Community Health Concentration, graduates will be able to:

1. Generate a report on community health vulnerabilities and assets using spatial and non-spatial data.
2. Develop a grant proposal to fund an equity-focused health promotion initiative.
3. Design a participatory evaluation of a community-based health initiative.
4. Analyze the implementation of a social media campaign to promote health equity.
5. Apply a global perspective to design a community health initiative.
6. Utilize technologies to develop strategies for planning and implementing community health programs.

Community Health Concentration Required Courses

| Course | Online | Credits |
|---|--------|---------|
| HEA 531 Community as a Basis for Health* | Fall | 3 |
| HEA 538 Evaluation of Health Programs | Spring | 3 |
| HEA 539 Community Health Program Planning & Technologies | Spring | 3 |
| HEA 543 Strategic Communication for Health Equity | Fall | 3 |
| HEA 544 Program Administration in Health and Human Services | Spring | 3 |
| HEA 645 Global Community Health Promotion & Advocacy | Fall | 3 |

**This course incorporates community-engaged learning to fulfill our program's community service requirement.*

Health Care Management Concentration

Health administrators are charged with coordinating a wide variety of activities crucial to the effective and efficient delivery of health services and programs. In general, the job of the health administrator is to plan, organize, coordinate, and supervise the delivery of services within a wide range of health care organizations, including hospitals, mental health clinics, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, managed care organizations, and multidisciplinary physician groups. The responsibilities of a health administrator take place in an environment influenced by many regulations and political forces. Consequently, a thorough understanding of the factors influencing health policy is crucial to effective health administration. For more information of this concentration, visit the [Health Care Management website](#) or contact the Health Care Management Concentration Coordinator, Dr. Harry Holt at 610-436-2124 or hholt@wcupa.edu.

The MPH in Health Care Management is 100% online asynchronous. Students have an option to take the two core courses (HEA 520 Epidemiology and HEA 526 Biostatistics) in person.

Health Care Management Concentration Competencies

Upon completion of the Health Care Management Concentration, graduates will be able to:

1. Engage in activities that enhance skills to identify and respond to current trends and issues of health care management and policy.
2. Identify external and internal pressures affecting administrators' functions and their role in organizational politics, resource allocation decisions, and other critical issues.
3. Demonstrate the widespread applicability of management theory to diverse types of health services organizations and health systems.
4. Apply health care management terminology and concepts to enhance professional development and lifelong learning.
5. Analyze health care regulations and legal requirements for health care operations and financial sustainability of health care organizations.

Health Care Management Concentration Required Courses

| Course | Online | Credits |
|---|--------|---------|
| HEA 513 Legal Aspects of Health Care | Spring | 3 |
| HEA 514 Approaches to Health Care Delivery | Fall | 3 |
| HEA 612 Health Care Financial Analysis and Management | Fall | 3 |
| HEA 613 Advocacy and Quality of Health Care Services* | Fall | 3 |
| HEA 614 Health Care Technology and Information Management | Fall | 3 |
| HEA 616 Strategic Leadership in Health Care | Spring | 3 |

**This course incorporates community-engaged learning to fulfill our program's community service requirement.*

Environmental Health Concentration

The Environmental Health Concentration prepares students for the technical and professional demands of careers dedicated to the protection of human health and the environment. Graduates of the program work to improve the quality of air, water, soil, and food using technology to measure and control pollutants, indoors and outdoors. MPH degree graduates direct multidisciplinary teams of professionals as Environmental Health Managers. At all levels, the program embraces the broad environmental ethic of sustainability through human cooperation with nature, including basic rights to a safe home and workplace; clean water supplies for human consumption, recreation, and wildlife; safe and available food supply; waste and energy management; and careful resource management for the future. For more information on this concentration, visit the [Environmental Health website](#) or contact Environmental Concentration Coordinator Dr. Melanie Vile at 610-436-2360 or mville@wcupa.edu.

The MPH in Environmental Health is delivered in a hybrid format with all in-person Environmental Health concentration courses. Students have an option to take the two core courses (HEA 520 Epidemiology and HEA 526 Biostatistics) in person.

International Student Course Format Regulations:

To ensure compliance with federal regulations, international students in the Environmental Health concentration must enroll in the two in-person core courses, HEA 520 Epidemiology and HEA 526 Biostatistics, in addition to the six in-person concentration courses. Follow the international student full-time admission plans for Spring and Fall semesters across the two-year program. As part of these regulations, students must enroll in six credits of in-person coursework each Fall and Spring semester.

Environmental Health Concentration Competencies

1. Identify illness and injury causing agents in workplaces, residences, health care facilities and other institutions, and the outdoor environment.
2. Measure biological, chemical and physical disease agents in any environment and assess compliance with environmental regulations and professional standards.
3. Analyze, interpret, and evaluate toxicological, epidemiological, and environmental exposure data.
4. Quantitatively assess risk using mathematical models and communicate risk information to populations served.
5. Integrate the legacy of environmental (in)justice and other historical social inequities into sustainable policy decisions for future generations.
6. Determine how climate-change and sustainability policies have disproportionately affected vulnerable groups.

Environmental Health Concentration Required Courses

| Course | In-Person (4:25-7:10pm) | | Credits |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| ENV 524 Industrial Hygiene* | Fall | Tuesday | 3 |
| ENV 533 Water Quality and Health | Fall | Wednesday | 3 |
| ENV 545 Risk Assessment | Spring | Tuesday | 3 |
| ENV 547 Environmental Regulations | Spring | Wednesday | 3 |
| ENV 551 Environmental Toxicology | Spring | Monday | 3 |
| ENV 553 Occupational Safety | Spring | Thursday | 3 |

**This course incorporates community-engaged learning to fulfill our program's community service requirement.*

MPH Applied Learning Experience (ALE)

PREREQUISITES: HEA 520 Public Health Epidemiology **and** HEA 526 Biostatistics in Public Health.

The ALE is the culminating activity for the MPH Program, and it is intended to occur after completion of a minimum of 30 credits. The **purpose of the ALE** is to provide students with an opportunity to **gain real-world public health graduate-level experience**, to introduce students to an agency where they can apply competencies learned in the classroom. To accomplish this purpose, students are responsible to select 3 Foundational Competencies and 2 Concentration Competencies to develop and then implement the required ALE assignments.

