



UNIVERSITY OF  
SAINT JOSEPH  
CONNECTICUT

**GRADUATE  
PROGRAM IN PUBLIC  
HEALTH**

**MPH STUDENTS**

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**HANDBOOK**

**2023 –  
2024**

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## The Master of Public Health Program Overview

### **USJ Mission Statement**

The University of Saint Joseph, founded by the Sisters of Mercy in the Catholic tradition, provides rigorous liberal arts and professional education for a diverse student population in an inclusive environment that encourages strong ethical values, personal integrity, and a sense of responsibility needs of society.

### **USJ Core Values**

- *Catholic Identity*
  - The University of Saint Joseph is grounded in its heritage as a Catholic institution, expressing the Catholic tradition in an ecumenical and critical manner.
- *Development of the Whole Person*
  - The University of Saint Joseph encourages, inspires, and challenges all students to fully develop their intellectual, spiritual, social, emotional, physical and leadership potential.
- *Compassionate Service*
  - The University of Saint Joseph promotes, supports, and facilitates caring service as an integral part of all teaching and learning experience.
- *Academic Excellence*
  - The University of Saint Joseph provides a value-centered education that prepares students as global citizens, lifelong learners, and informed decision makers.
- *Respect/Integrity*
  - The University of Saint Joseph demonstrates respect and reverence for all people and fidelity in personal witness.
- *Hospitality*
  - The University of Saint Joseph is a welcoming community where its relationships are based on openness, inclusivity and mutual respect.
- *Multiculturalism/Diversity*
  - The University of Saint Joseph is committed to fostering the growth of an inclusive community that welcomes differences among community members and benefits from them.

### **Nutrition and Public Health Mission Statement**

The mission of the Department of Nutrition and Public Health is to provide students with a broad foundation in their chosen area of study that focuses on improving the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and populations by addressing the diverse needs of a changing society.

## **USJ-MPH Mission**

The mission of the University of Saint Joseph Master of Public Health Program is to prepare students to become competent public health practitioners while promoting health equity in their communities.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The [University of Saint Joseph's \(USJ\) Master of Public Health](#) Program (MPH) overarching goal is to prepare students for practice and promote healthy lifestyles and health equity in community-based settings. Hence, the USJ MPH program is designed to:

1. Prepare students for employment and careers in the broad field of public health.
2. Provide the opportunity for Public Health graduate education, whether already in the field or in other occupations.
3. Promote public health through community involvement and research.
4. Collaborate with other disciplines and community partners to enhance the education of students and the field of public health

Students are required to complete the core MPH curriculum that comprises approximately 42 credit hours, which are required for graduation. Students have the flexibility to customize the elective credit hours of their MPH generalist concentration.

## **Generalist Concentration**

A core component of the USJ MPH Program is to empower students to play a critical role in designing and implementing their educational studies and experience. Students in the consultation with advisors to 1) develop an individualized educational plan and 2) gain the competencies required for their path in public health. The generalist studies include the following content areas: Health Disparities and Public Health, Public Health Nutrition, and Maternal and Child Health.

## **Foundational Public Health Knowledge**

Guided by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), all MPH students will be grounded in foundational public health knowledge as measured by the student's achievement of the following learning objectives:

### ***Profession & Science of Public Health***

- Explain public health history, philosophy, and values.
- Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services.

- Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health.
- List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other community relevant to the school or program
- Discuss the science of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.
- Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge.

### ***Factors Related to Human Health***

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

### **MPH Foundational Competencies**

All MPH graduates will demonstrate the following competencies.

#### ***Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health***

1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of 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 & Health Care Systems***

5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings
6. Discuss how structural bias, social inequities 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 stakeholders 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 leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges

### **Communication**

18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
19. Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content

### **Inter-professional 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

## **Generalist Concentration/Track Competencies**

- Identify, adapt, or create data collection instruments for primary data (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups).
- Assess epidemiological study types using the ranking of evidence.
- Design a multi-level comprehensive strategy to reduce health disparities for a given population or community.
- Assess the impact of healthcare access and quality on health status and health disparities.
- Apply skills in evaluation design and implementation to public health programs.
- Develop a budget for a public health program.
- Identify and analyze current US nutrition assistance programs, at the state, national and international level.
- Describe methods for assessing and evaluating community nutrition status.
- Identify current community nutrition problems, nationally and internationally.

