Master of Public Health in Epidemiology Program Handbook 2016/2017

Division of Epidemiology
Dalla Lana School of Public Health
University of Toronto

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*This handbook defines program requirements for the 2016/17 academic year. Applicants for admission in 2017 or later should seek the most recent edition of the handbook.

All students are expected to be familiar with the University of Toronto School of Graduate Studies policies and procedures. Additional information can be found on the School of Graduate Studies webpages (sgs.utoronto.ca), as well as the DLSPH Student handbook on the DLSPH website (www.dlsph.utoronto.ca).
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MPH Epidemiology: Program Overview

Program Description

The MPH in Epidemiology provides a solid base in epidemiological methods, an understanding of the breadth of public health and opportunities for applied experiential learning in epidemiologic practice, research and policy. The degree program is intended for students who want a research career (including a PhD in epidemiology), and those who want to work in an applied public health setting.

Full time students will complete the program over 4 to 5 consecutive terms of study (including summer). The program requires mandatory and elective courses, and a required practicum placement (completed after at least two terms of course-work).

The curriculum emphasizes quantitative methods, critical appraisal of evidence, data analysis and interpretation. In contrast to strictly skills-based training, the degree is aimed at developing leaders who will make independent contributions when faced with public health challenges, and direct initiatives in the field. In addition, completion of the program meets the requirement for physicians training to be Medical Officers of Health in Ontario, and Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada requirements for Public Health and Preventative Medicine residency program.

Program Goals

The objective of the program is to provide students with a base of knowledge and skills in epidemiological methods and public health that will enable them to pursue careers in applied epidemiological research, or evidence-based public health practice.

Graduates will:
- be able to work as part of a research group or in public health practice;
- be able to describe trends and patterns of disease incidence and prevalence, disease burden, factors affecting health status, and major etiologic and prognostic factors;
- understand the strengths and weaknesses of major methodological and analytical techniques;
- exhibit practical skills, including the ability to develop an epidemiological question, refine the question in light of the literature and community situation, design an appropriate study to answer the question, collect relevant data, analyze these data using commonly available statistical software, and interpret the findings relative to the literature and the community/organizational context;
- be able to prepare a paper for peer-reviewed publication, and present epidemiological information;
- have knowledge of public health principles to practice; and
- be able to read, critically appraise, and interpret the scientific literature, and discuss the effectiveness of core public health interventions.

Career Opportunities

Our graduates have pursued careers in academic research institutes, applied research agencies, and public health settings.
Please review admissions criteria and program descriptions carefully.

In most years, large numbers of applications are rejected because they are incomplete or because basic eligibility requirements have not been satisfied.

Minimum Admission Requirements for all MPH fields

Applicants are admitted under the General Regulations of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). Applicants should refer to SGS web pages for details. www.sgs.utoronto.ca

MPH applicants must also satisfy the Dalla Lana School's additional admission requirements which are stated here: http://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/students/future-students/admission-requirements/

Minimum Admission Requirements for MPH Epidemiology field

The specific admission requirements for the MPH (all fields) are the above, plus:

- an appropriate bachelor’s degree or its equivalent from a recognized university
- at least a mid-B average in final year of the degree or in the last 5.0 full course equivalents completed at a senior level
- at least one undergraduate statistics course is required for Epidemiology. There is a requirement for a minimum grade (B+ or higher) and content of the qualifying course(s). See below in this document. Detailed statistical requirements are posted on the DLSPH website. http://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/students/future-students/admission-requirements/undergraduate-statistics-requirement/. See also the section Details on Admissions, in this handbook.

Coming in to effect in 2017 (for admissions in 2018), the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) will be required for applicants to MPH Epidemiology. Official GRE General Test Scores must be received by the University by the deadline for applications. For applications for admission in September 2017, submission of GRE General Test Scores by the application deadline is strongly recommended.

International applicants

The MPH Epidemiology program follows the admissions regulations of the School of Graduate Studies. Applicants who have not completed a qualifying degree in Canada (regardless of citizenship) should study the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) website to ensure that your prior degree(s) qualify and that your academic standing meets these criteria. The SGS website provides details on English Language Proficiency including tests accepted and minimum scores required by Graduate Division and conditions under which applicants are exempted from providing proof of English proficiency. The MPH program fields make no additional exemptions.

