Doctor of Public Health (DrPH): Building Canada’s public health workforce

October 17, 2020 | Presented by Dr. Erica Di Ruggiero, Associate Professor
DLSPH Open House
Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation, Anishnawbe, Wendat, Huron, and Haudenosaunee Indigenous Peoples on which the Dalla Lana School of Public Health now stands.

The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We would also like to pay our respects to all our ancestors and to our present Elders.
Launching Canada’s first DrPH

Highlights:

• Our Academic Plan 2019-2024 highlights a vision to provide the full cycle of public health training
• Immense support from local, national and global partners
• Long-anticipated program
• First cohort will join DLSPH in September 2021
What is a ‘Doctor of Public Health’?

• A professional doctorate degree, which fosters advanced expertise in evidence-based public health practice.

• A recognized degree since 1988 and has since been adopted by more than 12 top-ranked academic institutions worldwide.¹,²

• The number of DrPH programs around the world, and the demand for the program from potential students is increasing, reflecting the growing need for multi-skilled practitioners.

“...a way to fulfill the chasm between research and practice.”

Sherman et al. (2017)

References: (1) Sherman et al. 2017; (2) Lee et al. 2009
The DrPH focuses on accelerating the use of research evidence to inform practice and policy; this program offers practice-based training and applied research skills.

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<th>DrPH</th>
<th>PhD</th>
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<td>• Applied Research (theory and practice)</td>
<td>• Research-based (mostly theory)</td>
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<td>• Emphasis on research skills and development of other competencies (i.e. policy, leadership, management and more!)</td>
<td>• Emphasis on research skills</td>
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Who Might Benefit?

• Professionals who want to pursue advanced public health training (not research-focused).³

• Professionals interested in expanding competencies in knowledge translation, leadership and management.¹²

• Organizations that need strong public health leaders.¹

References: (1) Sherman et al. 2017; (2) Lee et al. 2009; (3) Berman & Frenk 2018
## Demand and Need

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<th>Student Perspective</th>
<th>Employer Perspective</th>
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<tr>
<td>A stepping-stone to pursuing academia and practice related career paths</td>
<td>Acknowledgement of training gap in public health education</td>
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<td>“The MacGyver degree of public health training”</td>
<td>Produces “a seasoned leader”</td>
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<td>Benefits students who do not want to pursue a PhD, but want advanced training</td>
<td>Produces a highly skilled professional who can work in diverse settings such as public health agencies, government, as well as both private and not-for-profit sectors</td>
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Note: Demand and need was discerned through consultations and qualitative interviews in 2018 and 2019.
Our Process

2018
- Jurisdictional Scan
- Internal Consultation with Faculty
- External Consultation with stakeholders

2019
- Program Planning
- Proposal Development
- Engagement with local and national public health partners
- External Review

2020
- Program Launch & Promotion
- Recruitment
DrPH Program

- **School-wide program (PHS and IHPME)**
- Graduate Unit: Public Health Sciences
- Division: Clinical Public Health

Curriculum

- Core and elective courses (6.5 FCE)
- Applied Project (16 weeks)
- Comprehensive Exam
- Thesis and Oral Defense
DrPH Cohort
• Up to 10 students per year

Eligibility
• Relevant Master’s training (e.g. Master of Public Health, Master of Health Administration, etc.)
• Minimum 5 years of work experience

Program Delivery
• In-person and online course work
• On-campus requirements heaviest in first year of study; more flexibility thereafter
Program Timelines (Full Time)

Year 1: Coursework, thesis proposal preparation and applied research project.
Year 2: Coursework, thesis work and written comprehensive examination.
Year 3: Complete remaining coursework and continue thesis research and writing.
Year 4*: Complete thesis, any outstanding coursework and provide oral defense.

*Could take up to six years
Core Competency Domains

DATA & ANALYSIS
LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE
POLICY & PROGRAMS
EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Note: These four competency domains are outlined by the Council on Education for Public Health.
## Year 1

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<th>Semester</th>
<th>Courses</th>
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| **Fall** | • CHL5005H Public Health Research (0.5 FCE) (D)  
• CHL5624H Historical, Ethical and Philosophical Foundations of Public Health (0.5FCE) (B, C, D)  
• CHL4001H Contemporary Approaches to Population Health and Health Equity (0.5 FCE) (multiple domains) – NEW!  
• RST9999Y Thesis (enrollment) |
| **Winter** | • 1<sup>st</sup> Methods course, including data analytics (0.5FCE) (A)  
  • Options (see Appendix A of DrPH Proposal for comprehensive list)  
• CHL4002H Critical Appraisal and Use of Evidence (0.5 FCE) (A) – NEW!  
• CHL4003H Leading High-Performing Health Systems (0.5FCE) (B) – NEW! |
| **Summer** | • CHL4004H Global Health Policy (0.5FCE) (C) – NEW!  
• RST9999Y Thesis  
  (Students will begin thesis work via their Research Informed Professional Placement / Applied Project; this will be conducted off campus in an organization, which could be the student’s workplace or other agency)  
  (16 weeks; co-directed with a field supervisor in an implementing agency; leadership log) (multiple domains) |

(A) = Data & Analysis; (B) = Leadership, Management & Governance; (C) = Policy & Programs; (D) = Education & Workforce
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<th>Year II</th>
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| **Fall** | - CHL4005H Governance & Financial Leadership (0.5 FCE) (B) – NEW!  
- CHL5132H Population Health Intervention Research (0.5 FCE) (A) (2nd methods course)  
- 1 Elective (0.5 FCE) (multiple domains)  
- RST9999Y Thesis |
| **Winter** | - HAD5778H Comparative Health Systems and Policy (0.5 FCE) (B, D)  
- 1 Elective (0.5 FCE) (multiple domains)  
  Comprehensive Exam (multiple domains) - assess knowledge and skills acquired to date about theories and methods, and demonstrate an ability to synthesize this knowledge, as applied to their topic and to support the student in selecting an appropriate thesis topic (students are expected to complete this exam at the end of the spring or no later than the summer of their second year)  
- RST9999Y Thesis |
| **Summer** | - RST9999Y Thesis (finalize proposal building on applied research project) |

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Year III

Fall to Summer

- HAD5765H Case Studies in Health Policy (i.e. pressing topics in public health and health systems (interactive seminar; opportunity for students to present dissertation ideas in progress and discuss case studies) (0.5 FCE) (A, B, C)
- Candidacy Achieved
- RST9999Y Thesis

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Upon completion, DrPH graduates are competitive for diverse types of senior roles:

- Leadership positions in non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- Director roles within public health units, regional health authorities and other similar agencies, as well as in the private sector;
- Executive/Director roles within non-governmental organizations.

Examples of DrPH Graduates:

- DrPH Careers (Columbia University)
- DrPH Alumni Profiles (University of North Carolina)
- Graduate Employment Outcomes (Harvard University)
Canada’s First Doctor of Public Health

To learn more about the program and our launch:

• **A Message from Steini Brown**, Dean of DLSPH

• **Podcast by PH Spot** (featuring Prof Erica Di Ruggiero who led the development of the program)
For More Information

email: drph.dlpsh@utoronto.ca
website: dlsph.utoronto.ca/program/
doctor-of-public-health
Thank You!