- Describe nutritional epidemiology and examples of national and international activities.
- Engage a life course perspective to analyze inequities in Maternal and Child Health outcomes.
- Apply public health principles and techniques across disciplines to solve multifaceted problems within the context of family centered, comprehensive, culturally competent/humility, community based MCH programs and systems.
- Identify social-behavioral, environmental, and biological risk factors of maternal and child health problems.
- Evaluate the role of government and financing in shaping health policy and health outcomes.
- Create and interpret causal loop diagrams to explain the importance of system thinking in public health.
- Synthesize the public health research and practice literature for a selected public health topic to design evidence-based deliverables—written and oral to disseminate for various audiences.

### **Summary of Graduation Requirements**

- A total of 42 credit hours are required to graduate. Students must complete the MPH core curriculum as detailed in the forthcoming section on the MPH Core Curriculum.
- Students with a Bachelor of Public Health from an accredited institution will have their Foundation of Public Health Course waived.
- All core curriculum courses must be taken for a letter grade, except the practicum project.
- All students must complete the MPH practicum requirements (e.g., at least 120 hours).
- All students must complete the MPH capstone or thesis.



## USJ's MPH Curriculum

### Curriculum Overview

The University of Saint Joseph's online MPH program with a generalist concentration consists of 42 credit hours of coursework is completed in five - seven consecutive semesters (i.e., Fall, Summer, and Spring). The USJ MPH program core curriculum is grounded in the foundation of public health knowledge and in the profession and science of public health and factors that affect human population health (see figure 1). All USJ MPH graduates will demonstrate public health competencies outlined on **pages 5 - 8** that are informed by the multidisciplinary public health that includes the five foundational core areas and cross-cutting and emerging public health areas.



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### *Generalist Concentration*

#### *Figure 1: USJ's MPH Curriculum Experience*

The program's curriculum allows students to apply and demonstrate their acquired and enhanced public health skills, knowledge, and tools as public health practitioners through the MPH Practicum (see pp. 10-11) and Capstone Project/Thesis (see pp. 12-13).

In addition to the foundational competencies, USJ's MPH program is designed to access the following outcomes:

1. Assess and monitor health problems at the population level.
2. Apply epidemiological principles to identify and investigate population-based health problems in your local or global community.
3. Assess and monitor environmental issues that impact human health and formulate strategies to address these threats and promote social and environmental justice within communities.
4. Develop evidence-based programs to promote health and improve health equity in communities.
5. Utilize social and behavioral health theory and cultural awareness to develop strategies to help people develop healthier behaviors.
6. Evaluate the implementation and progress of health promotion programs.
7. Develop public health communication strategies to reach target populations effectively.
8. Promote health and health equity through the development and analysis of public health policy.
9. Apply systems thinking to complex public health issues.

### **Required Courses**

The following courses are required of MPH students to meet foundational learning objectives and competencies. **MPH students are required to complete each core course with a grade of “B” or better.** These courses must be taken for a letter grade when offered:

#### ***Required Core Courses***

- PUBH 502: Epidemiology (3 credits)
- PUBH 505: Social & Behavioral Health (3 credits)
- PUBH 515: Fundamentals of Health Policy & Administration (3 credits)
- PUBH 513/NUTRI 590: Biostatistics (3 credits)
- PUHB 510: Environmental Health (3 credits)

#### ***Other required courses***

- PUBH: 501 Foundations of Public Health (3 credits)
- PUBH 523: Community Needs Assessment (3 credits)
- PUBH 525: Program Planning & Implementation (3 credits)
- PUBH 527: Program Evaluation (3 credits)
- PUBH 595: Public Health Internship (3 credits)
- PUBH 599: Public Health Capstone (3 credits)
- PUBH 600: Public Health Thesis I – Thesis Proposal (3 credits)

- PUBH 601: Public Thesis II—Thesis Defense (3 credits)

## **Generalist Elective Requirements**

### ***Electives***

All students are required to complete six credit hours of elective coursework. *If a student fails to earn a C+ or better in his/her elective course, the student may re-take the elective course or take another elective with a passing grade of C+ or better.* Students have 6 - 9 credit hours of electives chosen in consultation with their academic advisor. Students are encouraged to seek out electives that reflect their professional or personal goals.

