

An Overview of Undergraduate Public Health Education in the US and the Mercer University Experience

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Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, 2003

“In 2003, the United States (US) Institute of Medicine of the National Academies recommended that **all undergraduate students have access to an education in public health** to assist with diversifying the public health workforce and ensuring an educated citizenry on public health issues.”



Armstrong-Mensah, E. A., Ramsey-White, K., & Alema-Mensah, E. (2019). Integrative Learning in US Undergraduate Public Health Education: A Review of Effective High-Impact Educational Practices at Georgia State University. *Frontiers in public health*, 7, 101.

Institute of Medicine. *The Future of Public Health*. Washington, DC: The National Academics Press (1988)

Initiatives Supporting Undergraduate Public Health programs in the US

- In 2003, the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), initiated accreditation of undergraduate public health programs
- The Educated Citizen and Public Health Initiative (2006)

Resnick, B., Leider, J. P., & Riegelman, R. (2018). The landscape of US undergraduate public health education. *Public Health Reports*, 133(5), 619-628.

Characteristics of Undergraduate Public Health programs in the US

- Basic understanding of public health concepts
- Foundational skills
- Possible careers
- Preparation for graduate studies

Tarasenko, Y. N. & Lee, J. M. (2015). US undergraduate education in public health: hot or not?. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 3, 71

Resnick, B., Leider, J.P., Riegleman, R. (2018) The Landscape of US Undergraduate Public Health Education *Public Health Reports*

Characteristics of Undergraduate Public Health programs in the US

- 75,165 undergraduate public health degrees conferred between 2003 (1448) and 2016 (12,895)
- Geographically, most conferred in the Southeast and West
- California and Florida conferred the most in 2016

Tarasenko, Y. N. & Lee, J. M. (2015). US undergraduate education in public health: hot or not?. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 3, 71
Resnick, B., Leider, J.P., Riegleman, R. (2018) The Landscape of US Undergraduate Public Health Education *Public Health Reports*

Characteristics of Undergraduate Public Health programs in the US

- Majority of degrees earned by women (78%)
- 50% White, 16% Black, 13% Asian/Pacific Islander, 14% Hispanic
- Most degrees were in public health education and promotion (20,753) or PH general education (11,299)

Tarasenko, Y. N. & Lee, J. M. (2015). US undergraduate education in public health: hot or not?. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 3, 71
Resnick, B., Leider, J.P., Riegleman, R. (2018) The Landscape of US Undergraduate Public Health Education Public health Reports

