

Master of Public Health (MPH) Student Handbook

August 2024



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY
CORPUS
CHRISTI

COLLEGE OF
NURSING
& HEALTH
SCIENCES

Master in Public Health - College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS)
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC)
<https://www.tamucc.edu/nursing-and-health-sciences>

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SECTION I

Welcome to the Master of Public Health (MPH) Program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi! This handbook is a document developed for students to reflect on the mission of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences as well as information on the Public Health program.

This handbook is designed to serve as a resource to help with your questions about the graduate program. It is a companion for the catalog of the entry year: <https://catalog.tamucc.edu/> and in case of any contradiction, the graduate catalog of the record is the true source of information, as well as the College of Graduate Studies handbook <https://www.tamucc.edu/grad-college/current-students/assets/documents/masters-student-handbook.pdf> . The Master's Student Handbook from the College of Graduate Studies handbook provides university-wide information relative to student resources, academic policies, financial assistance, information on coursework requirements, advising, professional organizations and policies and procedures are included.

Students will also use this handbook in conjunction with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) website and current degree planners to facilitate progression in the MPH program.

VISION

Enriching lives, advancing healthcare, one Islander at a time.

MISSION

The TAMUCC College of Nursing and Health Sciences is committed to promoting a learner-centered and caring environment that facilitates student success and engagement in a global context. Delivering nationally recognized, evidence-based educational programs that serve a diverse student population, the college sets clinical standards of excellence in healthcare, and actively advances scholarly research and leadership. The activities are fostered in a collaborative, inter-professional, and multicultural learning community.

SECTION II
FACULTY & STAFF

Academic Program Coordinator:

Pending

Primary Faculty:

Luis Espinoza, PhD, MPH, MCHES®, CPH, Assistant Professor
Rajesh Melaram, PhD, Assistant Professor

Secondary Faculty

Liwen Zeng, PhD, Assistant Professor
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SECTION III

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program Description

The Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Master of Public Health prepares graduates for positions in community and public health settings by providing an understanding of a broad range of health-related topics, evidence-based approaches to problems, and learning how public health organizations run. It is designed to educate students to facilitate and improve the public health of communities.

The Master of Public Health will provide students with an understanding of epidemiology, environmental health, health policy, biostatistics, program planning and evaluation based on current health and wellness trends. This degree is relevant across many industries and organizations, including those that are not centered specifically on health or healthcare, such as, ensuring safe public water access, monitoring building codes, and nutrition.

All clinical education and training must be accomplished in the state of Texas.

MPH Program Goals and Expected Outcomes

The goals of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences assist the College in implementing the University and College missions:

- To develop students into competent public health professionals
- To engage students in the principles, practices, and applications common to public health promotion and disease prevention

The student learning outcomes of the MPH program are as follows:

Graduates of these programs will:

- Use public health informatics to develop, implement, evaluate, and improve policies, programs, and services.
- Apply ethical principles in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information
- Develop and apply organizational and financial strategic plans, including measurable objectives and targets, relationships to community health improvement plans, budgets, and workforce development plans
- Communicate information to influence behavior and improve health
- Analyze and assess factors affecting the health of a community, using quantitative and qualitative data and information

Program Options

There is no required thesis or graduate advisory committee to complete the MPH.

Applicants who have earned a bachelor's degree can start graduate coursework upon admission to the MPH program. Although it is beneficial to have a background in a health-related career, it is not required when applying to the MPH program.

SECTION IV

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

Program Admission

Admission information and deadlines can be found on the website:

<https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/nursing-health-sciences/masters/public-health-mph/#admissionrequirements>text under Admission Requirements.

The MPH program uses a rolling admission process (applications are reviewed upon receipt or when there are an adequate number of applicants for review). We encourage students to apply early. This will allow for enough time to also apply and qualify for federal student aid and scholarships. Applications will not be reviewed until all required materials have been submitted and received.

The college reserves the right to defer admission in the case of low enrollment. Students will be notified and given options if a selected track is not offered.

To apply for admission, students should complete application requirements as outlined in the posted Application Requirements section of the MPH webpage:

<https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/nursing-health-sciences/masters/public-health-mph/#admissionrequirements>

Additional Information:

- Students with a GPA less than 3.00 may be considered for conditional admission with a waiver request.

Academic Advising for MPH Students

Academic advisement for students enrolled in the MPH program at TAMU-CC is provided by the CONHS Graduate Advisor and the MPH Program Coordinator. **Each student is responsible for awareness and successful completion of all degree requirements.**

The following individuals will facilitate student progress in accomplishing the MPH program student learning outcomes.