ALE includes two core courses: HEA 649 and HEA 650. These two courses must be completed during the last two semesters of the MPH program. **Students cannot register for these courses during the same semester.** Before the start of the ALE II Practicum course, the student must complete ALE I assignments and obtain a passing grade.

(1) HEA 649 (ALE I), 1-credit course, referred to as the Orientation or Preparatory Course.

During ALE I students complete the documentation necessary to secure a site placement; propose two ALE Products, a list of Professional Practice Activities, and a process for the Major ALE Project. During this course, students might be in communication with potential site-supervisors, but there are no on-site hours.

(2) HEA 650 (ALE II) 3-credit course, referred to as the Practicum Course.

During ALE II, students complete 200 hours at the approved placement site, where they will implement the proposed Products and Major Project and will engage in Professional Practices activities.

Applied Learning Experience I (HEA 649)

The purpose of the ALE Orientation/ Preparatory course is to prepare students for the ALE II on-site practicum experience. During the **ALE I Orientation** students search for, apply for, and select an ALE professional practice site, complete all required documentation, obtain appropriate site confirmations, propose professional practice products and activities, and develop an implementation plan for their Major Project. Students are required to complete a Major Project Proposal, Two Products Proposal, Professional Practices Activities list. The placement site will be approved by ALE Faculty Advisor after all documentation is on file.

The ALE Faculty Advisor is responsible for supervision and evaluation of the ALE I assignments. Students will submit all required placement documentation on RamPortal and to the College of Health Sciences Administrative Assistant for Clinical Experiences. This staff person is responsible for the processing of required forms and affiliation agreements. These forms and affiliation agreements need to be complete by the end of the ALE I. The ALE Faculty Advisor will provide the final approval, and the student will receive a confirmation email for their ALE Placement.

Applied Learning Experience II (HEA 650)

In ALE II students **implement** their proposed Major Project and two Products, while engaging in professional practice activities at the placement site. The ALE II requirements include:

- (1) ALE II Practicum must be scheduled during the last semester of the MPH Program.
- (2) Students cannot enroll in ALE II before nor simultaneously with ALE I
- (3) Students must complete 200 hours at their placement site, under the supervision of their ALE Site Supervisor.
- (4) ALE supervisors must have at least a Master degree in Public Health or five years of experience in public health
- (5) MPH course enrollment is allowed during this semester; however, due to the time needed to complete ALE II onsite hours, a reduced course schedule is *recommended*.

At the end of the Practicum, the MPH students will have a professional practice experience that prepares them for their future careers as public health professionals.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

The graduate certificates in the Department of Public Health Sciences allow students (with a bachelor's degree) to explore an area of interest in public health or build on current skills. Students do not have to be enrolled in the MPH Program to complete a certificate. Students will need to be admitted into the certificate program by going through the admissions process. If students decide to enroll in the MPH Program, they may apply for the certificate credits to the MPH degree (applies to the Health Care Management Concentration). These applied credits will need to meet the MPH academic requirements and certificate students will then need to apply for the MPH Program. Students currently enrolled in the MPH Program can take additional courses beyond their required concentration courses to earn a certificate. MPH students will need to apply for the certificate program.

When the certificate is completed the certificate designation will appear on the student's transcript. Many students in the MPH Program have interests in more than one concentration and the addition of a certificate allows students to add to their skills and competencies in public health. For more information on the application process for certificate programs, please ask your advisor or refer to the Graduate Catalog at the university website (wcupa.edu). Below are graduate certificate programs offered in the Department of Public Health Sciences and other relevant graduate certificate programs offered across the university.

Department of Public Health Sciences Graduate Certificate Programs

Graduate Certificate in Health Care Management

The Graduate Certificate in Health Care Management provides health care professionals an opportunity to expand their knowledge of health care administrative issues. An accelerated format is available for many of the courses so the certificate can possibly be earned in three semesters or less and all certificate courses can be completed 100% online. For more information, contact certificate graduate coordinator Dr. Harry Holt, 610-436-2124 or hholt@wcupa.edu.

Graduate Certificate in Integrative Health

The Graduate Certificate in Integrative Health is designed for healthcare professionals desiring graduate study of evidence-based integrated approaches to health promotion, disease prevention, and treatment. Please note that this certificate is not designed to prepare practitioners in any given modality. For more information, contact certificate graduate coordinator Dr. Donald McCown, 610-436-2267 or dmccown@wcupa.edu.

Graduate Certificate in Applied Mindfulness

The Graduate Certificate in Applied Mindfulness is designed to offer professionals the training to achieve basic competence in the development and delivery of mindfulness-based programs in health care, mental healthcare, education, and other disciplines. The program of study equips and encourages students to incorporate mindfulness practices into their personal and professional lives. In this 12-credit program, three core courses focus on developing a useful background in the science and theory of contemporary mindfulness-based interventions and training the professional in the four essential skill sets required for applied mindfulness curriculum development, delivery, and refinement. As a capstone, a teaching practicum provides opportunity for practice and integration of the essential concepts and skills to shape and integrate a committed professional identity and practice. For more information, contact certificate graduate coordinator Dr. Donald McCown, 610-436-2267 or dmccown@wcupa.edu.

Graduate Certificate Programs Outside the Department:

Graduate Certificate in Gerontology

The interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate in Gerontology is an ideal program for professionals seeking training in the field of gerontology. The 12-credit interdisciplinary curriculum includes courses taught by expert faculty from social work, nursing, health, nutrition, kinesiology, and other fields. Faculty research interests in gerontology include end of life care, dementia care, caregiver burden, housing, health equity and disparity, resilience, elder abuse, and depression in older adults. This certificate can be completed 100% online. For more information, visit the [Gerontology Graduate Certificate website](#) or contact Dr. Angela Lavery, certificate graduate coordinator and Professor in the Department of Graduate Social Work at 610-738-0341 or alavery@wcupa.edu.

Graduate Certificate in Urban and Regional Planning:

The Department of Geography and Planning offers a certificate program in Urban and Regional Planning that consists of six courses. Urban and Regional Planning is a creative way to influence the future of regions, cities and neighborhoods. Professional planners use a variety of tools and techniques to design communities that are equitable and sustainable. This certificate program provides graduate-level instruction on the major areas of planning. For more information, visit the [Graduate Certificate in Urban and Regional Planning website](#).

Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or Online Certificate in GIS:

The Department of Geography and Planning offers a certificate program in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that consists of four courses. Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) technologies have become prominent workplace tools used widely in public and private sectors. This certificate program will provide graduate-level instruction on their use. West Chester University now offers an on-line option for students wishing to earn a Certificate in GIS through distance education. The online GIS Certificate offers the same curriculum and is taught by the same faculty who teach in-class courses. For more information, visit the [Graduate Certificate in GIS website](#).

CAREER RESOURCES

University Libraries

West Chester University has two libraries, the [Francis Harvey Green Library](#), at the corner of High Street and Rosedale Avenue, and the [Presser Music Library](#), in the Swope Music Building. Both libraries offer excellent environments for individual and collaborative learning. Students come to the libraries to conduct research, use technology, write papers, compose music, print posters, exchange ideas, and engage with the world of information in the library's holdings of more than two million items. Library collections compare favorably with other major public and private libraries in the region, and students navigate the collections with the help of expert guidance from librarians and library staff.

That guidance extends beyond the libraries' walls. The library's website enables students to connect with librarians and staff, and to a wide array of resources and services through links to the library's catalog, databases, reserve items, and more. Students use OneSearch, a Google-like interface on the [library homepage](#), to search most materials owned or licensed by the University Libraries. OneSearch and online library resources are available to WCU students, faculty, and staff from any device wherever their research takes them at any time, day or night. Fourteen professional librarians provide formal and informal instruction on library resources. Every discipline and department have a subject specialist who will work with individuals, groups, or classes. For one-on-one assistance, [contact our Science & Health Librarian Walt Cressler to schedule an appointment](#). Refer to the [Library Services for Distance Education Students website](#) for more information.

The WCU Campus Store

The WCU Campus Store is located on the ground floor of Sykes Student Union. The Campus Store has new and used textbooks for all WCU courses, a thriving textbook rental program of new and used titles and select course offerings including digital textbooks. Textbooks may be purchased in the store or on the [WCU Campus Store website](#). For your convenience, the Campus Store provides in-store pick-up for online orders, or shipping is also offered. The WCU Campus Store also stocks course supplies, and reference materials, as well as study and teacher aids. WCU Campus Store offers a complete line of official WCU- imprinted clothing and gifts that can be purchased on the store's website. Services offered include special orders for computer software and general interest books (at no extra cost), an onsite Greek wear provider, UPS and USPS shipping services, and daily book buybacks. All major credit cards, Ram Bucks, and personal checks, accompanied by a valid ID, are accepted. For more information, call 610-436-2242 or visit the [WCU Campus Store website](#).

Information Services & Technology Division (IS&T)

The Information Services & Technology Division (IS&T) provides information technology services for the University community, including communications networks, collaboration tools, multimedia and video services, services for distance education courses, and multiple on-campus student computing labs. The labs are staffed with support consultants to assist students with technical questions, and open hours are posted online at <https://wcupa.edu/ITHelpdesk>. The labs provide access to a range of software and OneDrive cloud storage, as well as to multi-function printers and scanners. All lab computers support general-purpose applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, graphics, and database management systems (O365 apps and services), plus course-specific software such as SPSS, SAS, etc. The software and applications are also available for remote access through [RamCloud](#). IS&T also provides access to training, educational materials, and services to promote the use of technology in the teaching and learning environment, including instructional design services, active learning space design, and a Learning Management System. Visit the [IS&T website](#) to submit an IT support request or call the IT Help Desk at 610-436-3350.

Learning Assistance and Resource Center (LARC)

The Learning Assistance and Resource Center (LARC) strives to provide quality academic support services which help students become independent, active learners who achieve academic success. The LARC aims to promote cognitive development in a diversity of student populations through assessing and teaching the affective skills necessary for achieving academic and personal learning goals. The pursuit of a quality education, although contingent upon professors and administrators, is essentially a venture of self-reliance. At the Learning Assistance and Resource Center envisions a University populated with independent learners imbued with a desire *to learn, to improve, and to progress*. The tutors promote the critical thinking skills necessary for students to find unique and creative solutions to achieve academic success and actively pursue career goals. Students are encouraged to work with LARC if they are experiencing academic issues with test anxiety and time management. Please visit the [LARC website](#) or contact LARC at (610) 436-2535.

Writing Center

Anyone can come to the Writing Center! Everyone can improve their writing! West Chester students, grad students, and professors frequently visit the Writing Center for assistance. They come to the center because they know how useful it can be to talk about and get feedback on their writing. Talking with a tutor helps clarify and organize thoughts which will help you become a better writer overall. The WCU Writing Center values *The Right to Our Own Language* by affirming that everyone's language of nurture, and all Englishes, are inherently eloquent and equal. Each of us owns a language that is a legacy from those who loved us. Our language is a testament to where we come from. No language is less than another. This said, the Writing Center also acknowledges that the systemic and intersecting forces of racism, xenophobia, and class prejudice create a present reality of double standards in which some so-called "non-standard" English is disrespected, while other objectively just-as-non-standard English is given a pass. Language prejudice is brazenly and unapologetically used as a justification, both in education and in the workplace, to restrict access to opportunity. Furthermore, language prejudice is inextricably linked to racism and xenophobia so that the way we look often means we can't be heard, regardless of our mastery of the "standard." The Writing Center acknowledges the harm and trauma of language prejudice and systemic racism. Through our tutoring, we seek to disrupt language prejudice, to advocate for the equal value of all language, and to ensure equal access to education.

Graduate students are welcome to bring in any type of writing assignment for any class or project to the Writing Center. The staff will offer personal help with planning, revising, or any other aspect of writing your paper, but they will not write student papers. The staff helps students develop writing skills which are vital to student academic and professional development. Visit the [Writing Center website](#) to schedule an appointment, call 610-436-3548, or email writingcenter@wcupa.edu. It is important to note that most of the MPH courses are writing intensive. Program planning, needs assessments, research reports, grant proposals, and Applied Learning Experience projects need to be written at a professional level. MPH faculty will expect students experiencing more difficulty with writing skills to utilize the Writing Center. Some MPH faculty will require a staff member of the Writing Center review and critique papers as part of student assignments. To fully benefit from the writing tutor session, it is highly recommended to schedule an appointment in advance to when the paper is due.

