



How to Join an MPH Program

by

Monika M. Wahi, MPH, CPH

DethWench Professional Services



Outline

- Structure of accredited Masters of Public Health (MPH) “schools and programs”
 - What to expect from a school/program
 - Tips on choosing a program
- Application process





What do I mean by “accredited”?

- Accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)
- “School” or “program” becomes part of the Association of Schools and Programs in Public Health (ASPPH)
- “School” means an entire college (UMN SPH), and “program” means within a college (Tufts)

Explainers on:

CEPH:

<https://dethwench.com/public-health-what-is-the-ceph/>

ASPPH:

<https://dethwench.com/public-health-what-is-the-aspph/>



Even International Students Should NOT go to Unaccredited Public Health Schools

- Tend to be scams
- You need well-trained staff to be able to teach complex topics like epidemiology and biostatistics
- It is hard to get hired with an unaccredited degree
- Governments look for high-quality degrees in public health

A screenshot of the ACEPH (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Public Health) website. The header features the ACEPH logo and a search bar with the text "What are you looking for?". A navigation menu on the left lists: "About CEPH", "Who We Accredit", "Criteria & Procedures", "For Schools and Programs", "For Students", and "For Site Visitors". Below the menu is a large image of graduates in caps and gowns. Underneath the image is a navigation bar with links: "Search for an Accredited Degree", "List of Accredited Schools and Programs", "List of Applicants", and "Rece...". The main content area is titled "List of Accredited Schools and Programs" and includes links to "To jump to the list of accredited programs, [click here](#)." and "To jump to the list of accredited baccalaureate programs, [click here](#)." Below this is a section titled "Schools of Public Health" with a table listing several institutions.

<u>Boston University</u>	<u>Ohio State University</u>	<u>University of Washington</u>
School of Public Health	College of Public Health	College of Public Health
715 Albany St.	250 Cunz Hall	111 Washington St.



MPH Core Competency Model

- For each program to be accredited, they have to assure that the ASPPH core competencies will be met
- Generally, this means two years of courses that cover:
 - Epidemiology and biostatistics
 - Content on top chronic and infectious diseases
 - Health promotion/interventions
 - Policy/environmental
 - Leadership/inclusion

Biostatistics	▼
Environmental Health Sciences	▼
Epidemiology	▼
Health Policy and Management	▼
Social and Behavioral Sciences	▼
Communication and Informatics	▼
Diversity and Culture	▼
Leadership	▼
Public Health Biology	▼
Professionalism	▼
Program Planning	▼
Systems Thinking	▼



Program Attributes

- Need to find a US-based program for accreditation
- International? No problem! Programs are set up for international students
- Many have a mostly-online or all-online option
- *Warning: Training in most of these programs was already low quality, and with online, it is worse!*

If the programs are accredited, why is the training such low quality?





How is it Accredited MPH Programs Can Still Be Very Low Quality?

- Many programs have been set up recently, but the system for setting up MPH programs started in the 1980s, when programs started being created at colleges
- In the late 1990s/early 2000s, we had the evidence-based medicine movement (EBM)
- By 2003, MPH programs still were not looking at “program outcomes” as a basis of program quality – instead, they were looking at “program components”
- They have tried to correct this bias, but they have not really succeeded