- PUBH 540: Public Health Nutrition (3 credits)
- PUBH 530: Public Health and Health disparities (3 credits)
- PUBH 535: Maternal Child Health (3 credits)
- NUTRI 594: Research Methods (3 credits)

Students can choose to pursue a certificate in the specific areas of study listed below. You must apply and be accepted into the certificate program, independent of the MPH application process.

*Listing of certificates that can be done via online.*

- Healthcare Systems Management
- Emerging Infectious Diseases
- Environmental Science
- Health Informatics

## **Transfer Credits**

USJ's incoming MPH students may transfer up to 3- 6 hours from accredited institutions at the Program Director's discretion. Courses approved for transfer credit must be graduate level and must fall within established time limits for the Master's program. Students can **only transfer courses with a grade of "B" or higher**. Academic credit hours transfer but grade points earned at other institutions do not transfer.

## **Scheduled Courses**

The 42 credit hours program can be complete in seven semesters (approximately 2 ½ years).

## **Sample MPH Scheduled Courses List (seven semesters)**

### **Year 1**

#### *Fall Semester*

- PUHB: 501 Foundations of Public Health - waived if have BS in PH\*
- PUBH 502: Epidemiology
- \* PUBH 530: Public Health and Health Disparities

#### *Spring Semester*

- PUBH 505: Social & Behavioral Health
- PUBH 515: Fundamentals of Health Policy & Administration

#### *Summer Semester*

- PUBH 513: Biostatistics
- PUHB 510: Environmental Health

### **Year 2**

#### *Fall Semester*

- PUBH 523: Community Needs Assessment
- PUBH 525: Program Planning & Implementation

#### *Spring Semester*

- PUBH 527: Program Evaluation
- Elective

#### *Summer Semester*

- PUBH 595: Public Health Internship
- Elective

### **Year 3**

#### *Fall Semester*

- PUBH 599: Public Health Capstone/ PUBH 600-601: Public Health Thesis
- Elective

## Practicum

### **Practicum Overview**

Master of Public Health students is required to complete a field experience, “Practicum,” (PUBH 595: Public Health Internship) that their faculty advisor approves. The purpose of the practicum experience is to give students opportunities to synthesize, integrate and apply knowledge and practical skills from coursework in community-based settings and to their special interest. All students must address at least five competencies, of which three must be foundational. The practicum is a supervised practical field experience.

In consultation with a faculty advisor, students will select a site, project, plan, and complete a satisfactory field experience that fulfills the program’s practicum requirements. Lead-time is required to identify a public health mentor and host organization; thus, the Faculty advisor will remind students a semester prior. When students identify a project for their practicum, students must obtain approval from their Faculty Advisor before confirming the site as a practice placement.

### **Practicum requirements**

Students plan and design their practicum. All students must include the following required components:

- Students must complete all core courses to register for the PUBH 595: Applied Practice Experience.
- Participate in public health practice, research, or policy activities
- Provide 120 (minimum) hours to the practicum organization
- Produce eight deliverables from your practicum experience
- Receive mentorship from a public health professional with appropriate education and training
- Apply graduate-level public health skills and at least five Learning CEPH competencies.

### **Acceptable practicum sites**

The practicum sites are public health organizations in a student’s community. Practicum sites (i.e., paid or unpaid) can be working at a local, state, federal or international organization. Sites can be working at a local, national, or international field site. Practicum sites are expected to provide each student with the following:

1. Opportunities for MPH students to develop further and apply competencies learned in the classroom
2. An onsite supervisor who can meet regularly with the students to ensure their progress

*Examples of acceptable practicum sites include:*

- Federal agencies
- State, county, city, or district health departments
- Non-governmental Organizations
- Community Health Centers
- Hospitals
- Community-based organizations

Students can use the data from their practicum experience as a component of their Master's thesis or capstone paper (see the section on Integrative Learning Experience).

### **Methods of Evaluation**

Students will be evaluated based on their performance in the field site with either a **Pass or Fail grade**. Students are required to provide eight deliverables. (See *MPH Practicum Handbook*).

### **Practicum Policy Waiver**

University of Saint Joseph's MPH program does not anticipate circumstances under which a professional student would be exempt from the Practicum requirement.