We utilize APA-style paper formatting and citation in the MPH program. In addition to the Writing Center and Library, APA style guidelines and examples can be found at the [Purdue University's Online Writing Lab](#).

Twardowski Career Development Center

The Twardowski Career Development Center supports graduate student success through programs and services that help students explore and pursue career and continuing education options. The center works one on one with graduate students to help develop the skills necessary to have a competitive edge in the job market. Services for graduate students include individual appointments and drop-in hours; resume, LinkedIn, and cover letter reviews; mock interviewing; job and internship fairs; employer meetups; and job postings via [Handshake](#). The center's website links to various other job search sites grouped by [Career Communities](#) to facilitate an effective online job search. The Career Development Center is located at 225 Lawrence Center (second floor) and is open year-round. For additional information, visit the [Career Development website](#) or call 610-436-2501.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Sykes Student Union

The Earl F. Sykes Union first opened in 1975 as the community center for West Chester University. A building expansion and major renovations were completed in 1995, providing students with a 102,000-square foot multipurpose facility.

- The *ground floor* features the Lawrence A. Dowdy Multicultural Center; Campus Store; Student Services, Inc. Service Center; a 350-seat theater; the Ram's Den Lounge/EcoGrounds coffee; and the east patio entrance.
- The *first floor* offers a food court and dining area; a multi-use outdoor pergola; a 5,000-square foot multipurpose ballroom designed for dances, concerts, banquets, and lectures; as well as the student union administrative offices and building Information Center.
- The *second floor* houses the Student Affairs offices of the Fraternity and Sorority Life; Student Leadership and Involvement; Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Ally Services; and Off Campus and Commuter Services. The Student Services, Inc. Business Office; the department of Student Activities; and the Center for Student Involvement are also located on the second floor.
- The *third floor* Frederick Douglass Lounge Area features a 25-unit computer lab with quiet study and seminar space and a meditation lounge.

Sykes Union also features 17 rooms accommodating student groups of 4 to 500 for meetings, programs, and events. For information concerning Sykes Student Union, call the Information Center at 610-436- 2984/3360.

Lawrence A. Dowdy Multicultural Center

The mission of the [Lawrence A. Dowdy Multicultural Center](#) is to promote holistic success and development of Students of Color through collaborative co-curricular experiences that promote multicultural awareness, create a sense of belonging, affirm racial and cultural identity, and empower all students to challenge systems of oppression. The center provides and maintains a supportive environment that promotes the academic achievement and personal development of multicultural students at the University. This is accomplished by providing a wide range of services, programs, and activities aimed at meeting the educational, social, cultural, and developmental needs of multicultural students. In addition, the center collaborates with other offices, organizations, and departments to improve awareness of and appreciation for racial and cultural diversity for the University community. To follow the WCU Multicultural Student Organizations on social media, visit the [Multicultural Organization Advisory Board's website](#). The Multicultural Center serves as a general gathering place for all students and is also a home-base for the Lawrence A. Dowdy Multicultural Center Mentoring Program, the Board of Governors Scholarship program, and many multicultural student organizations. The center is in Room 003 in Sykes Student Union and can be reached at 610-436-3273.

Global Engagement Office

The services provided by the [Global Engagement Office](#) include:

1. Full immigration assistance for (F-1) international students including travel outside the United States, visa stamp expiration, duration of status, transfer procedure, on-campus employment, off-campus employment, bringing dependents to the United States, taking less than a full-time course load, extension of stay, curricular training, and practical training.
2. Full immigration assistance for (J-1) international scholars, professors, and specialists including short-term programs, employment, practical training, extensions, and bringing dependents to the U.S.
3. Yearly seminars presented by a local immigration lawyer on a variety of other immigration issues.
4. Income tax forms and information.
5. Job search and interviewing tips, a film series on a variety of topics of particular interest to international students including first arrival problems and issues, street wisdom, culture shock, the employment interview process, and health care in the U.S.
6. Orientation program for new students.
7. Travel information around the tri-state (Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey) area.

This office provides support to the international students at West Chester University and should be contacted for any issues related to immigration status. The Department of Public Health Sciences faculty are unable to assist students with processing VISAs, immigration issues, or housing. An International Student Orientation is provided at the start of each semester. Contact their office at 610-436-3515 or International@wcupa.edu.

Center for Women and Gender Equity (CWGE)

Since 1974, the Center for Women and Gender Equity (CWGE) has been celebrating, honoring, and empowering our campus community. This is done through a range of educational programs, resources, and advocacy for all people. The center promotes a campus culture and climate that supports principles of social justice, equity, inclusion, and community. They advocate for a campus community that values the safety, equality, and intellectual advancement of women and historically marginalized groups at West Chester University. CWGE provides education, resources, and advocacy primarily on gender-related issues. They facilitate, sustain, and advance dialogue about how gender intersects with race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, ability, age, and nationality. Their mission is accomplished through:

- Educational programs that address a wide range of social justice issues that affect the success, well-being, and empowerment of women
- Special events, workshops, and trainings that promote awareness of the ways in which gender bias intersects with racism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression
- Leadership opportunities that build confidence and provide skills to enhance the personal and professional growth of women
- Coordinating campus-wide violence prevention initiatives, including programming designed to engage men as allies in violence prevention
- Building allies and partners-in-movement through programming focused on healthier forms of masculinity and the ways in which gender impacts our everyday lives
- Support and referrals for students experiencing sexual misconduct
- Information and referrals about issues that disproportionately impact women
- Advocating for systemic changes that support women and historically marginalized groups

The Center for Women and Gender Equity is located at 214 Lawrence Center. For more information, visit the [Center for Women and Gender Equity website](#) or call 610-436-2122.