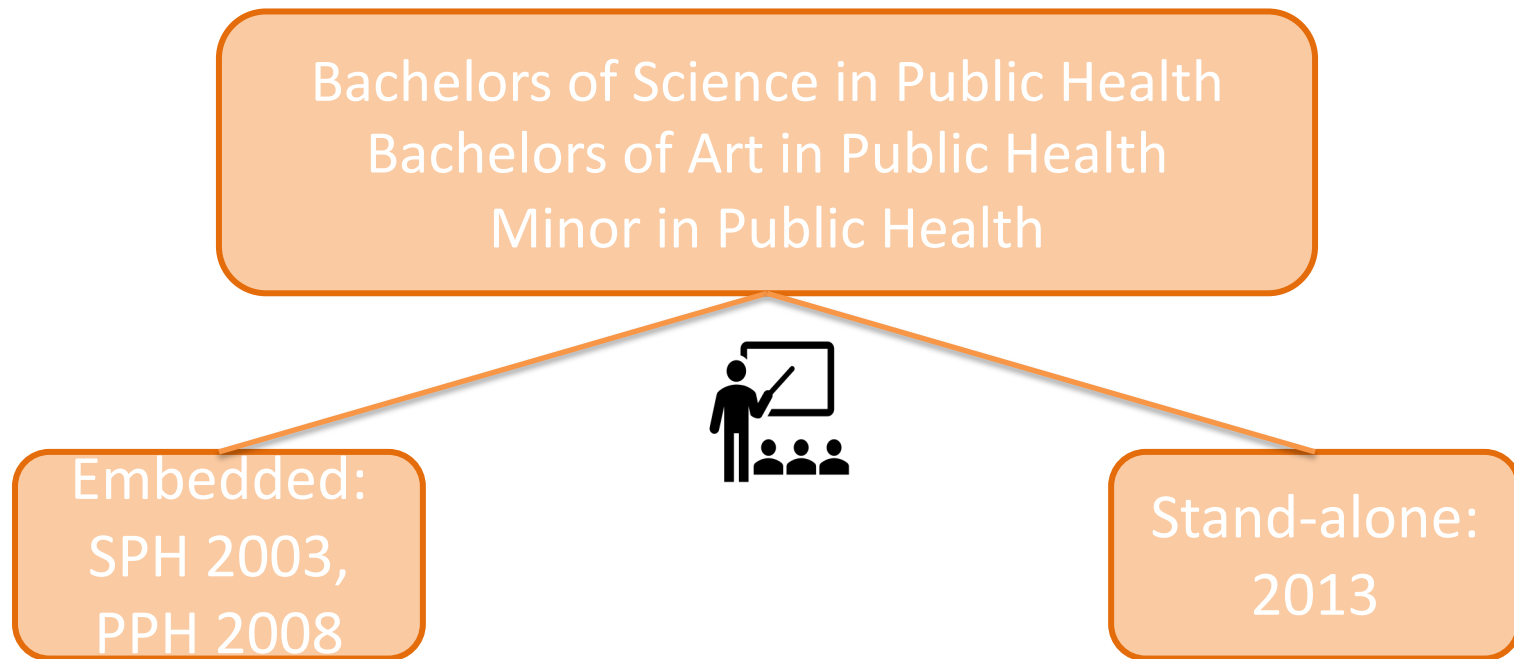
Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) Accreditation Criteria

“CEPH assures quality in public health education and training to achieve excellence in practice, research and service, through collaboration with organizational and community partners.”



About. Retrieved from <https://ceph.org/about/org-info/>

Council on Education For Public Health (CEPH) Accreditation of Undergraduate Public Health Programs



Bachelor's Degree Foundational Domains

1. The concepts and applications of basic statistics
2. The foundations of biological and life sciences and the concepts of health and disease
3. The history and philosophy of public health as well as its core values, concepts, and functions across the globe and in society
4. The basic concepts, methods, and tools of public health data collection, use, and analysis and why evidence-based approaches are an essential part of public health practice
5. The concepts of population health, and the basic processes, approaches, and interventions that identify and address the major health-related needs and concerns of populations
6. The underlying science of human health and disease including opportunities for promoting and protecting health across the life course

Accreditation Criteria Standalone Baccalaureate Programs. Retrieved From https://media.ceph.org/wp_assets/2018.SBPcriteria.pdf

Bachelor's Degree Foundational Domains

7. The socioeconomic, behavioral, biological, environmental, and other factors that impact human health and contribute to health disparities

8. The fundamental concepts and features of project implementation, including planning, assessment, and evaluation

9. The fundamental characteristics and organizational structures of the US health system as well as the differences in systems in other countries

10. Basic concepts of legal, ethical, economic, and regulatory dimensions of health care and public health policy and the roles, influences, and responsibilities of the different agencies and branches of government

11. Basic concepts of public health-specific communication, including technical and professional writing and the use of mass media and electronic technology

Accreditation Criteria Stand alone Baccalaureate Programs. Retrieved From https://media.ceph.org/wp_assets/2018.SBPcriteria.pdf

Bachelor's Degree Foundational Competencies

1. Communicate public health information, in both oral and written forms and through a variety of media, to diverse audiences

2. Locate, use, evaluate, and synthesize public health information

Accreditation Criteria Stand-alone Baccalaureate Programs. Retrieved From https://media.ceph.org/wp_assets/2018.SBPcriteria.pdf

Cumulative and Experiential Activities

- Students must have opportunities to integrate, synthesize, and apply knowledge by completing a cumulative , integrated and scholarly or applied experience or inquiry project

Source: Accreditation Criteria Baccalaureate Programs. Retrieved From https://media.ceph.org/wp_assets/2018.SBPcriteria.pdf