For more information, see the following pages on the School of Graduate Studies website: https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/prospectivestudents/Pages/International-and-Exchange-Students.aspx https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/prospectivestudents/Pages/English-Language-Proficiency-Testing.aspx

Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission. For details on specification of admissions criteria and the review process for MPH Epidemiology, refer to the MPH Program Handbook.
Full time MPH Epidemiology students complete the program in 4 to 5 consecutive terms of study (see Exhibit 1). The first two terms are dedicated to intensive, core, skills-based courses. Students should expect a heavy work-load, with extensive reading, plus tutorial exercises and written assignments. Assignments are skills-based and designed to develop skills relevant to the workplace in both applied public health and research. Students will achieve broad knowledge about public health and all the core disciplines which contribute to it. Epidemiology students acquire skills in descriptive and analytic research, biostatistics, and the critical appraisal and use of research evidence in public health.

The practicum is an important opportunity to apply skills acquired in the first year, and gain work experience in epidemiologic research and/or applied public health. The required practicum is usually completed in the summer term of the first year of study. Epidemiology practicum students must apply their quantitative skills in the analysis and interpretation of data, and contribute to written work.

Students in their second year choose diverse combinations of elective courses and an optional second practicum with considerable flexibility. The second year is the chance for students to explore new areas, and/or specialize. Specialization may be in advanced quantitative methods, academic research, or subject areas (e.g., chronic, or infectious disease, mental health or social determinants). Electives are typically within the DLSPH Public Health Sciences Graduate Unit in epidemiology or other fields. Electives outside the Graduate Division are often taken, conditional on availability and approval.

Exhibit 1  MPH Epidemiology Program Requirements; 10 Full Course Equivalents (FCE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1, Fall Term (September – December)</th>
<th>2.5 to 3.0 FCE*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHL5004H: Introduction to Public Health Sciences (NB: Begins with full time attendance in first week of fall term)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHL5201H: Biostatistics I</td>
<td></td>
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<td>CHL5300H: Public Health Policy</td>
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<td>CHL5401H: Epidemiologic Methods I</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHL5426H: Population Perspectives for Epidemiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
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<tr>
<th>Year 1, Winter Term (January – April)</th>
<th>2.5 to 3.0 FCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHL5202H: Biostatistics II</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CHL5402H: Epidemiologic Methods II</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CHL5405H: Health Trends and Surveillance</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHL5418H: Scientific Overviews in Epidemiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 – 2 Electives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will typically select summer practicum placements starting in January of this term.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Year 1, Summer Term (May – August)</th>
<th>2.0 FCE</th>
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<tr>
<td>CHL6010Y and CHL6012Y: Required MPH Practicum (16 weeks full time)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students must successfully complete all required first year courses, listed above, before progressing to the practicum. Evolution of a practicum placement into a Capstone Experience may occur during the first practicum. See MPH Epidemiology Practicum Guidelines for more information.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Year 2, Fall Term (September - December) and Winter Term (January – April)</th>
<th>2.5 to 3.5 FCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In their second year, students complete diverse combinations of approved graduate credits (regular courses or additional practicum placements) to bring the total number of credits completed to 10.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 10.0 FCE
Admissions Details – Specification of Admissions Criteria and the Review Process for MPH Epidemiology

Qualities Considered by Admissions Committees for the MPH Epidemiology

Successful applicants to the MPH program in Epidemiology will have evidence of qualifications in all of the following areas, and are often exceptional in several of these:

- Maturity, and relevant professional experience as demonstrated by past training, volunteer and paid work experiences,
- Quantitative skills
- Writing and scholarly research experience
- Knowledge of human health and/or its physical, social and environmental determinants
- Strong communications and interpersonal skills
- A genuine interest in graduate training in the discipline of epidemiology which is well-articulated in the letter of intent, and supported by past choices in training and experiences.