Institute for Women

The Institute for Women was initially designed to serve as the parent organization to represent the interests of women on campus. The institute is an independent body headed by a director and board of directors. Along with the Commission on the Status of Women, Women's Center, and Women's Studies Program, the Institute for Women engages in campus activities for the benefit of women students, faculty, and staff. The Institute sponsors the Graduate Grant, Endowed Book Fund, and other activities to enhance the self-esteem and career success of women at the University. The Institute prepares periodic reports on the status of women at the University and secures Charlotte W. Newcombe Scholarship Grants for mature second-career women. The Institute for Women offers an annual grant of \$750 to a woman graduate student who is accepted into a master's degree program. Application and reference forms may be obtained on the Graduate School website. For more information call Alicia Hahn-Murphy, Director, at 610-436-2122 or e-mail ahahn@wcupa.edu. Students can also visit [The Institute for Women website](#).

Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy

The mission of the [Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy](#) (CTQA) is to create an environment where the intersectional experiences of trans and queer people are supported, celebrated, validated, and affirmed. To get involved, view resources, or participate in programs or trainings, check out the CTQA website. The CTQA office is located in Sykes Student Union Rm 250, 610-436-3147 or transandqueer@wcupa.edu.

STUDENT SERVICES

Student Housing

West Chester University provides housing facilities for its graduate students on a limited basis for the regular school year and all summer sessions. Graduate students may live in either a North Campus residence hall (that houses predominantly undergraduate students) or in selected units of the South Campus apartment complex. Students in the residence halls must be on the University meal plan; apartment residents have the option of any meal plan offered or no plan at all. North Campus residence hall rooms are all double occupancy; apartments are designed for five occupants in combinations of double and single bedrooms.

The University, through the West Chester University Foundation, also offers other housing options on campus that are referred to as affiliated housing. University Hall, Allegheny Hall, Brandywine Hall, and Commonwealth Hall are suite-style residence halls on North Campus, and The Village and East Village apartments have four-bedroom units located on South Campus. These facilities offer all the same opportunities found in University-owned housing but are managed through an arrangement with [University Student Housing](#), a subsidiary of the WCU Foundation. Graduate students are expected to abide by all regulations appropriate to their living arrangements. Upon acceptance to graduate study, students may contact the Office of Residence Life and Housing Services for additional information and applications for on-campus housing. Students are encouraged to contact this office as early as possible since the availability of on-campus housing varies based on the time of year that the request is made.

For assistance in locating a dwelling or apartment off campus, students may contact the Office of [Off Campus and Commuter Services](#) (OCCS). OCCS partners with Places4Students.com to provide a FREE service for all students to use as an effective method of finding roommates and a place to live off campus. The office is located in Sykes Student Union, Rm 238, 610-436-2209. The Office of Residence Life and Housing Services is located at 202 Lawrence Center, 610-436-3307. The University Student Housing Leasing Center is located in Commonwealth Hall, 610-430-4988.

Student Health Services

The University maintains a [Student Health Center](#) staffed by physicians, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses. The Student Health Center staff is available to meet emergency and first-aid needs, and to perform routine treatment of minor illnesses and minor surgical conditions. All Student Health Services practitioners have received training to meet the unique needs and situations of the LGBTQA community.

Care provided by Student Health Services includes the following:

1. Acute medical care, including sore throat, cold, flu, and other illnesses
2. Minor surgical care, including suture placement and removal, and abscess care
3. Sexually transmitted infection (STI) and HIV testing, treatment, and referrals
4. Gynecological services, including routine examinations, contraceptives, and pregnancy testing
5. General preventative care, including immunizations and nonathletic general physicals
6. First-aid

During the fall and spring semesters, Student Health Services has appointments available Monday-Friday, 8am-5:30pm, and Saturday 10am-5:30 pm. Appointments are available during summer and winter sessions from 8am- 3:30 pm. Visits are by appointment, except for emergency situations. Any emergencies during the night and on weekends may be treated at the Chester County Hospital Emergency Room. Student Health Services is located on the lower level of Commonwealth Hall. Visit the [Student Health Center website](#) or call 610-436-2509 to make an appointment.

Office of Wellness Promotion

The Office of Wellness Promotion (OWP) engages students in opportunities to cultivate sustainable skills in wellness and well-being. OWP offers services such as BASICS/CASICS, Wellness Coaching, and eCHECKUP TO GO. Wellness Promotion staff facilitate a range of educational workshops and events such as Refresh Sleep Program, Fresh Check Day, and the Student Health and Well-Being Expo. Dr. Rebecca Rich from the Department of Public Health Sciences collaborates with OWP Director Dr. Jayme Trogus to coordinate the annual November Student Health and Well-Being Expo. If you are interested in serving as a table exhibitor, review MPH Student Announcement emails with more details or visit the [Wellness Promotion website](#). Wellness Promotion is located on the ground floor of Commonwealth Hall or contact them at 610-436-0730.

Counseling Services

The [Department of Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (The Counseling Center) is located in 241 Lawrence Center. All currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students may walk in for a brief triage assessment (M- F, between 1-3pm), at which time a determination is made to help the student receive the most appropriate mode of treatment (e.g., individual, group, or a referral off campus). The Counseling Center includes licensed psychologists, licensed counselors, consulting psychiatrists, and graduate-level trainees with whom students may discuss their concerns in strict confidence. Since the Counseling Center provides services for a wide range of concerns, each student's experience will be tailored to meet their needs. Students may wish to focus on their emotions and learn better ways to cope, improve their interpersonal skills, resolve personal conflicts, or clarify their educational or vocational choices. The Center compiles counseling resources including those specific to race-related violence and COVID-19 on their [resource page](#). For more information, visit the [Counseling Center website](#) or call 610-436-2301 to make an appointment.

Office of Educational Accessibility

The [Office of Educational Accessibility](#) (OEA) offers services for students with physical and learning disabilities and is located in the Lawrence Center 223. The OEA is designed to assist students to make a successful transition to the University. We take a proactive stance that encourages students to understand their needs and strengths in order to best advocate for themselves.

West Chester University recognizes that some students with disabilities want minimal assistance while others require the full range of support and services. The staff of the OEA supports students as they become more self-reliant by emphasizing their knowledge and communication skills and the understanding of their rights and obligations under the laws. To facilitate a successful transition a comprehensive assessment of needs is recommended through this office.

