



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

DALLA LANA
PUBLIC HEALTH

FACULTY OF N
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MPH Epidemiology Open House October 2020

Dr. Jennifer Brooks

Assistant Professor of Epidemiology

Program Director MPH Epidemiology



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Overview

- What is epidemiology anyway?
- How our program works
- What to expect
- How to apply

What is epidemiology?

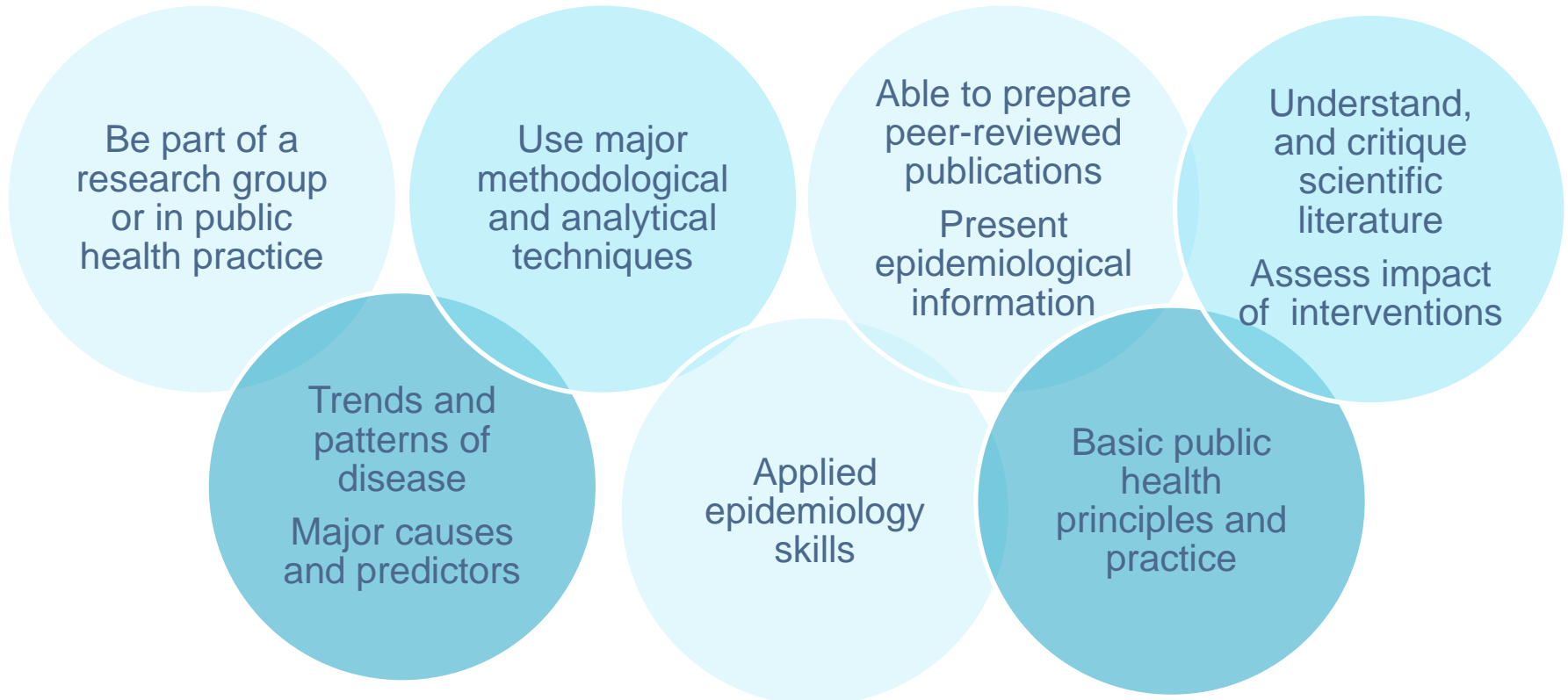
- “The study of the distribution and determinants of **health related states or events** in **specified populations** and the application of this study to control **health problems**”
- Epi: upon/on/over
- Demos: population/people
- Logos: study/count/tell
 - The study of what is upon us/counting what is upon the people

