Master in
Public Health
Student Handbook

Students in the Masters in Public Health(MPH) are officially considered to be students of West Coast University (WCU). Therefore, MPH students are expected to comply not only with the regulations and academic standards in this handbook (including the clinical education component), but also with those specified in the most current edition of the WCU University Catalog and Student Handbook.

Please be advised that the University Catalog contains policies and procedures that apply to all students and is the primary source of reference. If there are any discrepancies in policies or procedures that are contained in the University Catalog with those contained in the MPH Programmatic Student Handbook, the University Catalog will be followed.

WCU reserves the right to change any provision or requirement, including fees, contained in this informational document at any time with or without notice.

Please read this handbook carefully. Questions related to the content of this manual should be directed to

Dean Public Health Programs:
Michele Mouttapa, PhD
Phone: 626-676-4004
West Coast University Online
mmouttapa@westcoastuniversity.edu

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Introduction to the Master of Public Health (MPH) Program

Congratulations and welcome to the Public Health Program here at West Coast University! We are excited that you have selected us to achieve your goals in becoming a public health professional.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with important information that will guide and help you be successful in the program. Therefore, it is important to review this handbook at the start of your program and periodically throughout your studies to familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures.

The contents of this handbook may be subject to change throughout the program.

Please be advised that the University Catalog contains policies and procedures that apply to all students and is the primary source of reference. If there are any discrepancies or differences in the policies or procedures contained in the University Catalog with those contained in the Public Health Program Student Handbook, the University Catalog will take precedence.

The decision to study and work toward becoming a public health professional is an intriguing opportunity as you will be exposed to a wide range of issues in a variety of industries and fields. A degree in public health provides you with the necessary skills to tackle various public health problems. You will be taking different courses that will give you a strong foundation in the core competencies and disciplines in public health. In addition, there will also be other practical experiences that will help you integrate your learning in a pragmatic manner.

The Public Health Program at West Coast University began in 2017 with our Master of Public Health degree. In 2021, the University decided to offer a Bachelor of Science in Public Health degree. Both degree programs aim to educate and train students to pursue a career that involves working in the community in various public health settings, such as departments of health, hospitals, community and social agencies, schools, and more.

Our faculty for the Public Health Program all has expertise in public health, community health, and health science. Many of our faculty are highly involved in the discipline through work experience, scholarly work, public health association memberships and continual conference participation.

Courses are offered entirely asynchronously in an online format. Students are expected to complete courses in sequence to have prerequisite knowledge and skills before taking advanced courses. All courses for the Master of Public Health Program (MPH) must be completed with a passing score of 83% or better in order to continue in the program. The program encourages an atmosphere of cooperation and non-competitiveness for students to successfully complete the objectives, competencies, and goals of the program.

To earn the Master of Public Health Degree (MPH), a total of 42 semester credits are required and completion of these courses with a minimum grade requirement is mandatory for you to be eligible for graduation. The Public health program is designed to lead students into the profession of public

health. The field of public health is varied in its requirements for licensure and certification(s) and you are responsible for researching the specific requirements for the career path you select.

MPH Program Mission

To develop public health leaders who are skilled at addressing emerging needs within diverse communities through health education and advocacy that is aimed at equitable health outcome.

MPH Program Vision

Building healthier communities by cultivating public health leaders within them.

MPH Program Philosophy

The Public Health program intends to prepare graduates who will protect and improve the health and well-being of communities as an important part of building a safer and healthier world. This program is designed to provide a broad perspective on the science and practice of community-based approaches to promoting health and preventing diseases. Courses focus on health promotion, environmental health, epidemiologic research methods, health leadership, and health policy, culminating in a capstone project intended to integrate essential concepts, attitudes, and behaviors.

MPH Program Learning Outcomes

Upon graduation, MPH graduates will possess the knowledge, skills, and aptitude to:

1. Assess the health status of populations with quantitative and qualitative research methodology and analyses.
2. Describe how public health, health care, and regulatory systems impact health disparities within communities, regions, and around the world.
3. Create and evaluate innovative public health initiatives in diverse settings to protect and improve health.
4. Evaluate the impact of policies and legislation on the health of populations, with a social justice perspective.
5. Apply leadership skills that empower communities to engage in behaviors that promote their health and well-being.
6. Employ a variety of modalities to communicate to both lay and professional audiences in a manner that is culturally competent and inclusive.
7. Engage with interprofessional groups to learn the relevance of public health in diverse healthcare settings.
8. Utilize a systems-thinking approach to visually conceptualize and address public health issues.

MPH Program Competencies

The Program Learning Outcomes serve as the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) required program competencies. The PLOs are mapped to the CEPH Competencies for the Master-level public health professionals.

