

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH IN HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

## Program Requirements

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### Student's Advisory Committee

After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling, the student will consult with the head of his or her department concerning appointment of the chair of the advisory committee. The student's advisory committee for the Master of Science degree will consist of no fewer than three graduate faculty representatives of the student's fields of study and research. The committee chair or one of the co-chairs must be a member of Graduate Faculty in the student's department.

Committee members must be comprised of at least one principal faculty member within SPH but external to the relevant department(s), all voting members must be members of the graduate faculty. The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The committee composition must be approved by the relevant department head.

If the chair of a student's advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student is near completion of the degree and wants the chair to continue to serve in this role, the student is responsible for securing a current member of the University Graduate Faculty, from the student's academic program and located near the Texas A&M University campus site, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. The Department Head or Chair of Intercollegiate faculty may request in writing to the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School that a faculty member who is on an approved leave of absence or has voluntarily separated from the university, be allowed to continue to serve in the role of chair of a student's advisory committee without a co-chair for up to one year. The students should be near completion of the degree. Extensions beyond the one year period can be granted with additional approval of the Dean.

The committee members' signatures on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members can be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign in masse. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student's research and dissertation or record of study, has the responsibility for calling all meetings of the committee. The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the research proposal, guidance and supervision of the thesis

study/research and the final examination. In addition, the committee, as a group and as individual members, is responsible for counseling the student on academic matters and, in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the Graduate and Professional School.

### Degree Plan

The student's advisor, in consultation with the student, will develop the proposed degree plan. The final degree plan must be completed and filed with the Graduate and Professional School prior to the deadlines imposed by the student's college, and no later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination.

The proposed/final degree plan should be submitted through the online Document Processing Submission System located on the website <https://ogsdpps.tamu.edu>.

Additional coursework may be added to the approved degree plan by petition if it is deemed necessary by the advisor to correct deficiencies in the student's academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student's Request for Final Examination or Request for Final Examination Exemption is approved by the Graduate and Professional School.

### Credit Requirement

A minimum of 45 hours of coursework is required for the MSPH degree. To demonstrate integration and application of subject matter learned and the development of written and oral communication skills, a student will be required to produce a thesis and participate in a Practicum. Concentration and elective courses vary among the core disciplines and will be addressed during advising and creation of the degree plan. Electives may be taken upon approval/advice from the student's assigned advisor and will be listed by rubric, section, and description in the degree plan.

### Transfer of Credit

A student may transfer up to 9 hours of graduate credit to the MSPH degree program on the advice and approval of the student's advisory committee, department Chair, and school Academic Affairs Dean, and with the approval of the Graduate and Professional School. Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater may be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Otherwise, the limitations stated in the preceding section apply. Coursework in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit. Courses appearing on the degree plan with grades of D, F, or U may not be absolved by transfer work. Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours or equated to semester credit hours. An official transcript from the university at which the transfer coursework was taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

Courses used toward another degree at another institution may not be applied for graduate credit. If the course to be transferred was taken prior to the conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit toward the degree must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPA.

## Limitations on the Use of Transfer, Extensions, and Certain Other Courses

If otherwise acceptable, certain courses may be used toward meeting credit-hour requirements for the master's degree with the following limitations.

1. The maximum number of credit hours allowed toward the MSPH as transfer credit is 9.
2. Courses previously used for another degree are not acceptable for credit.
3. A zero credit 684 or 685 course is only allowed for non-thesis option master's students. A zero credit 681 course can be used for either thesis or non-thesis option master's students. Other courses, including 691 (Research) hours, are not eligible for zero credit. Under normal circumstances, non-thesis masters students may not use 691 hours on their degree plan. However, for non-thesis masters students who are using 691 hours on the degree plan, see the Non-Thesis Option section on the Program Requirements page in the graduate catalog for the degree they are pursuing.
4. A maximum of 3 hours of 684 (Professional Internship/Practicum), and 9 hours of 685 (Directed Studies), if approved on the degree plan.
5. Undergraduate courses are not allowed to transfer to the MSPH degree program.
6. Continuing education courses may not be used for graduate credit.
7. Extension courses are not acceptable for credit.
8. For non-distance degree programs, no more than 50 percent of the credit hours required for the program may be completed through distance education courses.
9. To receive a graduate degree from Texas A&M University, students must earn one-third or more of the credits through the institution's own direct instruction. This limitation also applies to joint degree programs.