¹Porta, Dictionary of Epidemiology

Objectives of epidemiology

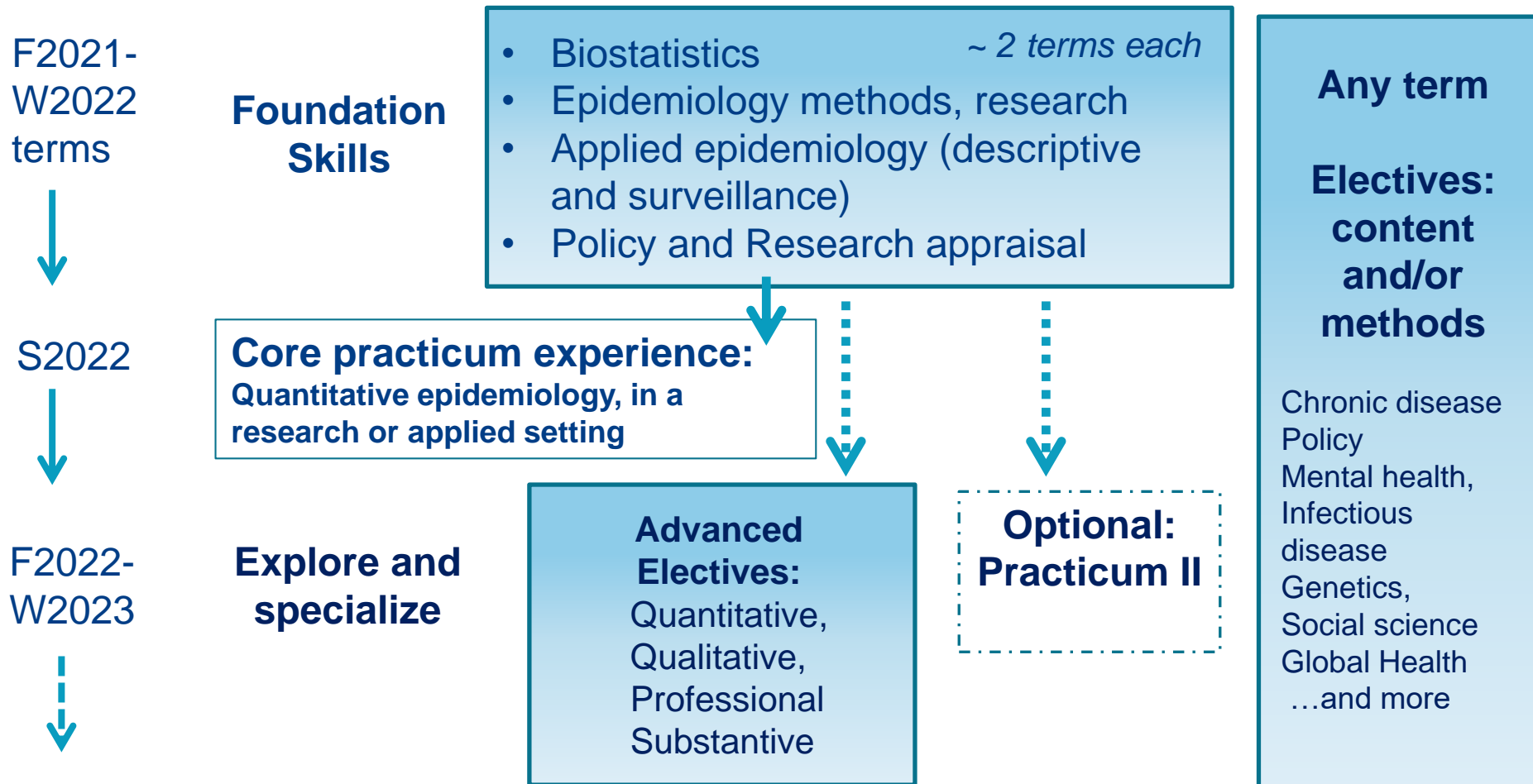
- Study the natural course of disease from onset to resolution
 - Determine the extent of disease in a population
 - Identify patterns and trends in disease occurrence
 - Identify the causes of disease
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of measures that prevent and treat disease
-
- How disease is distributed in populations and the factors that influence/determine this distribution

