

## Public Health

Health Professions Advising Office (HPAO), Student Access to Science Center, FO5-109

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Public Health is the science of protecting and improving community health through education, health promotion, research, and disease prevention strategies. The mission of public health is to "fulfill society's interest in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy" (Institute of Medicine, Committee for the Study of the Future of Public Health, Division of Health Care Services. *The Future of Public Health*. National Academy Press, Washington, DC). Unlike medical doctors that treat individual patients after they become sick, public health professionals focus on the health of entire populations while they are still healthy.

Public Health is mainly composed of the following core areas:

### **Environmental Health Sciences**

Environmental health includes many diverse disciplines such as chemistry, toxicology and engineering. Environmental Health professionals are concerned with the identification, and control of factors in the natural and man-made environment (e.g. air, water, land, housing, etc.) which affect health.

### **Biostatistics**

Career opportunities in this area involve the application of statistical procedures, techniques and methodology to characterize or investigate health problems and programs.

### **Behavioral Sciences/Health Education**

These specialists use specific methods, skills and program strategies to help people choose healthier lifestyles, make more efficient use of health services, adopt self-care practices and participate actively in the design and implementation of programs that affect health.

### **Epidemiology**

Due to a nationwide shortage, opportunities abound for specialists trained in the systematic study of the distribution and determinants of disease or disability in population groups.

### **Health Services Administration/Management**

Persons seeking careers in administration or resource management in the public or private sectors of health service delivery can specialize in health planning, organization, policy formulation and analysis, finance, economics or marketing.

### **Maternal and Child Health**

Through advocacy, education, and research, professionals in maternal and child health improve the public health delivery systems specifically for women, children, and their families.

### **Nutrition**

This field examines how food and nutrients affect the wellness and lifestyle of the population. In short supply in both public and private sectors, nutrition encompasses the combination of education and science to promote health and disease prevention.

### **International/Global Health**

International health professionals address health concerns from a global perspective and encompass all areas of public health (e.g., biostatistics, epidemiology, nutrition, maternal and child health, etc.).

### **Public Health Laboratory Practice**

Public health laboratory professionals such as bacteriologists, microbiologists, and biochemists test biological and environmental samples in order to diagnose, prevent, treat, and control infectious diseases in communities.

### **Public Health Policy**

Public health policy professionals work to improve the public's health through legislative action at the local, state, and federal levels.

### **Public Health Practice**

A degree in public health practice enables clinicians to apply public health principles to improve their practice. Public health is an interdisciplinary field and professionals in many disciplines such as nursing, medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy routinely deal with public health issues.

The following are average salary ranges in Public Health:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Health Services Administration</b><br/>\$37,050 - \$161,400</li><li>• <b>Biostatistics</b><br/>\$33,000 - \$63,000</li><li>• <b>Epidemiology</b><br/>\$38,175 - \$136,237</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Health Education/Behavioral Science</b><br/>\$33,000 - \$86,625</li><li>• <b>Environmental Health</b><br/>\$44,550 - \$143,700</li><li>• <b>International Health</b><br/>\$31,500 - \$86,625</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Nutrition</b><br/>\$42,000 - \$55,000</li><li>• <b>Public Health Practice/Program Management</b><br/>\$44,000 - \$135,000</li><li>• <b>Biomedical Laboratory</b><br/>\$31,500 - \$78,750</li></ul> |
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The ASPH estimates that “there are well over three hundred academic institutions that offer a graduate degree in selected specialty areas within public health. Many of these are programs in community health education and programs in community health/preventive medicine.” But there are 41 accredited schools of public health and most accredited programs take approximately 2 years of full-time study. Internships or fieldwork are additional requirements for many MPH programs. Of the 41 accredited schools in the US, 4 are in California:

- University of California at Los Angeles School of Public Health <http://www.ph.ucla.edu/>
- Loma Linda University School of Public Health <http://www.llu.edu/llu/sph/>
- San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health <http://publichealth.sdsu.edu/>
- University of California at Berkeley School of Public Health <http://sph.berkeley.edu>

Major/ Prerequisite Requirements: The major and prerequisite requirements for Public Health are broad and vary by school and program. In general, any major is appropriate for Public Health applicants. However, to be considered for admission, applicants must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and have an adequate foundation in the biological, physical, and social sciences. *Students should contact the individual schools they are interested in to obtain their admission requirements.*

Testing: Many Public Health programs require the Graduate Record Exam General Test. Some programs may allow applicants to submit MCAT scores.

Application Information: Schools of Public Health Application Service (SOPHAS ) [www.sophas.org](http://www.sophas.org) is the centralized application service for 34 of the 41 CEPH accredited schools of public health. For non-participating programs, applicants must contact the individual schools to obtain application materials.

**Helpful Websites:**

- Council on Education for Public Health: [www.ceph.org](http://www.ceph.org)
- American Public Health Association: [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org)
- Association of Schools of Public Health: [www.asph.org](http://www.asph.org)

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Those students interested in pursuing a career in health services administration can earn their Master's in Health Care Administration at CSULB. This graduate program is accredited by the Accrediting Commission on Education in Health Service Administration (ACEHSA). Students interested in applying must have a Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution with a minimum of 9 units of course work that include: accounting, economics and statistics; submit scores on recent Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT); and have a minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA. Those applicants who do not meet the criteria may be admitted conditionally by special action of the Department Graduate Committee. For further information, admission or advising information please visit their website: <http://www.csulb.edu/colleges/chhs/departments/hca/programs/MasterofScienceinHealthCareAdministration.htm>