Competencies for the Master-level Public Health Professional

Please see CEPH Foundational Competencies for more information

Academic Calendar

Students enrolled in the Masters Public Health Program will follow the 8-week course system over 6 terms. For the current schedule for your academic year, please visit:

https://westcoastuniversity.smartcatalogiq.com/current/west-coast-university-catalog/academic-calendar/

Student Governance

Student governance plays a vital role in fostering leadership, responsibility, and a sense of community among students. By actively participating in governance, students develop essential skills such as decision-making, collaboration, and effective communication. These experiences not only enhance personal growth but also prepare students for future professional roles.

Student governance is even more crucial for online programs. It ensures that the diverse needs and voices of the student body are represented and addressed in a virtual learning environment. Student leaders can advocate for their peers, promote inclusivity, and facilitate meaningful interactions, thereby enriching the overall student experience and ensuring that the digital transition does not compromise the quality of their education

Online students can actively participate in student governance at the University and Program Levels and can also provide feedback via survey completion.

University Level

One such opportunity is joining the university-wide Student Advisory Committee (SAC), which amplifies student voices in academic governance. Decisions made by this committee can

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significantly impact Public Health Program students. Students who are interested in being a student representative for the SAC should contact the Public Health Program Dean.

<u>Program Level</u>

At the program level, students can serve as representatives and attend portions of the bi-monthly faculty meetings, including the Faculty Learning Community meeting and the annual Program Assessment Committee meeting. In these faculty meetings, important academic and programmatic decisions are made, and having student input ensures that these decisions directly address and enhance the student experience. Students who are interested in being a student representative for the Public Health Program should contact the Public Health Program Dean.

<u>Survey Completion</u>

All students can engage in shared governance by completing various program surveys. These include:
- Faculty Course Evaluations at the end-of-term for every course that can be found on student(s) Canvas Dashboards by Week 6 of each term.
- Annual Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) survey that is sent by the Program Dean through the Remind App.
- MPH exit survey link that is in PH 566.
- Provide feedback on the PH Hub discussion thread (PH Hub Discussion Thread)

MPH Students can also provide feedback directly to the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). CEPH Student FAQ Website

Administration and Organization

Faculty

Dean of Public Health

Dr. Michele Mouttapa, PhD

Professor, Dean of Public Health (2022- Current)
mmouttapa@westcoastuniversity.edu
Research Interests: Adolescent risk behaviors, obesity prevention, cancer screening. Research expert.

Full-Time Faculty

Dr. Isabelle Tardif, DO - Assistant Professor, WCU Public Health Program
itardif@westcoastuniversity.edu
Research Interests: Content expert in Family Practice medicine, anatomy, physiology, and medical terminology.
Courses Taught: PH 300, PH 320, PH 330, PH 500, PH 511, PH 515, PH 551PH 560, PH 525

Dr. Alexandra Auslander, PhD, MPH - Associate Professor, WCU Public Health Program
aauslander@westcoastuniversity.edu
Research Interests: Exercise Epidemiology in at-risk populations, impacts of toxic stress on health. Research and community service expert.
Courses Taught: PH 340, PH 450, PH 515, HA 530, PH 546, PH 566

Dr. Barbara Garcia, Ed.D, MPH - Professor, WCU Public Health Program
bgarcia@westcoastuniversity.edu
Research Interests: Social Media as an Educational tool in Public Health and General Education Sciences, Epidemiology and Outbreak Investigation, CPH Certified.
Courses Taught: PH 500, PH 525

Part-Time Faculty

For a complete list of the MPH faculty please visit
https://canvas.westcoastuniversity.edu/courses/32139/pages/public-health-faculty

Textbooks

Textbooks are required to assist the student in achieving the objectives and competencies for the course. Those students who have opted into textbooks as part of their financial aid will receive a voucher directing when to place your order through the WCU virtual bookstore to access their textbook on VitalSource.

Office Hours

Students are to contact instructors directly to make an appointment.

WCU Mobile Resources

1. Canvas App: Available on iOS or Android
    a. Use the Canvas app to login to your classes on the go. Post in the discussions, read your textbook, and review assignment feedback and grades.
2. WCU Student Portal at https://my.westcoastuniversity.edu/
    a. Access your student schedule, grades, advisor contract information, financial aid contact information, WCU news, important messages, and link to Canvas and email.

3. MS Outlook: Available to add to your mobile device on iOS or Android
    a. Check your WCU email account on a regular basis to review important messages from advisors, faculty, WCU administrators, and WCU associates
4. Remind App: Available on iOS and Android
    a. Use Remind App to text message and or voice call your faculty and program Deans.

For more information on Information Technology please see page 46 in the WCU Student Handbook WCU Student Handbook 2024

Travel Outside of the United States

When planning travel, please consider the approved countries list below. Students may not be able to access the WCU network including Canvas, Office 365, and the Student Portal outside of these areas:

USA
Canada
India
Germany
Mexico
Puerto Rico
United Kingdom
US Minor Outlying Islands
If you are traveling outside of the United States or to a country not included in the above list, WCU cannot guarantee that you will have access to Canvas or other WCU portals.