CONHS Graduate Advisor

- The CONHS Graduate Advisor will assist students with class registration issues, course sequencing, graduation procedures, academic progression, navigating College of Graduate Studies' (CGS) procedures and utilizing existing university facilities, such as financial aid.
- Each MPH student is responsible for meeting or holding a phone conference with the CONHS Graduate Advisor prior to or during each registration period. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the student of current offerings in the MPH program and to review the student's progress in the degree plan.
- Students should consult the CONHS Graduate Advisor when events affect their ability to complete courses, progress through the program or interfere with registration.
- The CONHS Graduate Advisor performs course inventories before graduation and students should be guided by this review of graduation requirements.

MPH Academic Program Coordinator

- The MPH Academic Program Coordinator is entrusted with the overall leadership of the MPH program. They are responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of the MPH program, including curriculum, clinical practice experience oversight, and compliance with national accreditation and certification standards.
- The MPH Academic Program Coordinator is responsible for administering the policies related to the MPH program and supporting students as they progress through the program.
- Students should seek assistance from course faculty as soon as they determine they are having difficulties in meeting course requirements, achieving course student learning outcomes, or meeting program student learning outcomes. Students are expected to contact course faculty, the CONHS Graduate Advisor and the MPH Program Coordinator following chain of command as needed, in the event academic difficulties occur that may impact program progression.

Progression

Students are expected to progress through the program per their degree plan.

Course Delivery & Sequencing

- Courses are delivered in a sequence that promotes the student's development of skills in the design of health services.
- Students may choose to meet faculty or other resources on the TAMU-CC campus to facilitate their learning.
- Students should consult the course faculty and the CONHS Graduate Advisor immediately when they encounter problems that may interfere with the successful completion of a course in any semester.
- Courses will be taught once a calendar year so students should consult the MPH Program Coordinator and the CONHS Graduate Advisor if they are unable to follow the current degree

- plan. An alternate degree plan may be approved.
- Students can find the course sequence in the Degree Planner for individual plans.

All students must meet the standards for minimal performance and progression established by TAMU-CC CGS. See catalog section on [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#). Students must also adhere to the CGS [Student Handbook](#).

Students who drop a course or do not enroll in a semester in which they are eligible to enroll will only have access to subsequent courses in their area of study when space is available. Therefore, it is highly recommended that students consult the CONHS Graduate Advisor or the MPH academic program coordinator before withdrawing.

Grading Scale

The CONHS letter grading scales for the MPH program consist of the following:

- A - 90 to 100
- B - 80 to 89
- C - 70 to 79
- D - 60 to 69
- F - 60 and Below

1. When a grade lower than a C is earned, the student:
 - a. Must repeat a course in which a grade of D, F, or W (Withdrawal) was earned.
 - b. May be placed on scholastic probation if the GPA falls below 3.0 because of the D, F, or W.
 - c. Will be removed from scholastic probation in accordance with university policy.
 - See [Scholastic Probation and Enforced Withdrawal](#) in the catalog.
 - d. May not progress to courses for which that course is a prerequisite when a grade of D, F, W or I (Incomplete) was earned.
2. If the student **earns a third C or below** in the program, the student cannot progress further and is required to withdraw from the program even when the GPA does not fall below 3.0.
3. The student cannot progress to the next course after withdrawing from two courses in the program unless approved by the College of Nursing and Health Sciences Department of Health Sciences, MPH Program Coordinator. A plan to complete the program must be submitted to the MPH Coordinator before a progression decision can be made. Admission to courses that need to be completed will depend on space availability.
4. Students admitted conditionally to the College must earn a B or better in each of the first four MPH courses to remain in the MPH program. If a grade of less than B is earned during the period the student is classified as a conditional student, the student will be prohibited from further enrollment in the MPH program.

Graduation

The MPH curriculum is 45 semester credit hours. Course activities are both didactic and experiential. The didactic component of courses is delivered through the web-based, learning management system (LMS) at TAMU-CC.

Degree Plan

See the relevant section University Graduate Handbook. The degree plan must be completed before the student has completed 18 credit hours. Please contact the graduate academic CONHS Graduate Advisor regarding degree plan completion.

Culminating Event/Exit Requirements

The culminating event for the MPH students is the Culminating Experience and Integrative Learning Experience.

