To qualify as a dual degree student in any of the training paradigms which appear in the Bulletin, a student must have evidence of having been simultaneously enrolled in one or more courses of both of the programs constituting the “dual degree” for at least one semester.

Program goal
The Division of Epidemiology in the Department of Family Medicine and Population Health in the School of Medicine offers a program for VCU medical students to obtain a Master of Public Health degree in conjunction with their medical training. The M.D./M.P.H. dual degree program provides an opportunity for medical students who wish to pursue a public health or research career to graduate from medical school trained in both clinical and preventive, population-oriented medicine. Graduates from this program are prepared for positions in preventive medicine, primary care, research, community-based health centers and state and local health departments.

The objective of the dual degree program is to provide high quality and in-depth training in public health to qualified medical students. The five-year program includes four years of medical school and one year of study in the M.P.H. program. Students enter the M.P.H. curriculum after the M-3 year. During the M.P.H. year, students take a minimum of 36 credit hours of course work.

The required minimum of 36 credits in the M.P.H. curriculum includes 21 credit hours of core courses, a minimum of nine credit hours of concentration courses, a minimum of three credits of elective courses and a minimum of three credit hours of a capstone project that examines a relevant public health topic. Note that some elective courses may not be available in certain years or may require instructor permission for registration. Students receive nine credit hours toward the M.P.H. degree for completion of course work in the M.D. program. Successful completion of Population Health and Evidence-based Medicine satisfies the three credits of the M.P.H. core course, EPID 571; Patient Safety and Quality Improvement satisfies the one credit required for IPEC 501; The Physician, Patient, and Society satisfies two credits of elective course work; and a minimum of one public health elective during the M-4 year satisfies the three-credit public health internship (EPID 693) requirement. No credits in the M.P.H. program apply to the M.D. program.

Note: Enrollment in the dual degree program requires admission into both the School of Medicine and the Graduate School. Students must successfully complete all required course work to receive both degrees at the end of the five years.

The mission of the M.P.H. program is to provide exceptional public health training; conduct cutting-edge, translational research; promote health equity and community wellness; and foster lifelong inquiry and discovery that improve human health. The overall goal of the M.P.H. program is to educate students to become well-grounded in the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes of public health and demonstrate their ability to apply these essentials through course work, internships and the M.P.H. capstone project. This program is designed to provide students with the skills required to advance to positions as public health practitioners in a broad spectrum of positions and settings and who can perform the following:

1. Administer public health programs
2. Collect, analyze and evaluate public health data
3. Plan, implement and evaluate public health interventions
4. Apply results of evaluations and data analyses to policy development as necessary
5. Promote public health through educational campaigns

The structure of the program provides a framework for the progressive development of a mastery of the current state of the subject matter of public health and an ability to synthesize and apply this information to the identification of key areas of practice and research in public health.

Student learning outcomes
Student learning outcomes are monitored by the program faculty and include primarily around competencies for all students. Overall learning outcomes are as follows.

1. Integrated knowledge of public health: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the current elements of public health, at a level assessed by program faculty as competent or higher, according to the program rubric.
2. Demonstration of focused knowledge and skills: Students will demonstrate more detailed knowledge and applied skills in the individual area of scholarship, including familiarity with the research literature and the ability to evaluate and critique publications, at a level assessed by program faculty as competent or higher, according to the program rubric.
3. Development of competencies: Through program course work and applied experiences, students will develop competence in the discipline of public health as demonstrated through annual self-assessment of performance on the M.P.H. program competencies and faculty assessment of (1) student competence in semi-annual student reviews and (2) student performance in the program’s integrated learning experience, the capstone project.
4. Training in appropriate public health skills/knowledge: Through didactic study and two separate applied experiences in professional public health settings, students will gain knowledge and skills required to perform as public health practitioners and/or researchers.

The M.P.H. program trains students to develop educational competencies established by the program’s accrediting body, the Council on Education for Public Health. These competencies may be viewed on the Department of Family Medicine and Population Health website (https://familymedicine.vcu.edu/epidemiology/epidemiology-graduate-programs/mph-program/competencies/).

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs
The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the
graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (http://www.gradschool.vcu.edu/) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-reggs/)

Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-reggs/grad/candidacy/)

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-reggs/grad/graduation-info/)

Other information

School of Medicine graduate program policies

The School of Medicine provides policies applicable to all programs administratively housed in the school. Information on master’s programs is available elsewhere in this chapter of the Graduate Bulletin.