Program Goals



Emphasis on quantitative methods, appraisal of evidence, analysis and interpretation.
Skills applicable to *any* setting where Epidemiologists work

Progress through the program over 16-20 months (Full time study)



Timeline: First Fall term

- Core courses

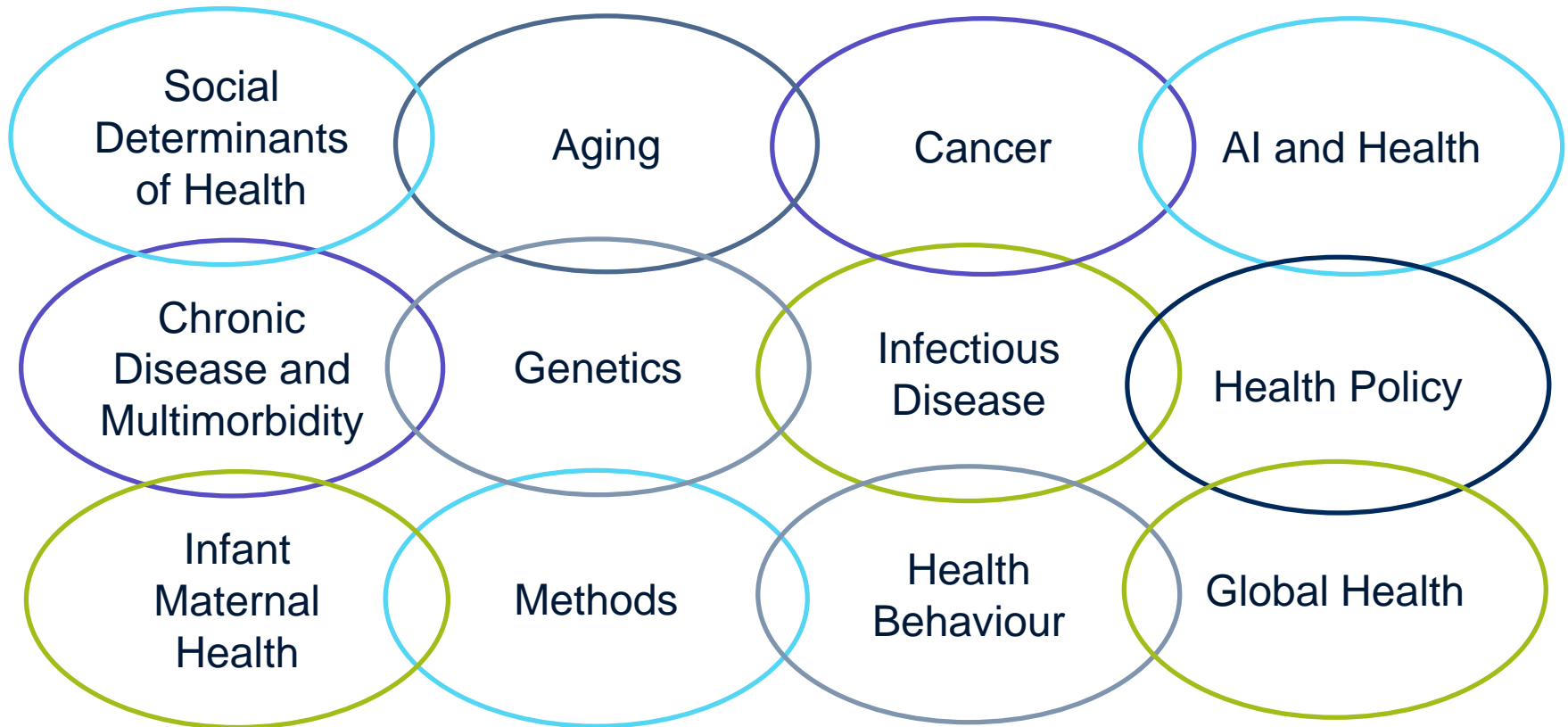
- Intro to Public Health (multidisciplinary)
- Epi required courses (Biostats 1/ Epi 1 / Pop Persp.)
- Core Policy course (multidisciplinary)
- *Up to one elective*