Applicants are welcomed from the biological and health sciences, quantitative social sciences including psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology and other fields, and from clinical backgrounds. Health professionals are encouraged to apply if your goal is to pair your clinical experience with specialized training in population health. Roughly 10% of our MPH students have clinical backgrounds and graduates often pursue clinical studies after the MPH. The MPH Epidemiology program focuses on non-experimental and population-based research. Randomized trials, clinical and laboratory research are discussed in the program, but are not the focus of training. Applicants focused on clinical research might consider other Masters options within the DLSPH faculty. Health professionals admitted to the MPH complete the same degree requirements as other students.

Professional (volunteer or paid) experience relevant to public health and/or research is a formal program requirement. All paid work experience (even if unrelated to public health) should be described in the curriculum vitae. Paid and volunteer work should be described fully in terms of time commitment, duties, training, accountability, and progression of responsibility.

Epidemiology graduates from DLSPH are expected to be experts in quantitative research methods, statistics and analysis. Therefore, applicants need to show strong quantitative skills and a willingness to study statistics and data analysis, and use these skills professionally. Applicants without the statistics pre-requisite will not be considered for admission. In practice, admissions committees expect to see an A- or better on first attempts at statistics courses. Applicants who have more advanced statistics courses and relevant work experience should highlight this in their application. Committees look at all evidence of numeracy in the application, including grades in mathematics, in all years of study.

The program is very demanding in terms of written research essays and scientific reports. Admissions committees look for evidence of ability to write throughout the application (this includes the letter of intent, publications listed in the CV, and in descriptions of the applicant’s skills in letters of reference). Undergraduates considering graduate school should take courses which challenge you to write literature reviews, and scientific research papers. Students in sciences and health studies should consider writing courses as well as senior courses in social sciences and humanities. This develops experience in reading and writing, as well as the social determinants of health.

Graduate Record Examination test scores are for 2018 admission and recommended for 2017. Scores for numeracy, verbal reasoning and analytic writing will all be considered as part of the evidence of qualities, above. No minimum GRE test scores have been set for admission; however, any test score below the population median (“%below” value of 50 or lower) may warrant rejection. See below for more information on the GRE.

NOTES:
- Admissibility can only be evaluated based on a complete application, submitted through the regular annual process. Faculty and staff will not review individual CVs or other documents.
- Applicants are strongly advised to attend Graduate Fairs and information sessions held by DLSPH, and use the career and academic counselling services at your current university.
Statistics Requirement for Epidemiology

Epidemiology

At least one undergraduate statistics course is required for admission to the MPH program in the *Epidemiology* field. The qualifying statistics course must be completed **prior to the application deadline**. Applicants must obtain a **minimum grade of B+** in this course(s).

The content of the statistics course must include the topics listed below (See Box 1). In the event the course does not, students should take additional statistics courses. Students should judge the appropriateness of the undergraduate statistics course(s) based on the parameters outlined on this page.

Applicants must complete the ‘Statistics Requirement’ form and submit this with their application. The form must identify the relevant course(s) in the transcript and provide evidence of the topics covered.

**Box 1. Epidemiology and Health Promotion: Content guidelines for statistics prerequisite.**

- Frequency distributions, skewness
- Measures of central tendency: Mean, median, mode
- Levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal, interval
- Measures of variation: Standard deviation, standard score, standard error
- Probability, normal curve
- Sampling, confidence intervals
- Test of significance: Null hypothesis: t-test, one-tail/two-tail tests
- Analyses for proportions and categories (e.g., Chi square))
- Analyses for group means (e.g., t-tests, analysis of variance)
- Correlation
- Regression (linear and/or logistic)

At the University of Toronto, STA220 is one example of a course which has covered the minimum content required in recent years. Courses from other departments and universities which cover the same topics will also be accepted. It is the applicant’s responsibility to choose an appropriate course guided by the list, above. In addition to the statistics pre-requisite, Admissions Committees may also consider other evidence of numeracy within the application including any of grades in mathematics; previous work and study experience and/or standardized test scores.

International Applicants

The MPH Epidemiology program follows the admissions regulations of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). Applicants who have not completed a qualifying degree in Canada should first ensure that your prior degree(s) qualify and that your academic standing meets these SGS criteria. See: [https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/prospectivestudents/Pages/International-and-Exchange-Students.aspx](https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/prospectivestudents/Pages/International-and-Exchange-Students.aspx)

Proof of English-language proficiency is always required and must be received by the application deadline. These are the exemptions from having to provide evidence of English proficiency:

- A Canadian citizen who studied at a Canadian university where instruction is in English or French
- Any applicant who has obtained a qualifying undergraduate or graduate degree from an institution recognized by the University of Toronto and where the language of instruction and examination is uniformly English. Note: Students applying from outside Canada should consult the School of Graduate Studies website which provides a list of countries from which university instruction in English will be recognized without further documentation.