The M.P.H. program student handbook is available upon request.

For the M.P.H., apply online at sophas.org (http://www.sophas.org/). Submit a VCU supplemental application following the instructions available at sophas.org and on the Family Medicine and Epidemiology website (https://familymedicine.vcu.edu/epidemiology/epidemiology-graduate-programs/apply-now/).

Admission requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree:</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry:</th>
<th>Deadline dates:</th>
<th>Test requirements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.D. and M.P.H.</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Applications strongly encouraged by Mar 1</td>
<td>MCAT (acceptable in lieu of GRE scores for this combined professional/academic degree program) TOEFL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Students applying to the dual degree M.D./M.P.H. program should be accepted to the VCU School of Medicine prior to applying to the M.D./M.P.H. Program. Students must apply separately to each program. Applications to the M.P.H. program are made through sophas.org.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/), applicants must present the following qualifications.

1. Prior degree: Students must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, with a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in all undergraduate and any other graduate study. Official copies of transcripts for all prior degrees earned must be submitted to the VCU Office of Graduate Admissions.

2. Test scores: The M.P.H. program normally requires GRE scores, but for the combined M.D./M.P.H., students may submit MCAT scores provided for admission to the School of Medicine in lieu of GRE scores.

3. TOEFL: International students must submit TOEFL or IELTS scores. Minimum TOEFL score is 600 (paper-based), 250 (computer-based) or 100 (Internet-based). IELTS minimum score is 7.0. Test score requirements may be waived for international students who have received a medical degree (M.D.) in the U.S. Contact the program coordinator for more information. The PTE is also accepted with a minimum score of 65.

Students must also submit the following materials with their applications:

1. Letters of recommendation from three individuals who can assess applicant qualifications for graduate school; at least one academic reference is required, but two are preferred. Most appropriate are letters from past professors or work supervisors.

2. Current version of curriculum vitae or resume. Include experience and/or education relevant to study in public health.

3. Personal statement addressing the following issues:
   - What applicant plans to do in the first few years after graduation
   - Why VCU's M.P.H. program best fits the student's public health interests
   - Description of applicant's particular areas of interest in public health (e.g., maternal and child health, epidemiology)
   - How an M.P.H. degree will help the applicant achieve her/his career goals
   - Why the applicant wishes to pursue an M.P.H. degree
   - Description of the applicant's career goals
Degree requirements

The Master of Public Health program prepares students committed to public health careers in the public, private or nonprofit sectors. The program boasts experiential learning, a highly interactive environment, accessible and approachable faculty, and student involvement in important projects. The M.P.H. program is flexible enough to accommodate students who enter the program with various backgrounds and experiences.

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-reggs/grad/graduation-info/), students are required to successfully complete a minimum of 36 credit hours of formal course work that includes a capstone project. In addition, medical students will complete a public health elective during the M-4 year at a placement approved by the M.P.H. program director, in lieu of the required public health internship.

Capstone project: The culminating work in the M.P.H. program is the capstone project. The project is a practical experience that allows the student to apply what has been learned in the didactic components of the curriculum to a focused project. The goal is to enhance the student’s academic experience through the application of public health concepts and skills in a supervised experience. Students are required to synthesize the literature; analyze, assess or evaluate quantitative or qualitative data; and in general apply theory and integrate knowledge gained and principles in situations that approximate some aspects of professional practice. With this mentored experience, students are able to both broaden their skills and hone their proficiency in a specific area of public health. The major product of this culminating experience is expected to vary depending on the educational goals of the student, but could include one of the following:

1. Manuscript suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal
2. Comprehensive disease-related report and analysis
3. Policy analysis report
4. Needs assessment for a specific population
5. Development, implementation, and analysis of target population surveys
6. Program evaluation

At a minimum, the capstone experience will require the integration of multiple major competencies used by a public health professional. In fulfilling the capstone requirement, each candidate must: (a) submit a formal written paper of sufficient depth and rigor and (b) satisfactorily complete a poster presentation of the project chosen as the basis for the written paper at an appropriate venue (e.g., research forum, refereed conference, etc.) approved by the M.P.H. program director.