## Integrative Learning Experience

### **Overview**

The Integrative Learning Experience (PUBH 599: Public Health Capstone/PUBH 600&601: Public Health Thesis for three credit hours) is required for graduation and must be completed in the final semester of the MPH program. The Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) is a comprehensive process of the five MPH Core Competencies where students will demonstrate synthesis of foundational and program competencies. For the ILE, students can choose either a Capstone Project (i.e., non-thesis) or Thesis. Completing the ILE varies: If a student chose a capstone project, the project must be completed in one semester, whereas students can complete the Thesis in two semesters.

The ILE should align with the student's academic interests and areas of career goals. The ILE project requires two deliverables: 1) a high-quality written product and 2) a presentation on the ILE. The final deliverable can be either a practice project, research project report, policy analysis, grant proposal, written plan for a program, evaluation of an existing program, manual, or systematic review of the literature. The final paper for the ILE is expected to represent the thoroughness and quality of a publishable manuscript or report for professional publication.

Meeting all deadlines is essential for the successful completion of your ILE. The specific deadlines are:

1. Identify the problem to be addressed based on the student's interest (non-graded)
2. Submission of the proposal the semester before enrolling in PUBH 599: Public Health Capstone/ PUBH 600&601: Public Health Thesis (non-graded)
3. Submit a rough draft to your committee, including your Faculty Advisor
4. Submit final document and orally defend your ILE successfully (graded)

The committee must comprise at least two members: the student Integrative Learning Experience advisor (i.e., primary reader) and a second reader. The primary reader must be a faculty in UJS's Department of Nutrition and Public Health. The secondary reader can be outside of their department, based on interest and topic. The final written deliverable must be acceptably formatted, professional, and comprehensive and must display the student's comprehension of the MPH Core Competencies. Students must complete this process with the guidance of the ILE advisor.

## **Academic Integrity Policy**

The ILE is a self-directed, independent endeavor completed with guidance from your ILE advisor. Furthermore, students must cite all non-original work appropriately and read [USJ's Academic Integrity Policy](#) before starting their ILE.

## **Integrative Learning Experience Grading**

**The student must earn a grade of B or above in the ILE course, resulting in a Pass grade.** Students who fail to complete any portion of the ILE project requirements (i.e., problem identification, proposal, document submission, final draft, or presentation) successfully will receive a grade of incomplete.

## **USJ Institutional Review Board Review (IRB) Approval for an ILE**

Students who plan to do human subjects research must have IRB approval before working with human data or samples or contacting human subjects. To submit or get more information about the IRB process, visit the “MyUSJ” website, where you will use the same login information as Blackboard. Once you are on the “MyUSJ” page, under the Graduate and Research/Grants tab, students will find the information related to the [USJ Institutional Review Board](#). In addition to applying to USJ's IRB, students, who plan to use human subjects for their ILE, will need to complete research ethics and compliance training, also known as [CITI Program](#) or [U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Service IRB Program](#). Both are free but the CITI program training will close beginning November 2023. Students will need to submit the Human Subject Training certificate of completion with their name and number as part of the IRB application.



## Academic Advisement and Mentorship

### **Advisement**

Each student will be assigned an academic advisor, they will meet virtually with students to discuss courses, including but is not limited to planning coursework for current and future semesters, signing necessary paperwork, and aspiration planning. Your academic advisor will reach out to students during the first two weeks of the semester to enable a solid mentee-mentor relationship and coordinate frequent program check-ins.

The [required course is set per semester](#). As for electives, students can choose the electives of their interest. For more details on the MPH course descriptions, visit the [program course catalog](#). Students can register in October for the Spring semester, late March, or early April for both the Summer and Fall semesters. To view upcoming registration dates, please see USJ's [Academic Calendar](#).

Faculty in the Department of Nutrition and Public Health are always happy to talk with students about their careers.

### **MPH Academic Standing**

To maintain good academic standing in the MPH program, students must earn a grade of B or above in each course.

### **Academic Grievance Process**

Students who wish to file a written complaint should consult with the University of Saint Joseph's Student handbook ([Academic Grievance Policy](#)).

### **Discontinue Academics**

Students who wish to discontinue (i.e., voluntary or involuntary) their MPH degree should read [Discontinuing Academics](#) in the University of Saint Joseph's Student handbook.