A VPN (Virtual Private Network) is software that creates a secure connection between a computer and a network by encrypting data. The use of a VPN might allow students to access WCU networks safely while traveling abroad. Students will need to specifically adjust their VPN server to another country based on the country list provided above (preferably the U.S.). Please note there is no officially associated VPN software for WCU students, and installation is at user discretion and responsibility.

Public Health Hub

Your Go-To Site for the MPH Program.

The Public Health Hub can be found on your Canvas Dashboard or using the link below. Enrolled students will have access to the Public Health Hub throughout their entire MPH Program. The Public Health Hub will have current information regarding many areas of interest to students including: updates on all events, job opportunities, resources, faculty profiles, accreditation updates and the latest in the Public Health program. Join us for. **Public Health Hub**

MPH Curriculum

Competency Based Curriculum

The Public Health core program is a competency-based curriculum. Students develop competency through observation, practice, skills assessments, and competency assessments. Students, upon graduation from the MPH at WCU, should be able to demonstrate competency in entry-level and mid-level public health career fields. Areas of competency include but are not limited to:

1. Evidence-based approaches to public health
2. Public health and healthcare systems
3. Planning and management to promote health
4. Policy in public health
5. Leadership
6. Communication
7. Interprofessional practice
8. Systems thinking

Performance criteria are based on the Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Ethics
2. Professionalism
3. Effective communication
4. Evidence-based decision making
5. Program planning

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MPH Program Curriculum

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Current Number	Course Name
PH 500	Foundations of Public Health
PH 536	Environmental and Occupational Health
PH 515	Cultural Diversity & Health Disparities in Public Health
HA 500	Legal and Ethical Issues in Healthcare Mgmt.
PH 521	Biostatistics
HA 535	Health Research Methods
PH 560	Infectious diseases Epidemiology
PH 511	Health Promotion and Soc/Beh Health Science
HA 540	Special Topics in Epidemiology
HA 546	Leadership Principles and Policies in Public Health
PH 525	Program Development and Evaluation
HA 530	Managerial Epidemiology
PH 551	Global Family Health
PH 566	Integrated Learning Experience

For a full description of courses please visit:
https://westcoastuniversity.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/west-coast-university-catalog/courses/ph-public-health/

Applied Practice Experience

MPH students demonstrate competency attainment through Applied Practice Experience. The Applied Practice Experiences will be completed in course work in PH 525 by performing a needed task for a public health or health care organization.

For detailed information and the complete list of requirements, please refer to the
Applied Practice Experience Handbook

Integrated Learning Experience

The Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) demonstrates the synthesis of all MPH Program Competencies through the course of the MPH degree. The ILE is completed at or near the end of the program of study (e.g., PH 566) and represents the culmination of MPH educational endeavors. The ILE consists of writing

a high-quality written product that is useful to external stakeholders, such as non-profit or governmental organizations.

For detailed information and the complete list of requirements, please refer to the
Integrated Learning Experience Handbook

Academic Procedures

Communication with Faculty

Faculty will communicate with students on a regular basis via email and the Remind App. It is therefore vital for students to have current contact information on file with the University. Each student must keep his/her current address, all telephone numbers, e-mail address, and emergency contact information on file with the Registrar. This information will be kept confidential; however, will be shared among WCU associates for necessary communication.

Absence Protocol

West Coast University emphasizes the need for all students to attend classes on a regular and consistent basis. Regular attendance and punctuality with assignment submissions will help students develop good habits and attitudes necessary to compete in a highly competitive job market. West Coast University has a clear requirement for students to attend courses. Students should review the Attendance Policy in the University Catalog.

For more information on the Absence Protocol to the West Coast University Absence Protocol for more information

Late and Make-Up Work Policy

Weekly discussion posts will be assessed according to the Discussion Board rubric in the Grades area. Late postings that occur after Wednesday will reflect an automatic 10% point deduction. Discussion postings made after the week will not count toward the weekly discussion grade.

Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized at 5% per day. Late assignments will not be accepted more than 5 days after the due date, unless preapproval from the instructor has been obtained in writing. Note the due dates and times posted in the course. Be sure to contact the instructor if you must submit an assignment after the due date. Contact with the instructor regarding late assignments after the allowable 5 days does not guarantee approval to submit the assignment outside this time frame. Approvals outside the 5 days are generally provided for extenuating circumstances only.

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WCU late work is not accepted after the close of the course without prior approval from the instructor unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Academic Accommodations

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a verified disability is required to register with the Director of Student Services each term. The Director of Student Services will assist students with the necessary steps. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from that office. This letter is to be delivered to the instructor(s) at the beginning of each term so appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate the request.