Timeline: First Winter term

- Core courses
 - Epi required courses
 - Biostats 2 and Epi Methods 2
 - Health Trends and Surveillance (applied epi.),
 - Scientific Overviews (critical appraisal of evidence)
 - *Up to one elective*

The rest is up to you!

- What are you interested in?
- What skills do you want to develop?



Practicums

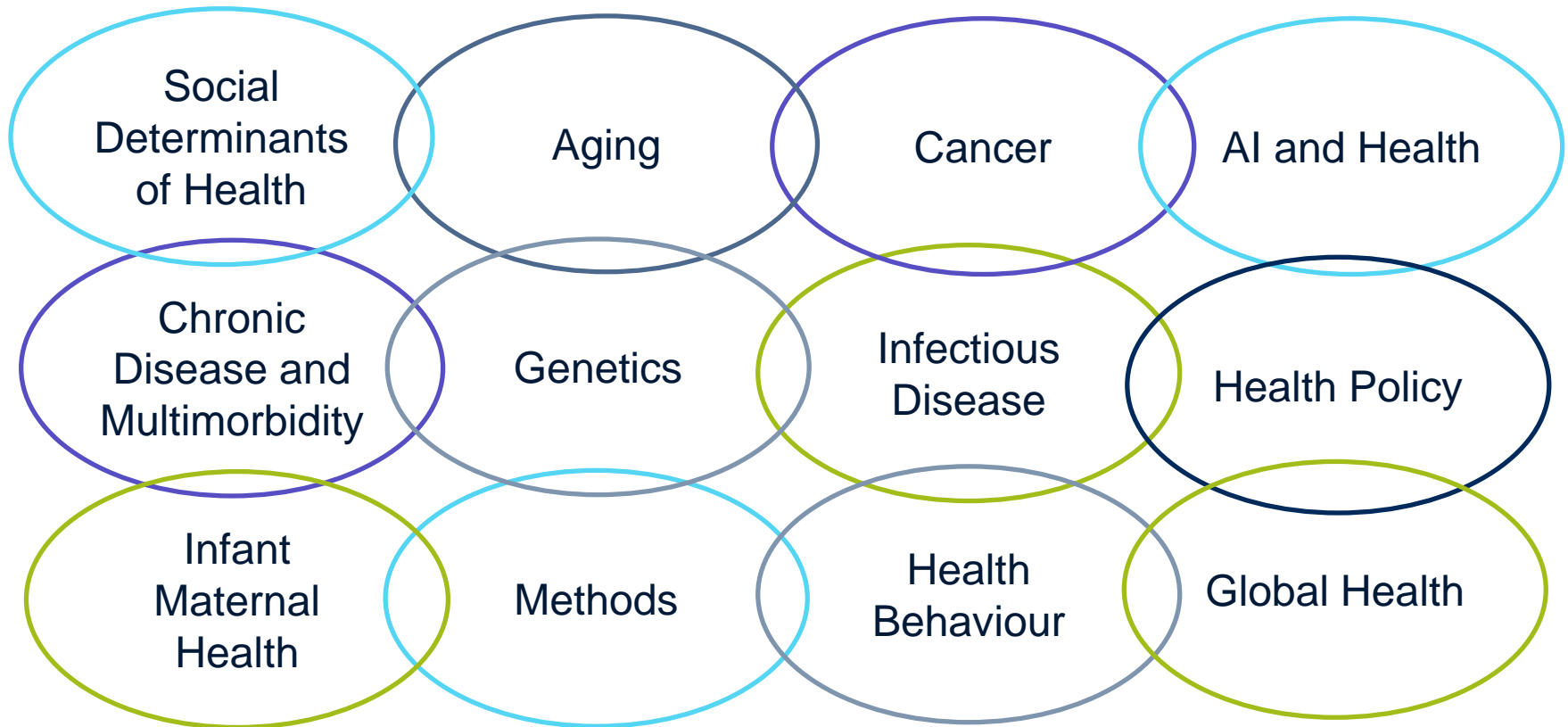
- Mandatory practicum in the Summer of your first year (summer 2022)
- Optional second practicum in the Winter term of your second year (Winter 2023)
- We coordinate these with you
- Positions advertised on an internal job board just for current MPH students
- Professional Development Opportunities
 - How to draft a cover letter, your CV, interview etc.