## Financial Support

## Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are offered to students who can be on campus from 8-16 hours per week. The USJ graduate assistantships are generally tuition waivers for one or two courses in exchange for 8 or 16 hours of work for the department. To get more information about USJ's [Graduate Assistantship](#) or apply for a graduate Assistantship, visit USJ's Graduate Assistant website or contact Dr. Kaydian Reid at [kreid@usj.edu](mailto:kreid@usj.edu).

## Financial Aid

Students, who plan to apply for financial aid, please ensure that your FAFSA has been completed. You do not need to submit an additional application for financial assistance. For students who are accepted, the award of aid will be granted once FAFSA is received. For further information regarding completing the financial aid process, please visit [USJ Graduate Student Financial Services](#).

## USJ Student Handbook

MPH Students should review the USJ Student Handbook and familiarize themselves with policies and procedures. Students should give particular attention to the following information:

- Statement Condemning Acts of Hatred and Violence
- General Student Conduct Process
- Sanctions
- Academic Integrity Policy Sexual Assault Policy

A link to the handbook can be found by [clicking here](#).

## Nutrition & Public Health Department Faculty Contact Information

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\*\*\*\* Note: This is a work in progress and students' suggestions are incorporated.

Appendix A

**DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND PUBLIC HEALTH  
PLAN OF STUDY FOR MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH DEGREE (MPH)**

(Rev. Fall 2022)

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of MPH Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

**REQUIRED CORE COURSES (15 CREDITS)**

<b>Course:</b>	<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Year Taken</b>
PUBH 502	Epidemiology	<u>3</u>		
PUBH 503	Principles of Biostatistics	<u>3</u>		
PUBH 510	Environmental Health	<u>3</u>		
PUBH 515	Fundamentals of Health Policy & Administration	<u>3</u>		
PUBH 505	Social and Behavioral Aspects of Public Health	<u>3</u>		
PUBH 501*	Fundamentals of Public Health	<u>3</u>		
PUHB 523	Community Needs Assessment	<u>3</u>		
PUBH 525	Program Planning & Implementation	<u>3</u>		
PUBH 527	Program Evaluation	<u>3</u>		
PUBH 595	Public Health Internship	<u>3</u>		
		<b>30 Totals</b>		

**\*NOTE:** PUBH 501\* Course waived for students with a bachelors in Public Health, minor in public health, or has a graduate certificate in public health.

**ELECTIVES (9 credits)**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Year Taken</b>
		<u>3</u>		
		<u>3</u>		
		<u>3</u>		

		<b>9 Totals</b>		
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**MPH Elective**

- PUBH 530: Public Health and Health disparities (3 credits)
- PUBH 535: Maternal Child Adolescent Health (3 credits)
- PUBH 545: Public Health Nutrition (3 credits)
- NUTRI 594: Research Methods

**Practicum: (3 credits).** One practicum experience is required. Final assessment consist of a paper and presentation in ***PUBH 595: Public Health Internship***. Students must register for practicum credit during the semesters in which the work is completed.

	<u>Mentor</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1. _____	_____	_____	_____

**Research Tool:**

The research tool requirement for the master’s degree is satisfied by demonstrating computer literacy. Satisfactory completion (i.e., a grade of B or better) of **PUBH 513** or approval of a waiver for documented demonstrated competence in a similar computer programming course.

**MPH Capstone/Thesis Committee (3 members minimum):**

1. Capstone/Thesis Faculty Advisor:
2. Community Preceptor:
3. Program Director:

**Thesis Proposal Defense:**

Date of presentation: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Action: \_\_\_\_\_

**Master Project (3- 6 credits).**

You must be registered for MPH project credits during the time of your capstone/thesis:

<b><u>Course TAKEN</u></b>	<b><u>Credits</u></b>	<b><u>SEMESTERS</u></b>
PUBH 599: Public Health Capstone/Thesis	_____3_____	_____

PUBH 600: Public Health Thesis I (Proposal)	<u>3</u>	_____
PUBH 601: Public Health Thesis II (Defense)	<u>3</u>	_____

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Capstone/Thesis Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of MPH Project Defense/Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Pass \_\_\_ Fail \_\_\_ Revisions \_\_\_

**Total Credits: 42**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student's Signature** **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Advisor's Signature** **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**MPH Director** **Date**