Where one of these conditions is met, the exemption will be applied automatically. Where evidence of English proficiency is not exempted, and evidence of English proficiency was not provided by the deadline, the application will be deemed incomplete and not reviewed.
Implementation of Graduate Record Examination (GRE) requirement

In June 2017, a new requirement for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) received governance approval.

- Applicants to the MPH Epidemiology for entry in fall, 2017, are strongly recommended to submit GRE scores.
- Applicants for admission in fall, 2018, will be required to meet the new GRE requirement.

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is the most widely used standardized admissions test in Public Health, in North America. The GRE requirement will apply to all domestic and international applicants to the MPH in the Epidemiology Field. Applicants will be required to have official GRE General Test scores submitted directly from ETS.org to the University of Toronto before the application deadline. See ETS.org for information on testing and report submission. GRE reports are valid for five years.

Exemptions and substitutions for the GRE: For the 2017 and 2018 admissions cycles, the following groups of applicants may be exempted from submitting GRE scores; although the GRE remains strongly recommended.

1. Physicians currently licensed to practice medicine in Canada will not be required to submit standardized test score reports, but are encouraged to do so if they have valid test scores.
2. Applicants who have written the MCAT in 2015 or later years, may submit the MCAT report as a substitute for the GRE, or in addition to the GRE. The GRE is preferred and will be considered evidence of a serious application. Note: DLSPH cannot obtain MCAT reports through the Ontario Medical Schools Application Service or through other divisions within University of Toronto. Applicants must log into their account at AAMC.org and request an official MCAT Score Report (as a PDF document) and upload that document with the application. This should be done shortly before the application deadline as the report is verifiable for 90 days.
Program Details

Our Curriculum, and Competencies

Competencies are action-oriented statements that delineate the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities in the performance of work responsibilities. The Discipline-Specific Core Competencies for DLSPH MPH Program Stream in Epidemiology are presented in Box 2 (following page). These competencies for the MPH in Epidemiology at DLSPH are consistent with Canadian and international competency statements for applied epidemiologists but also include intermediate to advanced research skills. The strong emphasis on research skills reflects the program’s history of a merger of a previous professional master’s program and the former MSc in Epidemiology focusing on research.

Our curriculum addresses the competencies for applied epidemiologists working in public health and government agencies, as defined by the Association of Public Health Epidemiologists of Ontario as well as the Applied Epidemiology Competencies for the European Union. Although DLSPH is not currently seeking accreditation with American Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the MPH in epidemiology curriculum covers the MPH competencies for both Epidemiology and Biostatistics as defined for accredited MPH programs.

An important competency statement for epidemiology in public health is the United States Competencies for Applied Epidemiologists in Governmental Public Health Agencies (US Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, CSTE, and US Centers for Disease Control; 2008). Following the CSTE classification, our program addresses the applied epidemiology competencies for professional roles described as Tier 2: Mid-Level Epidemiologist. In addition, our MPH Epidemiology curriculum addresses more advanced and research-focused competencies for epidemiologists in professional roles defined by CSTE as: Tier 3b: Senior Epidemiologist, Senior Scientist/Subject Area Expert.

MPH Epidemiology at DLSPH, compared to other programs

We have compared our program to other MPH and MSc programs in epidemiology, in Canada and internationally, with respect to: stated competencies; the content of required courses; opportunity for hands-on research; and, professional placement experiences. Just a couple of examples of other programs that are most similar to ours include: the University of Michigan MPH degree in Epidemiology Methods and Applications; and the Columbia University MPH in Epidemiology. Similar programs tend to be 1.5 to 2.0 years in duration, require multiple, consecutive terms of skills-based courses in epidemiology and biostatistics, have a mandatory breadth of training in public health, and provide a practicum experience. These chosen examples are also, like ours, highly specialized programs in epidemiology that require advanced courses in epidemiological research methods (i.e., observational research, population surveillance, and biostatistics).