MPH Epidemiology - Practicum

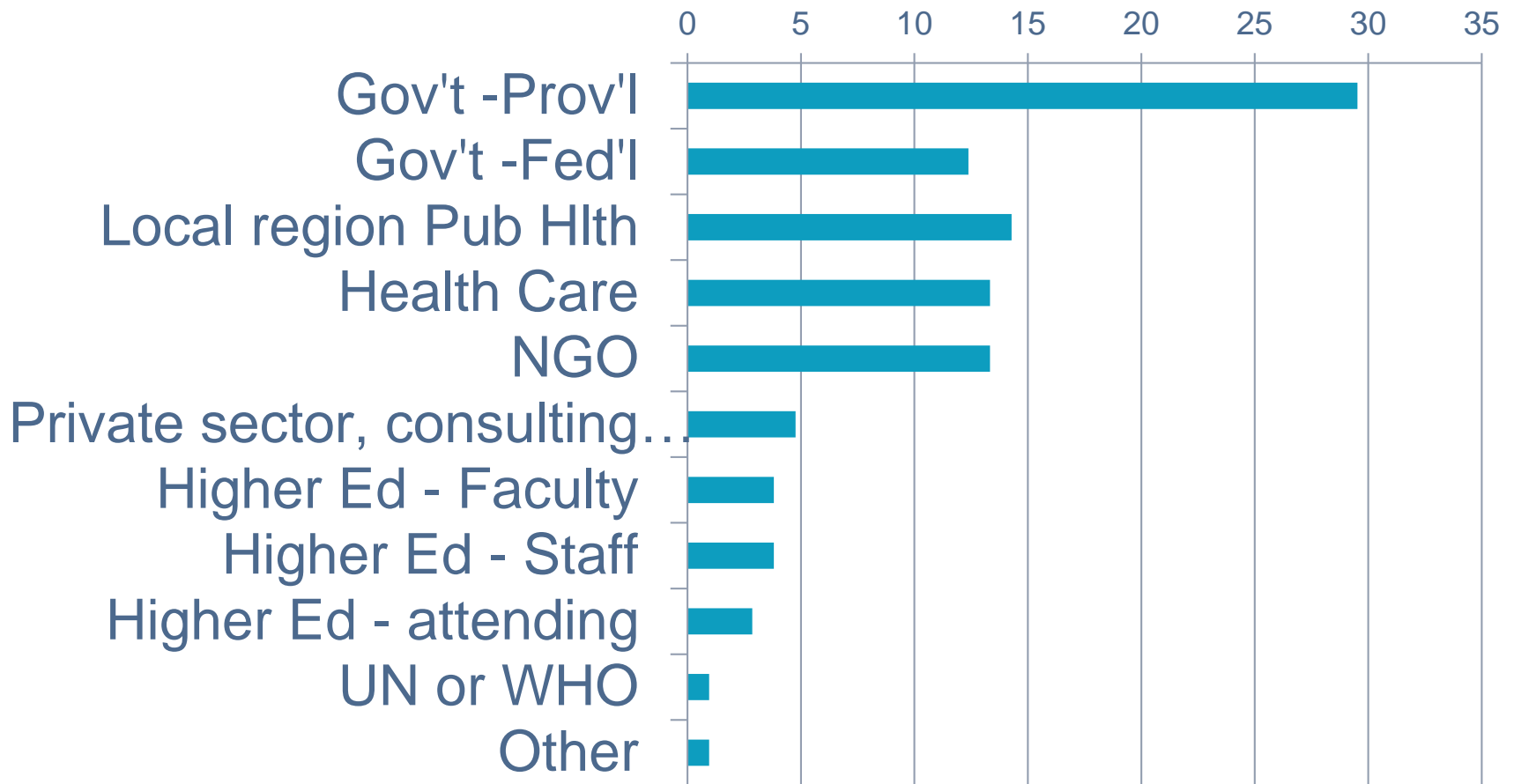
- **Practicum I Epidemiology-specific requirements**
 - Must apply quantitative, writing and communications skills
 - Variety of professional and/or research settings
 - Most Epi students have received a small stipend (\$)
- **Optional second practicum**
 - Try new things
 - In past years only the 2nd practicum could be outside Canada
 - This year....?
- **Mix of two practicum**
 - You may return to same mentors to extend the experience (e.g., phases of more ambitious research)
 - Or, a different place = different experiences and broader networking