The OEA provides advocacy with faculty for classroom accommodations under the requirements of Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Recent, appropriate, and comprehensive documentation provided by licensed professionals must accompany requests for accommodation. The OEA coordinates provision of direct services for students with disabilities through support staff in the research and technical areas of the University. The office also advocates in the readmission procedure, with the offices of Financial Aid and the Registrar, and supplement advising services to the extent that the information or assistance is disability related and necessary to promote student access. Services provided for students with disabilities include:

- Central documentation file
- Optional comprehensive needs assessment
- Advocacy with faculty
- Alternative test-taking arrangements
- Note-taking support, Assistance with alternate format materials
- Adaptive technology
- Readers for visually impaired students
- Interpreters for deaf students

For more information, visit the [OEA website](#), call 610-436-2564, or email oea@wcupa.edu.

Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance

Through collaborative efforts, the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance](#) (OEOC) helps to foster an inclusive and civil community by monitoring several policies that promote diversity and inclusion, as well as work to eliminate discriminatory behaviors at West Chester University. The OEOC is responsible for the overall well-being of the campus community and its climate by monitoring several policies that work to keep our campus a civil and safe environment for all. The policies include Equal Employment/Educational Opportunity, Title IX, and the Americans of Disabilities Act (ADA). The OEOC website also features a [calendar of educational opportunities and trainings](#) designed to cultivate an environment that welcomes all.

Veterans Affairs

Under the provisions of Title 38, West Chester University is an accredited university for the education of veterans. The University cooperates with the Veterans Administration to see that honorably separated or discharged veterans receive every consideration consistent with either degree or non-degree admission standards. All veterans, certain dependents of disabled or deceased veterans, and war orphans who wish to obtain educational benefits under the appropriate public laws must register with the Veterans Affairs Office at initial registration. Veterans must renew their registration with this office at the beginning of each subsequent

semester and each summer session. The Veterans Administration requires undergraduate students who are veterans to schedule at least 12 credit hours per semester in order to receive full benefits under the GI Bill® and graduate students who are veterans to schedule at least 9 credit hours per semester in order to receive full benefits under the GI Bill®.

West Chester University participates in the **Yellow Ribbon Program** under the Post 9/11 GI Bill®. The Post 9/11 GI Bill® pays up to the in-state tuition and fees for all students in the program, depending on their qualifying benefit level. For out-of-state students at the 100% benefit level, the University will contribute (and the VA will match) funds to make up the difference between in state and out-of-state tuition and fees. West Chester University is also compliant with the recent passage of [PA Act 11 and HB131](#) (referred to as the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014). In accordance with Act 46 of 2014, West Chester University offers Priority Registration for Veterans. For guidelines regarding priority scheduling please visit the [Registrar's website](#).

The [Greg R. and Sandra L. Weisenstein Veterans Center](#) is located at 624 South High Street. The Veterans Center provides services and assistance to veterans, service members, and spouse/dependents with their transition to college. Services include but are not limited to Student Veteran Group (SVG) meeting headquarters, a veteran lounge and computer area, the University's VA educational certifying official, assistance with VA educational benefits, and general VA information. For information about the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) benefits programs, assistance in completing the application for benefits, or to submit requests for enrollment certification, contact the [Veterans Center](#) at 610- 436-2862 or email veteranscenter@wcupa.edu.

Resource Pantry

The WCU Resource Pantry supports student success by minimizing food and basic need insecurity and preparing students for life after graduation. The Resource Pantry is open to ALL undergraduate and graduate students regardless of level of need. No appointments are necessary, walk-ins are welcome at any time during the hours of operation. There are no limits on the frequency of visits. The Resource Pantry is located in Commonwealth Hall, Lower Level (enter at Student Health Services). The resources the Resource Pantry offers includes non-perishable food items, fresh produce from the WCU Campus Gardens, personal care items, school supplies, and career clothing (can be retrieved at the WCU Twardowski Career Development Center). For more information, visit the [Resource Pantry website](#) or call 610-436-2378.

STUDENT SAFETY

West Chester University is concerned about the safety and welfare of all campus members and is committed to providing a safe and secure environment. Campus security is the responsibility of the University's [Department of Public Safety](#). Because no campus is isolated from crime, the University has developed a series of policies and procedures to ensure that every possible precautionary measure is taken to protect members of the University community while they are on campus. You may review the WCU [Annual Security and Fire Safety Report](#) and request a printed copy from the Department of Public Safety.

Emergency Alert Notification

In an emergency, the University will communicate key information as quickly and to as many people as possible using some or all of the following communication channels:

- Text message to WCU Alert subscribers, <http://www.wcupa.edu/wcualert/>
- Mass e-mails to faculty, staff, and students via WCU-assigned e-mail accounts
- Posted on WCU's homepage or recorded message on WCU's Information Line 610-436-1000
- External emergency notification broadcasts

While the University has a wide variety of methods to communicate with the campus community, the text messaging service allows the University to use some of the latest technology to reach students, faculty, and staff in the event of any emergency. The [WCU homepage](#) is the primary source for all up-to-date, official information concerning emergencies. For more information about emergency alert notification, visit the [Emergency Management website](#).

Emergency Preparedness

The University continues to review its safety policies and procedures and has developed initiatives to address the issues raised by national tragedies. Although no college campus is completely safe, West Chester University has taken positive steps to enhance the safety of the campus community. It is important that all University community members understand how the institution will proceed and respond in case of a campus emergency. All students and employees should learn where to find emergency information and instructions and be familiar with evacuation procedures for buildings where they live or work, as well as those they visit during the course of a day. The preparation people take now to learn, be aware of, and practice their own personal emergency plan is vital. Information about emergency preparedness and planning, as well as the University Threat Assessment Policy through [Department of Public Safety Emergency Preparedness website](#).