Noncurricular program requirements

In addition to course work, students are required to complete the following noncurricular requirements for the M.P.H. degree:

1. Attendance at 12 public health seminars
2. Twenty hours of community-based service-learning

M.P.H. curriculum requirements for the dual degree M.D./M.P.H. program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIOS 543</td>
<td>Graduate Research Methods I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Electives

Select minimum of three credits of elective course work from this list.

- BIOS 549  Spatial Data Analysis
- CCTR 630  Design Implications in Clinical Trials
- CCTR 631  Adaptive Clinical Trials
- EPID 571  Principles of Epidemiology
- EPID 601  Contemporary Issues and Controversies in Public Health
- EPID 620  Cancer Epidemiology
- EPID 624  Chronic Disease Epidemiology
- EPID 645  Public Health Genomics
- EPID 646  Epidemiology of Psychiatric and Substance Use Disorders
- EPID 692  Independent Study
- GRAD 614  Introduction to Grant Writing
- GRTY 501  Physiological Aging
- GRTY 510  Aging
- GRTY 603  Social Gerontology
- GRTY 604  Problems, Issues and Trends in Gerontology
- HEMS 505  Contemporary Issues in Health
- HEMS 550  Exercise, Nutrition and Weight Management
- HEMS 604  Nutrition for Health and Physical Activity
- HEMS 605  Psychology of Physical Activity
- HEMS 606  Psychosocial Aspects of Sport and Physical Activity
- HGEN 611  Data Science I
- HGEN 620  Principles of Human Behavioral Genetics
- PSYC 660  Health Psychology
- HSEP 601  Emergency Management: Response Planning and Incident Command
- HSEP 603  Risk Assessment
- HSEP 650  Public Health Preparedness
- SBHD 609  Research Methods in Social and Behavioral Health
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBHD 630</td>
<td>Theoretical Foundations of Social and Behavioral Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHD 632</td>
<td>Health Disparities and Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHD 636</td>
<td>Community-based Participatory Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHD 638</td>
<td>Applications in Qualitative Research Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 510</td>
<td>Domestic and Sexual Violence in Social Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 524</td>
<td>Aging and the Minority Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 603</td>
<td>Seminar in Population Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 607</td>
<td>Seminar in Racial and Ethnic Relations in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 611</td>
<td>Studies in the Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 620</td>
<td>Seminar in Criminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 624</td>
<td>Community and Community Services for the Elderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 632</td>
<td>Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence: Medical Practice and Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 633</td>
<td>Application of the Policy Process to Issues of Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 634</td>
<td>Social Contexts of Childhood and Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 635</td>
<td>Theorizing Gender Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 645</td>
<td>The Sociology of Health and Illness</td>
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<tr>
<td>URSP 521</td>
<td>Introduction to Geographic Information Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>URSP 621</td>
<td>Introduction to Geographic Information Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 622</td>
<td>Community Socioeconomic Analysis Using GIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 625</td>
<td>Spatial Database Management and GIS Modeling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Integrative program requirements
- EPID 694 MPH Capstone Project (Integrative Learning Course) 3

### Noncurricular program requirements
In addition to course work, students must attend 12 public health seminars and complete 20 hours of community-based service-learning.

### Total Hours: 36

## Sample plan of study for dual degree program

### Fall semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIOS 543</td>
<td>Graduate Research Methods I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPID 547</td>
<td>Applied Data Analysis Lab I</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPID 580</td>
<td>Public Health Ethics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPID 593</td>
<td>Foundations of the Public Health Profession</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPID 600</td>
<td>Introduction to Public Health</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPID 603</td>
<td>Public Health Policy and Politics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCRP 601</td>
<td>Introduction to Health Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Term Hours: 16.5

### Spring semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIOS 544</td>
<td>Graduate Research Methods II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPID 548</td>
<td>Applied Data Analysis Lab II</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPID 604</td>
<td>Principles of Environmental Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPID 622</td>
<td>Maternal and Child Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPID 694</td>
<td>MPH Capstone Project</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>(See list above)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBHD 605</td>
<td>Introduction to Social and Behavioral Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours: 19.5

Total Hours: 36

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for the M.P.H. curriculum toward the dual degree is 36.

### Contact
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(804) 628-2512

### Program website
familymedicine.vcu.edu/epidemiology/epidemiology-graduate-programs/mph-program/dual-degrees/