The rest is up to you!

- What are you interested in?
- What skills do you want to develop?



MPH Epidemiology graduates, where are you now? (%)



How to Apply?

- Application deadline is **January 18, 2021**
- Application components:
 - Letter of intent
 - CV
 - Statistics requirement
 - Scanned transcripts (all undergrad and grad studies)
 - ELP (if applicable)
 - 2 letters of reference

Letter of Intent

- Write a free-form essay
- No more than **1,000** words (2 pages, single-spaced)
- Outline your reasons for applying to the program
- How your background has prepared you for it.
- Indicate your aspirations, learning goals, career plans, and specific research plans (if applicable).
- Highlight any experience relevant to your program choice.

Curriculum Vitae

- **Should include at least:**
 - Name and contact information
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Publications and presentations
 - Teaching and research activities
 - Other relevant experience

Eligibility – all Graduate programs

- **Qualifying Undergraduate Honours degree**
 - Four years of progressively more advanced study
- **Minimum academic standing**
 - Inadmissible without mid-B standing (final 5 senior level courses (DLSPH minimum academic standing))
 - Upgrading no longer counted

<http://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/students/future-students/admission-requirements/>

Required: Prior degree and grades

The screenshot shows the 'International Degree Equivalencies Tool' page on the University of Toronto's School of Graduate Studies website. The page features a navigation menu with 'Home', 'About Us', 'Prospective Students', 'Current Students', and 'Postdoctoral'. The main content area includes a 'Prospective Students' sidebar with links like 'Why Grad Study?', 'Frequently Asked Questions', and 'Programs'. The main text explains that graduates from recognized institutions outside Canada should hold equivalent degrees as assessed by the University of Toronto. It notes that many graduate units have higher minimum requirements and that meeting the minimum does not necessarily mean admission. A dropdown menu labeled 'Select a Country' is visible for viewing minimum admission requirements.

Applicants will not be admitted without “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”

Stronger academic standing is needed to be competitive

- We expect mostly As and Bs
- STRONG marks in challenging senior courses
 - Math, statistics
 - Courses with essays, small seminars
 - Equivalent of honours specialization
 - Progression to senior courses (e.g., 400s)
 - One or more honours discipline
- Committee reviews entire academic record.

Eligibility cannot be determined until a complete application is submitted.