Cumulative and Experiential Activities

- Internship
- Service-learning project
- Senior seminars
- Portfolio projects
- Research papers
- Honors thesis

Accreditation Criteria Baccalaureate Programs. Retrieved https://media.ceph.org/wp_assets/2018.SBPcriteria.pdf

Bachelors Cross Cutting Concepts and Experiences

- Advocacy for protection and promotion of health
- Community dynamics
- Critical Thinking and creativity
- Cultural contexts
- Ethical decision making
- Independent work and personal work ethic

Source: Accreditation Criteria Standalone Baccalaureate Programs. Retrieved From https://media.ceph.org/wp_assets/2018.SBPcriteria.pdf

Bachelors Cross Cutting Concepts and Experiences

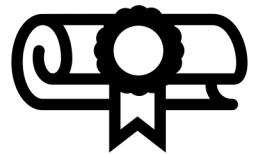
- Networking
- Organizational dynamics
- Professionalism
- Research methods
- Systems Thinking
- Teamwork and leadership

Mercer University

Bachelor of Science in Public Health

Vision: Maximum health in every population, specifically minority, rural, and older populations

Mission: The Department of Public Health of Mercer University will produce public health professionals through integrating public health education, service, and research to engage diverse communities (including minority, rural, or older populations) in improving population health, eliminating health disparities, and achieving health equity and social justice



The Mercer University Experience

- Fall 2015
- Fastest growing undergraduate program in the university
- Pipeline for MPH program

The Mercer University Bachelors of Science in Public Health Program

- **A. General Core Education 52 credit hrs.**
 1. Communication11
 2. Religious Heritage3
 3. Humanities/Fine arts3
 4. Behavioral/Social Science9
 5. Quantitative Reasoning7
 6. Scientific Reasoning8
 7. UNV 1011
 8. CHP Biology requirement10
- **B. Public Health Education45 credit hrs.**
- **C. Additional credits23 credit hrs.**



The Mercer University Bachelors of Science in Public Health Program

B. Public Health Education45 credit hrs.

PBH 101. Systems and Services of Public health

PBH 105. population Health And Environment

PBH 200. Rural Health in the US

PBH 202. Biostatistics

PBH 301. Dissemination of Public Health Information

PBH 305. Epidemiology

PBH 307. Health Behavior

PBH 400. US Health Systems

PBH 402. Population Health and Diversity

PBH 405. Health Programming

PBH 407. Public health Research Methods

PBH 490. Public Health Capstone



Our Competencies

BSPH students must demonstrate the following competencies:

The ability to communicate public health information, in both oral and written forms, through a variety of media and to diverse audiences.

Oral
Communication

Written
Communication

Communicate
with diverse
audiences

Communicate
through variety
of media

The ability to locate, use, evaluate and synthesize public health information.

Locate
Information

Use Information

Evaluate
Information

Synthesize
Information

Special Consideration and Accelerated Programs

Special Consideration Program (SCP): Pre-Medicine Track

Through a partnership with undergraduate programs offered on the Mercer University Macon campus, Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) offers a Special Consideration Program (SCP) for its Doctor of Medicine degree. Up to 18 incoming freshmen will be selected each year for this special program. Pharmacy is also included in the special consideration programs. Students in the program have a guaranteed interview if program standards are maintained



Accelerated Special Consideration Programs

3+2 BSPH/
MPH

BSPH/
MMSc

BSPH/
MAT

BSPH/ PsyD

BSPH/ DPT

Students are guaranteed an interview in an eligible health professions area during year 3.

BSPH and the Workforce

ASPPH member institutions in 2014-2015

- 75% were employed
- 12% were pursuing further Education
- 13% did not respond

Employment Sectors:

Not-for-profit	34%
Health care organizations	20%
Government	11%
Other	35%

Ideal Employment Outcomes



Local Health Departments
Rural Communities
Community Development



Data Center. Retrieved from <https://www.aspph.org/connect/data-center/>

What Does the Future Hold?



Increase in standalone programs

Increase in BSPH graduates in workforce