Weather Alert Notification

When adverse weather conditions affect the routine operation of the University, information regarding class cancellations, delayed openings, and/or University closings will be publicized via multifaceted communication media including the following:

- Text messages to WCU Alert subscribers. WCU has contracted with e2campus to provide the service WCU ALERT, which sends subscribers direct text messages of WCU announcements, including class cancellations, delayed openings, University closings, on-campus emergencies, and the occasional test message. WCU ALERT provides the most effective way to communicate safely to all students, faculty, and staff, wherever they are. WCU ALERT is completely free to sign up, but phone carriers may charge for receiving text messages. WCU ALERT will *not* deliver any kind of advertising content, and phone numbers will not be shared with any third parties. For more information and to sign up visit the [WCU Weather Alert website](#).
- Mass e-mails to students, faculty, and staff. WCU-assigned e-mail accounts for employees and students will be used as one of the primary layers of communication for weather-related as well as emergency alerts; all employees and students are required to activate and maintain regular access to their University-provided e-mail accounts.
- Posted on [WCU's homepage](#) will be the most up-to-date and specific information, including weather developments, event cancellations and postponements, or changes to the final exam schedule, will be posted on the WCU homepage.

Campus Recreation

At West Chester University, the Department of Campus Recreation is the primary destination for the Golden Ram campus community to engage in recreation, social, and wellness-orientated programs and services. Blending components of fitness and well-being with the co-curricular educational experience, it is our mission to assist each person in exceeding academic goals while establishing healthy lifetime behaviors. While at WCU we encourage you to treat yourself and allow your mind, body, and soul to engage in some daily PLAY time; you've earned it! The Student Recreation Center is the central hub for many of the quality programs and services we provide. With over 70,000 sq. ft. of recreation activity space, we believe we have something for everyone. Features of the SRC include: a 34-ft. tall climbing and bouldering wall; 13,000 sq. ft of strength and

conditioning equipment including an extensive line of Life Fitness cardio and strength equipment; three fitness studios featuring a wide range of group fitness classes including many Les Mills formats; two hardwood basketball courts; two racquetball courts; one multi-activity court perfect for floor hockey, soccer, volleyball, and many other activities; outdoor sand volleyball and basketball courts; men's and women's locker rooms; and the administrative offices for all full-time Campus Recreation staff.

Additional information can be found by visiting the [Department of Campus Recreation website](#), or by contacting the Department of Campus Recreation at 610-436-1REC (x1732).

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The student organizations listed below are examples of some of the opportunities for MPH students to socialize and network with other graduate students at WCU. For a comprehensive list of other student organizations, please refer to the Graduate Student Catalog on the university website (wcupa.edu).

WCU Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the student government of all people enrolled in graduate programs. The primary objective of GSA is to promote the overall well-being of graduate students at West Chester University. The GSA mission statement is as follows: The Graduate Student Association of West Chester University is a representative body through which the graduate students express their common concerns for the welfare of the student body, as well as for the continued progress and betterment of graduate studies at West Chester University. GSA achieves these goals through a number of methods: serving on various University committees; maintaining a close relationship with graduate students; reimbursing students for conference attendance and participation; hosting career development workshops for students interested in entering the workforce and pursuing further academic degrees; holding social events for graduate students. All graduate students are members of the association by virtue of their graduate status. The GSA office is located in McKelvie Hall and can be reached at gsa@wcupa.edu. There is also a Graduate Lounge on the 6th floor of the Francis Green Harvey Library. For more information, go to the [Graduate Student Association website](#).

In partnership with the GSA, students may apply for the ***Graduate Dean's Professional Development Award*** to attend or present at conferences beneficial to professional development and degree advancement. To be eligible, graduate students must be actively enrolled in classes at WCU, and the professional conference must take place while the graduate student is actively enrolled. Students who are presenting at a conference are eligible for an award of up to \$500 for domestic travel or up to \$1,000 for international travel. Students who are attending a conference domestically are eligible for an award up to \$250 or up to \$750 for international conferences. Students may apply for the award once per academic year. Applications are reviewed 3 times/year. Students must [submit an application](#) for the award as early as possible in the semester to increase the likelihood of funding.

WCU International Graduate Student Association (IGSA)

The WCU International Graduate Student Association (IGSA) is a way for international students to engage in student governance at the university. The purpose of the International Graduate Student Association is to: (1) advocate the interests and address concerns of international graduate students, (2) enhance international graduate student experiences at the university, and (3) provide communication between international graduate students, university community, international graduate student alumni, and professional societies. Former MPH international students have served on the executive committee. To join, go to <https://ramconnect.wcupa.edu/igsa/home/>.

MPH Student Advisory Board (MPH SAB)

The MPH Program provides opportunities for students to become involved in student governance through the MPH Student Advisory Board (MPH SAB). Board meetings are scheduled throughout fall and spring semesters. Each academic year there are elections for key positions in this Board. The purpose of this Board is to enable students to: provide suggestions for program improvement and enable students to become actively involved in public health service and research activities. Student representatives from this Board take part in program assessment review activities and attend MPH program meetings to ensure active student input into the administration of the program.

Students who are interested in joining the MPH SAB should contact the MPH SAB Faculty Advisor, Dr. Harry Holt at hholt@wcupa.edu. For more information, view the [SAB website](#) or join their [WCU MPH Instagram](#) to view events, networking opportunities, and campus career development resources.

Black Students in Public Health (BSPH)

Black Students in Public Health (BSPH) organization aims to create a supportive, empowering, and inclusive community for Black students in public health at West Chester University. The mission is to provide opportunities for networking, professional development, mentorship, and service, while promoting the advancement of health equity, diversity, and representation in the public health field. Through engaging events, guest speakers, volunteer initiatives, and cultural celebrations, BSPH will help students build connections, enhance their academic experience, and develop the necessary skills to succeed in public health careers.

To connect with the Founding President and join this newly created student organization, contact the BSPH Faculty Advisor, Dr. Stacie Metz at smetz@wcupa.edu.

MPH Program on Social Media

The MPH program maintains a [Facebook](#) page highlighting current student/alum highlights, announcements on professional development events, and relevant shares from professional public health organizations. The [LinkedIn group](#) is highly active and open to current MPH students, alumni, site supervisors, and community partners. This forum's purpose is to (1) converse and network with public health colleagues, (2) share professional resources and announcements about job/volunteer positions, internships suitable for our 200-hour Applied Learning Experience (ALE), fellowship deadlines, doctoral programs, and regional professional workshops, webinars, and conferences, and (3) to share and collaborate on public health advocacy or service efforts in the community. This is an excellent forum to share your latest professional accomplishments, such as new jobs, matriculation or completion of academic degree programs, presentations/publications, service activities, etc. Requests to join are reviewed weekly.

PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

One of the core beliefs in the MPH Program is the commitment to public health through service to the profession. Becoming a member of one of the public health professional organizations is a first step in becoming involved in the profession. The professional organizations listed below are some examples of opportunities opened to MPH students. There are other organizations that are available to students and academic advisors will provide guidance on selection of an organization that will be a good match to student career plans. There is one organization we ask all students to join and that is the Pennsylvania Public Health Association. Membership is low cost, and we ask all students to join when they are admitted into the MPH Program and remain active members while they are completing their degree.

Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health

Delta Omega is the honorary society for graduate studies in public health. The society was founded in 1924 at Johns Hopkins University, School of Public Health. There are currently 58 chapters throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Election to membership in Delta Omega is intended, not only to recognize merit, but also, to encourage further excellence in, and devotion to, public health work. (DeltaOmega.org)

Since Delta Omega's establishment in 1924, the meaning and scope of public health has broadened tremendously. While it is still seriously concerned with problems of environmental sanitation and communicable disease control, public health action has come to embrace all aspects of health and disease in populations. These include the planning, organization, and support of health promotion, disease prevention, and medical care. Basic to modern public health are the social sciences as well as the natural sciences--both in the United States and internationally. Membership in Delta Omega reflects the dedication of an individual to quality in the field of public health and to protection and advancement of the health of all people. (DeltaOmega.org).

The WCU Chapter of Delta Omega Honorary Society is Beta Xi. Our Chapter can only induct a select number of graduating students each academic year. Students may nominate themselves for the opportunity to be inducted into the society by completing an application with supporting documentation. Our Chapter's Student Election Committee will review all applications to determine which graduating students demonstrate current and/or potential qualities of outstanding leadership in the field of public health. For more information, students can contact the Chapter Faculty Advisor Dr. Chiwoneso Tinago at ctinago@wcupa.edu.

Pennsylvania Public Health Association (PPHA)

The Pennsylvania Public Health Association is a membership alliance working to promote the health of Pennsylvania residents through the advancement of sound public health policies and practice. PPHA members from across the state have interest, experience, and expertise over a wide range of health-related issues, including those related to policy, education, private and public sector health services, health care delivery, legislation, and health related research. PPHA is a state affiliate of the American Public Health Association and a subsidiary of the Public Health Management Corporation in Philadelphia, PA. To join as a student member for \$20, visit the [PPHA website](#).

American Public Health Association (APHA)

The American Public Health Association is the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world and had been working to improve public health since 1872. APHA and its state affiliates represent approximately 50,000 health professionals and others who work to promote health, prevent disease and ensure conditions in which we all can be safe and healthy. Members enjoy a wealth of benefits and resources, including information of the latest trends, research, legislation, advocacy and policy issues through multiple publications, expert commentaries, and many networking opportunities. Its Annual Meeting and Exposition is the world's largest public health meeting, with over 13,000 attendees and over 900 Scientific Sessions every year. Through its flagship publications: the *American Journal of Public Health* and *The Nation's Health*, APHA communicates the latest science and practice to its members (APHA.org). Reduced student membership rates are available on the [APHA website](#). Additionally, MPH Professor Dr. Gopal Sankaran is currently serving a term on the APHA Executive Board and alumni Dr. Allison Casola is a past President of the APHA Student Assembly. Many faculty are members of APHA and their specialty sections. Reach out for more information.

American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE)

The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) is the professional society for healthcare leaders committed to improving health. an international professional society of more than 48,000 healthcare executives who lead hospitals, healthcare systems and other healthcare organizations. ACHE's mission is to advance our members and healthcare leadership excellence. ACHE offers its prestigious FACHE® credential, signifying board certification in healthcare management. ACHE's established network of 76 chapters provides access to networking, education and career development at the local level. In addition, ACHE is known for its magazine, *Healthcare Executive*, and its career development and public policy programs. Through such efforts, ACHE works toward its vision of being the preeminent professional society for leaders dedicated to advancing health. The Foundation of the American College of Healthcare Executives was established to further advance healthcare management excellence through education and research. Reduced student memberships are available on the [ACHE website](#).

ACHE of Greater Philadelphia

As an official chapter of ACHE, the **ACHE of Greater Philadelphia** (formerly Healthcare Leadership Network of the Delaware Valley) serves healthcare leaders with local networking and professional opportunities. For networking opportunities, join [ACHE of Greater Philadelphia LinkedIn](#). Each Spring, ACHE of Greater Philadelphia participates in a student health care technology innovation case competition. WCU MPH students have won monetary prizes under the guidance of Health Care Management Concentration Coordinator and ACHE of Greater Philadelphia Executive Board Member Dr. Harry Holt (hholt@wcupa.edu).

National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)

NEHA currently serves more than 6,000 members to advance the environmental health and protection professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all. Professionals who earn a Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian credential from NEHA are recognized as having achieved an established standard of excellence. These environmental health professionals master a body of knowledge (which is verified by examination) and acquire sufficient experience to satisfactorily perform work responsibilities in the environmental health field. In addition to maintaining high standards of practice and testing for its credentialing programs, NEHA provides training and resources for continuing education through online courses and an online bookstore; holds an annual conference; fosters networking and career growth; and publishes the widely respected peer-reviewed *Journal of Environmental Health*. Reduced student memberships are available at the [NEHA website](#). For networking opportunities, join [NEHA LinkedIn](#).

Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE)

SOPHE is an independent, international professional association made up of a diverse membership of health education professionals and students. With its primary focus on public health education, SOPHE provides leadership through a code of ethics, standard for professional preparation, research, and practice; professional development; and public outreach. SOPHE is a professional organization founded in 1950 to provide leadership to the profession and to promote the health of all people by: stimulating research on the theory and practice of health education; supporting high quality performance standards for the practice of health education and health promotion; advocating policy and legislation affecting health education and health promotion; and developing and promoting standards for professional preparation of health education professionals. Reduced student memberships are available at the [SOPHE website](#). The Pennsylvania Chapter of SOPHE (PA SOPHE) is the chapter organization promoting public health through education and bringing together health educators throughout urban and rural Pennsylvania and northern Delaware. For networking opportunities, join [PA SOPHE LinkedIn](#).