The MPH in Epidemiology, at DLSPH, is unlike many MPH Programs, particularly where these are general MPH programs, and one year in length. The DLSPH MPH in the Epidemiology stream is

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considerably more specialized and focused on quantitative skills and their application to surveillance, research and evaluation.

Our program has many of the same strengths Masters degrees which emphasize the research supervisor-trainee partnership (often MSc). Our degree evolved from our MSc degree, by title, and seeks to achieve all the same objectives. MPH Epidemiology students are able to work with a selected research mentor within one or more practicum experiences. Many practicum placements encourage students to work on projects that may lead to peer-reviewed publication. MPH Epidemiology students have received the same research scholarships usually held by thesis students, (Canadian Institutes of Health Research and other health research awards). Many graduates have gone on to PhD programs in Toronto and elsewhere. Our program also offers advantages over some graduate programs which rely heavily on the thesis experience. All our students acquire broad foundational and professionals skills and all our students have access to a broad range of courses to meet their needs and interests.

What methods of student learning and assessment can I expect?

Students will experience a mix of learning and assessment techniques, matched to the objectives of the course (e.g. knowledge, synthesis and critique of existing knowledge and evidence, application of skills, and generation of new scientific knowledge). Some courses have large-class lectures (especially earlier in the program and where multiple disciplines come together), but all courses provide opportunity for discussion, in the class itself or in tutorials. Individualized feedback on assignments is built into many courses. Individual mentorship is built into the practicum experience.

All courses and practica require evaluated student work for either a credit/non-credit (CR/NCR) mark or letter grade. For graded courses a minimum grade of 'B-' (70%), is required to pass. Assessment of performance will involve all of: quizzes and exams; graded tutorial assignments; structured reports; independent research essays; presentations; case-studies and problem-based learning; and, evaluation of student participation and professional behaviour. Practicum experiences are registered as a course, and student performance is evaluated by the practicum preceptor and course coordinator, on a CR/NCR basis. For important information on academic policies and procedures, refer to the DLSPH Student Handbook and website of the University of Toronto School of Graduate Studies.

Part time study

We welcome part time students in the program and will work with individual part-time students to develop a plan of study. Students should recognize that completing the MPH program part-time takes longer. At present, most core courses are offered once per year, fall or winter term, and weekdays, 9:00am to 5:00pm. Attendance on campus is usually required although online materials, webinars and other distance-based learning opportunities are a growing component of the DLSPH programs. Some students take a reduced course load over a larger number of terms. Others alternate between terms of full-time study at DLSPH and terms when they are engaged in work or study activities elsewhere.

Common competencies across MPH disciplines, and common to all disciplines in public health

The MPH in Epidemiology is one of five discipline-specific programs offered under the designation of MPH at DLSPH. These fields are: Community Nutrition, Epidemiology, Family and Community Medicine, Health Promotion - Social and Behavioural Health Sciences / Health Promotion, and Occupational and Environmental Health). Each field is as highly specialized as the Epidemiology field, and this makes this DLSPH MPH Program unique in Canada. Each field also takes a multidisciplinary perspective, and each is committed to a shared set of 30 core-competencies organized under the seven headings of the Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada developed by Public Health Agency of Canada5. As stated previously, while DLSPH is not currently seeking accreditation, CEPH MPH competencies across public

health disciplines have also been considered in the design of cross-cutting program requirements, taken by all MPH students, regardless of their specialization.

