Department of Public Health

Master of Public Health
Graduate Student Handbook

ACCREDITED BY:

CEPH
Council on Education for Public Health
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WELCOME

Introduction
Welcome to the graduate program in the Department of Public Health at The University of Southern Mississippi. This handbook will help you become familiar with the department’s history, important policies, procedures and Master of Public Health degree requirements.

Graduate students in the department have many opportunities to participate in student activities and to share in the continuous improvement of programs. You will be encouraged to create your own philosophy of what it means to be a public health professional. The full benefit of these opportunities is based upon a commitment to the highest levels of excellence in your graduate studies and professional lives.

There are many paths leading to a career in public health. Whatever prior training and experience or future goals and aspirations, our intent is to share with you our common commitment to improving the health of the communities in which we work, play, and live.

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

History and Accreditation
In May 1989, the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning in Mississippi approved the creation of the Center for Community Health at The University of Southern Mississippi. In December 1989, the Board gave approval for the Center to grant the first Master of Public Health degree offered in Mississippi. The Master of Public Health degree is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the national accrediting body for programs in Public Health, as a Community Health/Preventive Medicine program. The first class of students was admitted to the MPH program in the summer of 1990. Initial CEPH accreditation was awarded in 1993, with the program being reaccredited in 1997. In 2001, the MPH program was awarded re-accreditation for a minimum of five years. The unit was renamed the Department of Community Health Sciences in 2004. Reaccreditation for a period of seven years was granted by CEPH in October 2007. In July of 2013 the unit once again changed its name to the Department of Public Health. CEPH approved the department’s reaccreditation for another seven year period June 2015. Therefore, The Department of Public Health continues its CEPH accreditation through July 2022.

Mission Statement and Values of the Master of Public Health Program
The mission of the University of Southern Mississippi Master of Public Health program is to advance the public’s health through education, research, and service with a focus on preparing students to become competent public health practitioners and/or administrators.

The MPH program is an integral part of the university setting and adheres to the values that have been formed through the history and traditions of the University of Southern Mississippi. These values are widely and deeply held beliefs of our faculty, staff, students, and administrators both in the Department of Public Health and the University as a whole:
• Education provides opportunities to improve the quality of intellectual, social, economic, and personal well-being. These opportunities should be available to all who are willing and able to meet our standards of excellence.
• Our success is reflected by the degree to which our students become well-read, articulate, and creative and critical thinkers. It is measured by their display of specialized knowledge and abilities suitable to the pursuit of a career and life in our complex, ever-changing world.
• We cherish innovation in the creation and application of basic and applied research findings, creative and artistic expression, meaningful learning experiences, the scope of services provided to our students and the broader community that we sustain, and the continuing evolution of degree programs that both respond to and anticipate the evolving demands of our society, employers, and the labor market.
• Education encourages and advances the ideals of a pluralistic democratic society: civic responsibility, integrity, diversity, and ethical behavior.
• Academic freedom and shared governance are long-established and living principles at the university. We cherish the free exchange of ideas, diversity of thought, joint decision making, and individuals’ assumption of responsibility.
• We make efficient and effective use of our resources, for we are accountable to our university communities, the Board of Trustees, and taxpayers.

Additionally, the values that guide the MPH program’s mission are as follows:

• The development and enhancement of collegiality among the faculty members
• Innovativeness in approach to teaching, practice and research
• Open-mindedness, respect, compassion, universal fairness, and equity
• Striving to increase population health, eliminate health disparities and improve the health and safety of the general public by teaching and following public health principles
• Collaboration and team work among the faculty and the establishment of partnerships with communities
• Collective responsibility and the wise use of resources
• Diversity and support for individual autonomy and privacy
• Student centered approach to teaching and program development
• Continuously seeking quality and excellence in scholarship
• Teaching and practicing individual and professional ethics
• Enjoyment

The University of Southern Mississippi MPH program currently has three overarching goals regarding instruction, research, and service.

Instruction: To provide comprehensive public health education and professional development to students in the areas of biostatistics, epidemiology, health administration, health policy, social and behavioral aspects of health, and environmental health. Additionally, to provide specialized training beyond the core competency level in the emphasis areas of health education and health promotion, epidemiology and biostatistics, and health policy and administration.
Research: To develop an innovative, focused program of applied research that rewards scholarship and fosters collaborative research efforts with other academic programs, disciplines and practitioners to increase the knowledge in the field of public health practice.

Service: To contribute to the development of public health policy and practice at the local, regional, national, and international levels through the active participation of our faculty and students with organizations which strive to improve the health of their community’s population.

**Goal 1. Instruction**

1. 100% of MPH Program core competencies will be addressed by core and emphasis area courses.

2. 80% of full time MPH students will complete their degree requirements within 24 months of enrollment in the program.

3. 80% of MPH students will evaluate MPH core courses as ≥ 4 (high or highest) on a 5 point Likert scale as measured on end of semester course evaluations.