Eligibility: Program-specific requirements

1. Statistics requirement.
 - At least one, term-long, university credit with required content
 - Take content list to your professor when choosing; you must provide course content to us (with uploaded application)
 - Minimum grade of B+
2. Broad skills and experience - assess qualitatively: reading, writing, professionalism, maturity, knowledge of human health and determinants. Clear interest in epidemiology.

<https://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/program/mph-epidemiology/>

See “advice to applicants” section

Statistics requirement (the #1 FAQ)

One or more courses (any discipline) which covered all the required content

- Frequency distributions, skewness
- Measures of central tendency: Mean, median, mode
- Measures of variation: Standard deviation, standard score
- Probability, normal curve
- Correlation
- Regression (linear)
- Sampling, confidence intervals
- Levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal, interval
- Test of significance: Null hypothesis: t-test, one-tail/two-tail tests
- Test of significance: Chi square
- Analysis of variance

**B+ or better standing
(As are preferred)**

Statistics attachment of application

- The applicant's responsibility: ensure each person reading your online application has all the evidence needed and that have the statistics pre-requisite
- Tip: Create a single multi-page PDF document
- Emphasize your **MOST ADVANCED** training in statistics
 - Identify all relevant courses (code and year) in your transcripts
 - Committee must see course content. Examples:
 - Online syllabus – provide website address and ensure any person can see content
 - Copy of the syllabus or detailed course description within attachment
 - Statement of content from stats professor

Internationally-trained students

- **English Language Proficiency, an absolute requirement**
 - See School of Graduate Studies website: required scores and the only countries where TOEFL is exempted
 - The MPH Epidemiology committee makes NO other exemptions or exceptions
 - Scores must be submitted with application, or application is incomplete and removed from review
- **U of T also offers rich services for internationally-trained students**
 - Contact the Centre for International Experience

<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/admissions/international-students/>

Assessment by Admissions Committee

- We consider the full breadth of your qualities and experience
- Quantitative skills, research methods background
- Writing and communications
- Require some human health knowledge
 - Plus physical, social and environmental determinants of health
- Maturity, professional skills, interpersonal skills
- Are we a good match?
 - Will this program help you reach your career goals
 - What will you contribute to this program and its people

Provide evidence of experience

- CV and letter should include all work experience
 - Related to health and research
 - Other employment also important
- Evidence of experience from volunteer work, or student positions
 - Be clear and honest about responsibilities and expectations
- Your past behaviour and choices are the best evidence of your genuine interest in Epidemiology
 - Must show commitment to working with quantitative methods
 - Clearly able to work with others

How to apply

- **First, do your research**
 - Thoroughly examine this program and others
 - Perform a self-examination
 - What are your greatest strengths, accomplishments?
What are your true goals?
- **Plan the application**
 - Timeline for required tasks
 - Draft letter of intent and recruit references
 - Follow all instructions
 - Leave time to review for quality

Make best use of application

- **No missing or poor quality information**
 - Transcripts
 - Scanned copies in application must look like official transcript
 - Must have course titles, individual grades, registration details
 - Statistics requirement
 - That attachment can be edited to add detailed information (make reviewer's job easy)
 - Letters
 - Genuine, beautifully written and letter-perfect
 - Work with your referees to capture your qualities
- **Make your best possible impression**
 - Show you can educate yourself, read information already provided
 - Be bright and respectful every time you interact with program faculty, staff and students

For more information...

- DLSPH website www.dlsph.utoronto.ca
- Download detailed program description for MPH Epi
- See also Graduate Student Handbook

- Graduate Department of Public Health Sciences
- Health Sciences Building
- 155 College Street, Ste. 600, 6th Floor
- Tel: 416-978-2058
- Email: dlsph.grad@utoronto.ca

- Epidemiology key contacts
- Admin: Matilda Kong
- MPH Program Lead: Jennifer Brooks
- Epidemiology Division Head: Arjumand Siddiqui

Questions?



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