Results of Years of “Program Component” vs. “Program Outcome” Bias

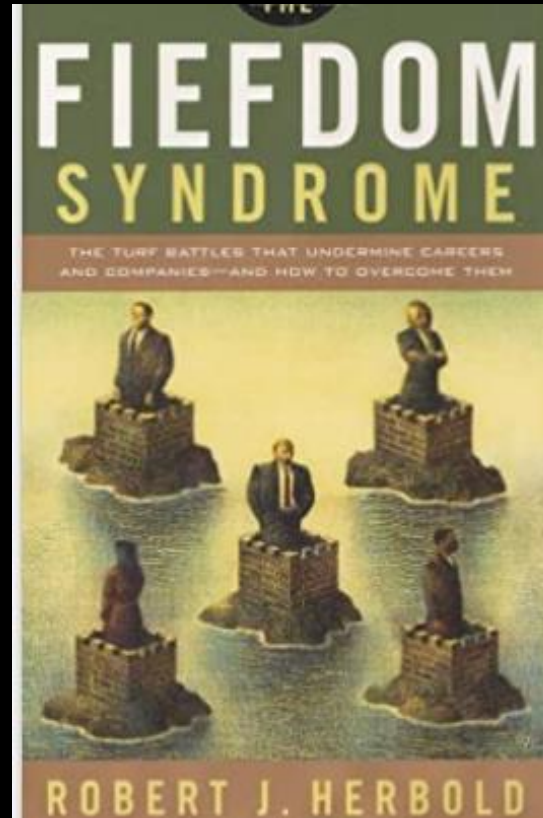
- Social injustice among programs: Programs were rewarded for simply having more resources
- Promotion of “fiefdoms”, and abuse of students and faculty: Program experience was not really tracked, graduation rates were not important, etc.
- Perpetuation of racism and sexism in public health: Lack of protection for vulnerable students, oppression of female faculty and students (including sexual harassment), etc.
- Ultimately, a failure of public health during COVID-19: Social injustice, historical lack of attention to important health issues (gun violence, police brutality, racism in healthcare)



Fiefdoms and Public Health Leadership

Explainer on the American Public Health Association (APHA):

<https://dethwench.com/public-health-what-is-the-apha/>



"The basic human tendency to want to control one's destiny or turf runs counter to discipline in an organization. If the CEO or the manager of a unit lets people act on their own, the company will soon fall into disarray."

Amazon link to book: <https://www.amazon.com/Fiefdom-Syndrome-Undermine-Companies-Overcome/dp/0385510675>



Public Health is Always Saying it will Reform

Bottom Line

I guess they admit there are these problems now:

- Racism in the healthcare system
- Police brutality ruining the fabric of communities
- Overincarceration of minorities
- A Drug War and an Opiate Crisis
- Gun violence

To get a public health job, you need an MPH from an accredited program.

These programs tend to be low-quality experiences, and you do not learn what you need to know.



Joining an MPH Program

Shopping

- Get recent, first-hand accounts from graduates
 - If they regret choosing the school, do not choose
- Learn about specific professors and classes that are good, and which to avoid
- Do not be too picky about topic (e.g., cancer, genetics)

Applying

- There is a generic online application platform called SOPHAS
- Personal statement, letters of recommendation
- Mainly, they see if you are ready for the program and qualify, and if you can pay tuition.



SOPHAS: More Public Health Grift

A screenshot of the SOPHAS website homepage. The header includes the SOPHAS logo (a blue checkmark in a circle) and the text 'SOPHAS THE CENTRALIZED APPLICATION SERVICE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH'. Navigation links include 'ACADEMIC PROGRAM FINDER', 'PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS', 'EVENTS', 'FAQS', and a red 'APPLY' button. The main content area features a large image of two students, a white woman and a Black woman, sitting on steps and looking at a laptop. To the left of the image, the text reads: 'Apply to schools and programs of public health using the centralized application'. Below this, in smaller text: 'SOPHAS allows students to apply to multiple institutions using one application.' A red 'APPLY' button is positioned below the text. At the bottom of the page, a light blue banner contains the text 'What Field of Public Health Interests You?'

SOPHAS
THE CENTRALIZED APPLICATION SERVICE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

ACADEMIC PROGRAM FINDER PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS EVENTS FAQS **APPLY**

Apply to schools and programs of public health using the centralized application

SOPHAS allows students to apply to multiple institutions using one application.

APPLY

What Field of Public Health Interests You?

- The portal has a one-star rating
- Very hard to use, hard to specify which program is getting your application, hard to communicate, costly



Monika's MPH Services

Contact me on
LinkedIn for a free
consultation and
estimate!

During MPH application:

- Help with shopping/evaluating programs
- Planning an educational strategy
- Providing education on program components/advice

During the MPH:

- Help with courses (if needed)
- Assistance with required internship (usually needed)
- Help dealing with program issues

Post-MPH:

- CPH certification help
- Help moving into PhD program
- Help getting a job
- Help doing a job



Conclusion: How to Join an MPH Program

- Choose the program you want, and the timing
- Apply through SOPHAS – including letters, transcripts, personal statement
- Pursue your public health career aspirations through obtaining an accredited MPH through a US school or program!

Monika recommends:

University of Minnesota
School of Public Health