For more information on Disability Services please refer to the WCU Student Handbook 2024 page 30

Course Requirements

The Public Health Program is very rigorous and places significant demands on students. Each individual course will state the requirements in the course syllabus. Failure to meet the deadlines and criteria set forth in the syllabus will affect the student's course grade as stated in each syllabus. As a student in a professional program, correct spelling and grammar is required on all quizzes, exams, and papers. Points may be deducted for incorrect spelling and grammar. Rubrics will be used to assess projects and assignments. Students must accept ultimate responsibility for completing all course requirements at the designated skill level in didactic courses at a minimum grade level of 83%.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations for 100% Online Asynchronous Courses

1. Class Week: A "class week" for 100% online asynchronous learning courses starts on a Monday and ends on the following Sunday at 11:59 PM PST.
2. Location: Online asynchronous courses are located in the Canvas learning management system. All course content and learning resources are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Each activity has a time frame which is listed in the course. To access the course, login to Canvas using your West Coast University username and password. For help with Canvas, contact the Canvas 24/7 Technical Support team at 877-251-6441. Please see the WCU Student Handbook for the required equipment including hardware and software.
3. Course Structure: Online asynchronous courses are conducted in a fully asynchronous format (without live instruction). Students are not required to be on campus for any portion of a 100% online asynchronous course. Online asynchronous courses are engaging and enriched and include but are not limited to video content, simulations, adaptive quizzing, and self-guided and faculty created learning resources. Courses are intuitive to navigate and timely access to faculty, peers, Student Affairs, and Technical Support is available through a hotline, live chat, email, and links to academic resources and academic support associates.

4. Complete Assignments: All assignments in a 100% online asynchronous course must be submitted electronically through the Canvas learning management system unless otherwise instructed by the faculty. Please see the Evaluation section of the syllabus for more details.
5. Grading and Attendance: 100% online asynchronous courses require Academically Related Activities (ARAs). When the course includes participation in a discussion board, please see the rubric for grading criteria and the Course and Program Specific Policies section of the syllabus for more details. Points received for graded activities are posted in the Canvas Gradebook. Points are typically posted 3-4 days after submission of assignments or assessments. No late submission of assignments or assessments are accepted after the academic term ends. Final course grades are typically available 3-4 days after the end of the term. Please see the University Catalog for the University attendance policy for 100% online asynchronous courses.
6. Netiquette: Interactions through written discussions and blogs, peer critique, sharing of memes, videos, and academic debate are appropriate exercises for students to reach a higher understanding of theories, content, and variables impacting professional decision making. While these experiences may be similar to interactions students engage in on social media, it is important to maintain academic composure and etiquette. Students are expected to maintain the highest level of netiquette in all interactions with faculty and peers online. Online safety is important. Before commenting or posting, consider:
   a. Would I say this to the person if we were face-to-face? If the answer is no, rewrite your reply considering your peer's feelings, social norms, and cultural/personal identity.
   b. Using standard capitalization can be considered by some that all CAPS IS THE SAME AS YELLING.
   c. Respect the privacy of others.
   d. Delay writing during instances if you are angry, emotional, or frustrated.
   e. Write in a professional, academic manner that does not overuse abbreviations, TXT language, and emoji's.
   f. Cite fully the work of others. Academic integrity is valued and expected.
   g. Report instance of cyberbullying and inappropriate netiquette privately via email to the instructor.
   h. Follow the "Golden Rule," do unto others….
7. Build Rapport: If a student is having trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the 100% online asynchronous course, contact the faculty as soon as possible. Building rapport and effective relationships is key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure to be proactive in informing the faculty when difficulties arise during the course, so that the faculty can assist in finding a solution and providing academic support.
8. Student Services and Resources: Student services and resources are available to all students. Please see the WCU Student Handbook for details. Students taking 100% online asynchronous courses are provided comprehensive support through numerous self-guided experiences. These online experiences provide an orientation to online learning, guide students through an overview of the Canvas learning management system and course tour,

and access to helpful mobile applications. In addition to access to technology support, online resources provide students access to library services, electronic textbooks, research and writing help, study tools, and student success tips to master life skills necessary for student success.

Protocol for In-Term Remediation

The Public Health program has developed an aggressive protocol for in-term remediation to identify students early that are at risk of not successfully completing the program. An action plan is developed between the student and the course instructor to help the student succeed. The following are the steps involved in the in-term remediation protocol with an explanation of what occurs at each step: (1) early identification of at-risk students, (2) outreach to the student to provide assistance, which may include a meeting.

Dismissal from the Program

Students will be dismissed from the program if they do not successfully pass each course with a 83% (B) or higher. Students may also be dismissed from the program because of Conduct Committee actions.

For a list of the full policies and procedures of WCU, please refer to the WCU student handbook https://westcoastuniversity.edu/current-students/student-handbooks