Exceptions will be permitted only in unusual cases and when petitioned by the student's advisor, department Chair, school Academic Affairs Office, and approved by the Graduate and Professional School.

## Thesis

An acceptable thesis is required for the Master of Science in Public Health degree. The finished work must reflect a comprehensive understanding of the pertinent literature and express in clear English, the problem(s) for study, the method, significance and results of the student's original research. Guidelines for the preparation of the thesis are available in the *Thesis Manual*, which is available online at <https://grad.tamu.edu>.

After successful defense (or exemption) and approval by the student's advisory committee and the head of the student's department, the student must submit his/her thesis in electronic format as a single PDF file. The PDF file must be uploaded to the website, <https://grad.tamu.edu>. Additionally, a signed approval form must be brought or mailed to the Graduate and Professional School. The PDF file and the signed approval form are required by the deadline.

Deadline dates for submitting the thesis are announced each semester or summer term in the Graduate and Professional School Calendar

(see Time Limit statement). These dates also can be accessed via the website <https://ogsdps.tamu.edu>.

Before a student can be "cleared" by Thesis and Dissertation Services, a processing fee must be paid through Student Business Services. This processing fee is for the thesis/dissertation services provided. After commencement, dissertations are digitally stored and made available through the Texas A&M Libraries.

A thesis that is deemed unacceptable by the Graduate and Professional School because of excessive corrections will be returned to the student's department head. The manuscript must be resubmitted as a new document, and the entire review process must begin again. All submittal deadlines must be met during the resubmittal process to graduate that semester.

## Thesis Proposal

The student must prepare a thesis proposal for approval by the student's advisory committee and the head of the major department or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, if applicable. This proposal must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School at least 20 working days prior to the submission of the request for the final examination.

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student involved in these types of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety at (979) 458-1467 to address questions about all research compliance responsibilities. Additional information can be also obtained on the website <http://rcb.tamu.edu>.

## Final Examination/Thesis Defense

A student must pass a final examination by dates announced each semester or summer term in the Graduate and Professional School Calendar. To be eligible to take the final examination, a student's GPA must be at least 3.000 for courses on the degree plan and for all courses completed at Texas A&M which are eligible to be applied to a graduate degree, and there must be no unabsolved grades of D, F or U for any course listed on the degree plan. To absolve a deficient grade, the student must repeat the course at Texas A&M University and achieve a grade of C or better. All coursework on the degree plan must have been completed with the exception of those hours for which the student is registered. For thesis-option students, an approved thesis proposal must be on file in the Graduate and Professional School according to published deadlines prior to the final examination or submission of the request for exemption from the final examination.

A request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date for the examination. The Graduate and Professional School must be notified in writing of any cancellations. A student may be given only one opportunity to repeat the final examination for the master's degree and that must be within a time period that does not extend beyond the end of the next regular semester (summer terms are excluded).

For thesis option students, the final examination covers the thesis and all work taken on the degree plan and at the option of the committee may be written or oral or both. The final examination may not be administered before the thesis is available to all members of the student's advisory committee in substantially final form, and all members have had adequate time to review the document. The examination is conducted by the student's advisory committee as finally constituted. A thesis option student must be registered in the University in the semester or

summer term in which the final examination is taken. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the major professor, attend final examinations for advanced degrees. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her exam. A department, or interdisciplinary degree program, may have a stricter requirement provided there is consistency within all degree programs within a department or interdisciplinary degree program.

The Report of the Final Examination Form must be submitted with original signatures of only the committee members approved by the Graduate and Professional School. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must also be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School. If necessary, multiple copies of the form may be submitted with different committee member original signatures. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must be included on the form submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

A thesis option candidate may petition to be exempt from his/her final examination provided his/her degree plan GPA is 3.500 or greater and he/she has the approval of the advisory committee, the head of the student's major department, or intercollegiate chair, if appropriate, and the Graduate and Professional School. It is required that the petition for exemption be submitted the same semester the student intends to submit the thesis.