- An MPH student may receive a degree upon satisfying the requirements of the catalog under which the student enrolled in the program, provided the catalog is no more than seven years old when the degree is conferred, and the University still offers programs and required curriculum described in that catalog. A student may petition to graduate under a subsequent catalog under which credit was earned because of a preference to meet newer degree requirements.
- MPH students have a maximum of seven years to complete the program, from the first semester start date.
- Students intending to have a degree conferred must notify the CONHS Graduate Advisor .
- Students who plan to participate in a graduation exercise and/or receive a diploma must complete an application for graduation by the deadline indicated in the Academic Calendar.
- An application for graduation must be obtained through the student portal, [S.A.I.L.](#)
- Students participating in the graduation exercise will also be required to obtain an appropriate cap and gown.
- The application for graduation is not transferable to a subsequent semester. If a student does not graduate, the application will be canceled. A new application must be obtained and processed through [S.A.I.L.](#)
- More information about Commencement can be found here: <https://www.tamucc.edu/commencement/index.php>

Academic Integrity & Student Conduct

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty is described in Article III of the Student Code of Conduct. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the university catalog and the [Student Code of Conduct](#), which explain standards for academic integrity and academic honesty. Information on [Academic Misconduct is available here.](#)

Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from the program without previous warning for unsafe and/or unprofessional behavior identified by college administrators and faculty. Personal integrity is reflected in professional judgments. Consequently, the College reserves the right to dismiss students from the program for unprofessional or unsafe behavior.

College of Nursing and Health Sciences Student Grade Appeal Process

The CONHS adheres to the [University's Student Grade Appeal](#) Procedure.

SECTION V

MPH PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

All didactic courses in the MPH program are in online format.

Course Delivery

- Each MPH course can be accessed in a unique LMS shell through the TAMU-CC link. Course materials are organized within the shell. Links to support services including the library, tutorials, zoom presentations, and IT Help Desk are available in each shell. All course-related communication including documentation of grades, clarification of assignments, and discussions should occur in the course shell.
- Generally in-person, face-to-face activities between faculty and classmates will not be required to complete course-specific assignments.
- Course work consists of a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities that support student learning. Faculty may use a variety of web-based technologies such as YouTube videos or group conferencing as well as the learning tools embedded in the learning management system (such as chats, discussions, assignment management) to support student learning.
- Students are expected to maintain access to the Internet so that they can regularly participate in class activities.
- The TAMU-CC IT Help Desk maintains student support services seven days a week and can be reached by email or phone. Students should contact the IT Help services when they cannot access the course shell. Additionally, students should contact the course faculty as soon as possible when they have long-term access problems that will interfere with their access to course materials through the LMS. Each course should present a class schedule, which will delineate deadlines for assignments and provide a framework for establishing a work plan to complete course requirements. Most courses include lessons presented through a text format. These lessons generally include references to material on sites outside of the course made available through links. The lessons supplement the required readings. Self-assessments are often used as activities for students to evaluate their understanding of the information covered in lessons.

Written Assignment Requirements

- Because this is a graduate-level program, student performance will be assessed primarily through application activities that include the design, implementation, and defense of interventions that support quality health care. All assignments submitted to faculty must be submitted in the current APA format unless specifically instructed for that assignment. Any deviation from this requirement will be explicitly stated in a course syllabus.
- Students are strongly advised to purchase a copy of the current Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association and avoid relying solely on electronic templates. Using only
- electronic aids for APA formatting may create problems because electronic templates do not always work correctly when documents are transmitted electronically.

MPH Program Courses:

Core MPH Courses

PUHE 5340	Planning & Management to Promote Health	3
PUHE 5310	Environmental Health	3
PUHE 5300	Biostatistics	3
PUHE 5321	Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health	3
PUHE 5335	Public Health Communication	3
PUHE 5350	Public Health Leadership & Interprofessional Practice	3
PUHE 5325	Epidemiology	3
PUHE 5312	The Health Care System	3
PUHE 5320	Health Economics and Policy	3

Prescribed Elective Courses

PUHE 5360	Introduction to Public Data Management	3
PUHE 5320	Biostatistics II	3
PUHE 5330	Advanced Biostatistics	3
PUHE 5355	Population Health Research Methods	3
PUHE 5345	Epidemiology II	3

Culminating Experiences

PUHE 5100	Culminating Experience	1
PUHE 5250	Integrative Learning Experience	2

SECTION VI STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Professional Honor Societies

Phi Kappa Phi. The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi—the nation’s oldest all-discipline honor society — established its Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi chapter in 2014. The A&M University–Corpus Christi chapter is the 328th chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, which was founded in 1897 at the University of Maine. Graduate Students who meet the eligibility criteria will be invited by the chapter to join Phi Kappa Phi (no nomination letters needed). Graduate students must have completed 18 credit hours and rank in the top 10% of their class.

Professional Organizations

[American Public Health Association](#) champions optimal, equitable health and well-being for entire populations. The APHA is the only organization that combines more than 150 years’ perspective, a broad-based member community and the ability to influence federal policy to improve the public’s health.

This list is not exhaustive of all professional organization.

Conferences to Attend

Attending or presenting at annual leadership, education or public health conferences is encouraged. The university may provide limited travel funds for presentations at conferences or subsidize travel to regional conferences.