**Box 2  Discipline-Specific Core Competencies for DLSPH MPH Program Stream in Epidemiology**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Understanding the system</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Describe public health and understand public health systems in relation to other health care systems (e.g., international).</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Describe legislation regarding public health privacy and personal health information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Demonstrate a broad understanding of content areas such as the social determinants of health, occupational and environmental health, and healthy environments, in general.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Understanding data sources; critical appraisal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Identify existing data sources and gaps</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Demonstrate knowledge of available data sources and their applicability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of available data</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Recognize sources of bias and validity when critically appraising research literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Databases, technology, surveillance</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Explain the design and implementation of surveillance systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Develop and manage databases</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Recognize the uses of technological systems (e.g., GIS) and literature databases (e.g., Medline)</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Operate/employ basic commands within a statistical package (e.g., SAS, SPSS, R, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Identify key findings from surveillance data, draw conclusions, identify health threats</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Recognize and utilize evidence-based guidelines for surveillance</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Epidemiologic methods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Describe population health status, determinants, risk factors, health care utilization</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Evaluate health outcomes and understand implications for population health</td>
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<td>c. Write a draft proposal for a study (which includes a study protocol, data collection instruments, proposed analysis, etc.)</td>
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<td>d. Conduct risk assessment (with guidance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Design basic analysis plan, sampling design, sample size estimation</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Describe the design and implementation of qualitative and quantitative research</td>
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<td>g. Design and interpret outbreak investigations, including disease clusters</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Prepare reports/publications suitable for peer review</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Apply ethical principles to data collection, management, dissemination</td>
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<tr>
<td>j. Differentiate between and evaluate applicability of various study designs</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Biostatistics, data analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Use statistical methods to estimate measures of disease occurrence, risk, trends, associations</td>
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<td>b. Use statistical methods to conduct multivariable hypothesis testing</td>
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<td>F. Public health guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Provide epidemiological input to develop measurable outcomes for public health programs</td>
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MPH Epidemiology Practicum Guidelines & Requirements

The purpose of the practicum is to enable students to get “hands on” experience and to apply the theory and analytic skills acquired in the academic portion of their degree program. The practicum activities undertaken will depend on the nature of the practicum setting, the needs of the practicum agency/organization, and the student’s learning objectives.

For detailed information about the practicum experience including discipline-specific practicum guidelines, and the responsibilities of the students and supervisors, see this link:
http://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/program/mph-epidemiology/#practica

Students are required to undertake a full-time practicum in the Spring/Summer term of their first year. A 16 week practicum is recommended (2.0 Full time equivalent course credits or FCE), however a 12 week (1.5 FCE) practicum is also permitted. Many students also complete a second/elective practicum in the Winter term of their second year. Students are only allowed to take maximum 3.5 FCE of practica. If you complete a 16-week practicum in your first year you are only allowed a 12 week practicum in your second year (or vice versa). All MPH Epidemiology students must complete at least one practicum placement in an applied public health or research setting and this mandatory placement must include an element of quantitative work. Students wanting a thesis-like experience are also able to achieve this through practicum placements.

Practicum procedures and timeline

Full-time students complete their required practicum placement in the first summer, after two terms of required courses. Placements are coordinated by the Practicum Placement & Professional Development Officer (Practicum Officer). Detailed information about practicum procedures are presented to registered students by October or November of the first year of study. In January, eligible students are given access to a database of practicum opportunities. Students must apply to positions that interest them. All registered MPH students, in good standing and eligible for the practicum, are guaranteed a placement. Epidemiology applicants are not required to identify a supervisor, or practicum, prior to the start of their studies. Applicants wishing to apply for research funds with a specific DLSPH supervisor are encouraged to explore this as early as possible, understanding that these arrangements are conditional on acceptance into the MPH and approval of the practicum placement. Epidemiology students who identify their own practicum opportunity must discuss this with the Practicum Officer as early as possible. This allows time to ensure that the placement is suitable and institutional agreements are in place, as required. Students who wish to do a second or elective practicum are expected to identify their own placement, with the approval and ongoing support of the Practicum Officer.

Paid Practica and Financial Support

Not all practicum placements can pay students (because of their own resources or policies) and many unpaid placements offer valuable professional experience. In recent years most MPH Epidemiology practicum students have received some level of stipend or salary. Also in recent years DLSPH has received the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) James Rossiter MPH Practicum Awards which provides stipends for unpaid practica. Travel awards have been awarded to some MPH students. Practicum stipends is only forms of financial support available to MPH students who can also apply for needs-based bursaries and many competitive awards. Note that many MPH Epidemiology students have held the same competitive research awards as MSc students and use practicum placements to undertake research projects. Refer to DLSPH and SGS websites for more information on financial support.

FAQs about Global Health and International Practicum experiences

Students must assume that the required practicum for epidemiology will be completed in Ontario. Questions about Global Health Practica should be directed to the Office of Global Public Health Education and Training at DLSPH.