SECTION VII GENERAL INFORMATION

This section of the handbook includes standardized information about rules and policies pertaining to graduate education at Texas A&M University. It is not intended to be comprehensive. You are strongly encouraged to read the sections of the catalog pertaining to graduate students, which will provide more detail and additional topics that may impact you. You will also find information about your program.

Graduate Admissions

To be admitted to a program of graduate study, an applicant must hold a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or an equivalent foreign institution. Decisions concerning admission to graduate study are based on all admission criteria. To be considered for a graduate program, a minimum last 60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements; review specific program information in the graduate catalog or elsewhere in this handbook. All applications must be made through [Apply Texas](#). For more information about the application process, visit the [Application Process](#) page on the CGS website or see the Catalog, [Graduate Admissions section](#).

Graduate students should be aware of their enrollment status, as it may impact financial aid, veteran's benefits, or other important aspects of graduate life. In addition, international students have specific requirements about enrollment status. Enrollment status for graduate students is as follows:

Full-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 9 hours Combined summer terms = 6 hours
Three-quarter-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 7 hours Combined summer terms = 5 hours
Half-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 5 hours Combined summer terms = 3 hours

Continuous Enrollment

The University does not have a continuous enrollment policy for master's students. However, you should be aware of your own program's requirements, which may differ from general University requirements. Master's students should also know that if they do not attend for two years, they will be required to reapply to the University. Students should consider applying for a leave of absence (see below), especially if the time-to-degree and recency of credits requirements will be impacted by a needed absence.

Leave of Absence

Students experiencing life changing or catastrophic events should consult with their program coordinator and/or department chair and request a [Leave of Absence](#) in writing from the CGS using the [Request for Leave of Absence form](#). A student who is in good standing may petition for a leave of absence of no more than two full academic terms. The maximum number of leave of absence requests permitted in a program is two. A request for a leave of absence requires approval in advance by the CONHS Graduate Advisor, respective Academic Program Coordinator, College Dean, and Dean of the CGS. If the Dean of the CGS approves the petition, the registration requirement is set aside during the period of time of the leave. Students should be aware that leaves of absences require suspension of all activities associated pursuit of the degree. See the catalog for more information.

Maximum Course Load

Graduate students may not register for more than 12 hours in a regular semester, 6 hours in a single session of summer school, or 12 hours in the combined summer session (not including Maymester) without the approval of the appropriate college dean. See the [Maximum Course Load](#) section in the catalog.

Repetition of a Course

There are specific policies about repeating courses for higher grades, including the provision that graduate students may retake a maximum of two courses during graduate study at the University. Each course may be repeated only once. Some courses may be repeated for multiple credit if those courses are so designated in the course description and approved by the faculty or program advisor as designated by their college. Complete catalog information may be found in the [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#) section of the catalog.

Time Limit to Degree

The requirements for a master's degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within seven years subsequent to admission to the program. The seven-year period begins the first semester of enrollment and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Credit that is more than seven years old will not be counted toward a master's degree. Exceptions will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as submission of a revalidation plan. Credits earned at another university are not eligible for an exception. Written approval from the major department chairperson, the dean of the college offering the degree, the dean of CGS, and the Provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

Revalidation of Courses Beyond Degree Time Limit

In order to revalidate dated courses, students should carefully attend to information in the catalog (see [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#) section of the catalog. Revalidation requests should be made using the [Revalidation Request Form](#).

Academic Requirements for Graduate Work

Good Standing. Graduate students, including degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, and non-degree-seeking students, are considered in “good academic standing” if they maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on all graduate course work and earn a grade of S (Satisfactory), IP (In Progress), or CR (Credit) on all course work that does not affect GPA. A higher GPA may be required by some programs. In such cases, the higher standard will be substituted for 3.0 in all other matters related to good academic standing. A complete discussion of academic requirements including but not limited to scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal may be found in the [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#) section of the catalog. For information regarding the effect of scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal, see the [Financial Assistance Suspension Policy](#) in the Tuition, Fees, & Financial Assistance section of the catalog.

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, which include but are not limited to illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, plagiarism, or collusion in any of these behaviors. All students should familiarize themselves with the full Academic Integrity Policy as well as the processes and procedures used to address violations thereof. You can find additional information in the [Academic Integrity](#) section of the catalog. Students can also access University Rules and Procedures [13.02.99.C0.04](#): Student Academic Misconduct Cases.

Additional Information

Information, policies, and procedures about tuition, fees, financial assistance, scholarships, and other topics important to graduate students can be found in the catalog. In addition to the catalog, web pages for offices and services on campus provide expanded information, forms, and contact names/phone

numbers.

Some of those webpages include the following:

[College of Graduate Studies](#)

[Office of Student Financial Assistance](#)

[Scholarships](#)

[GROW](#)

[Assistantships](#)