4. 80% of students in the Health Education emphasis will evaluate their emphasis area courses as ≥4 (high or highest) on a 5 point Likert scale as measured on end of semester course evaluations.

5. 80% of students in the Health Policy and Administration emphasis will evaluate their emphasis area courses as ≥4 (high or highest) on a 5 point Likert scale as measured on end of semester course evaluations.

6. 80% of students in the Epidemiology/Biostatistics emphasis will evaluate their emphasis area courses as ≥4 (high or highest) on a 5 point Likert scale as measured on end of semester course evaluations.

7. 90% of all traditional MPH students will demonstrate professionalism in the field of public health as evidenced by an overall internship/practicum preceptor evaluation of above average or better.

8. 90% of all traditional MPH students will demonstrate specialized knowledge in their emphasis area as evidenced by a passing grade on the required portfolio associated with their internship/practicum.

9. 75% of all traditional MPH students will pass comprehensive exams on the first attempt.

10. 95% of executive MPH students will score ≥ 3 using a 4 point scale (pass with distinction, pass, low pass, or fail) on the Capstone oral presentation.

11. 90% of executive MPH students will score above average or better on the Strategic Planning written report.

**Goal 2: Research**

1. 70% of program faculty will pursue and initiate collaborative public health research with agencies, organizations and foundations at the local, state, national, or international levels.

2. 60% of program faculty will pursue opportunities to conduct interdisciplinary, applied, and community-based scholarship with appropriate programs, agencies, and organizations.
3. 70% of program faculty will enhance public health science through the dissemination of research findings in publications and presentations.

**Goal 3: Service**
1. 70% of MPH program faculty members will serve as a resource for at least one public and/or private health care activity or organization at the local, state, national, or international level.
2. 70% of MPH faculty, with the assistance of MPH student organization groups, will provide community education and service projects that will have a positive public health impact at local, state, national, or international levels.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Undergraduate Preparation**
The Department of Public Health (DPH) draws a variety of students representing a wide array of health and non-health related undergraduate majors. There are minimal prerequisites to MPH coursework. Successful completion of an introductory statistics course is a prerequisite to CHS 623 “Biostatistics”. If students have not had an introductory course in statistics, they are required to enroll and successfully complete CHS 440 “Introduction to Biostatistics” prior to enrolling in CHS 623. All students admitted into the program should be computer literate and maintain a Southern Miss email account.

**Transfer Credit**
As many as six (6) semester hours of graduate credit from other accredited institutions may be transferred to a student’s program based on review and approval of the appropriate department chair, and the dean of the Graduate School provided that the course work transferred falls within the six year period allowed for the degree. Such course work must carry a letter or numeric grade of “B” or better and cannot be a pass/fail course. The course work may not have counted toward another graduate degree. The transfer grade will not calculate in the USM GPA. Students must submit all materials required for course evaluation.

**Graduate Students Taking Undergraduate Courses**
Graduate students enrolled in undergraduate courses must complete the "Out of Career" permission form available in The Graduate School and receive permission from their department chair and the dean of the Graduate School. Graduate students taking undergraduate courses should be aware that such courses are considered “out of career” and might not count toward eligibility for financial assistance or the calculation of full-time status. Although graduate students taking undergraduate courses will receive a grade for the coursework, they will not receive quality points; the absence of quality points may negatively impact the ability of the student to count the course(s) for credit when seeking licensure or certification. It is the responsibility of the student to determine how the course will affect his/her status and future plans. Students should contact The Graduate School if they have questions. Students may not earn an undergraduate degree while earning a graduate degree.
**Time Limitation**

The student must complete the master’s degree within five calendar years from the date of initial enrollment in a graduate program. Five years is the maximum age allowed for graduate credits toward a master’s degree. The dean of the Graduate School, under extenuating circumstances, and special petition, may approve revalidation of some over-age credit hours if the original credit was earned at The University of Southern Mississippi and if the department chair approves the revalidation. The revalidation is secured by the student’s successfully passing a special examination on the course. However, any student who fails to complete the master’s degree program within the five-year time period becomes subject to any changes in degree requirements made at any date five years prior to graduation. The fee charged for the special revalidation examination is to be paid before the revalidation examination is taken. Over-age extension and transfer courses cannot be revalidated. Revalidation forms are available in The Graduate School.

**Advisement**

Upon admission to the program, each student will meet with the graduate coordinator. The purpose of this meeting is to initiate a plan of study, be assigned a faculty advisor based on emphasis, discuss possible pre-registration, and answer general questions about the program and student services. The Department of Public Health will host a MPH student orientation during the first week of classes. Attendance is required.

Students must file a plan of study the first semester of enrollment. The plan of study provides course sequence which must be followed to insure degree progress. Faculty advisor, graduate coordinator, and chair signatures are required on the plan of study. Subsequent advisement periods are posted in the University calendar at [www.usm.edu/registrar/calendars](http://www.usm.edu/registrar/calendars). Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisors on a regular basis to discuss the degree program, career objectives, potential internship sites and future employment. Students are responsible for meeting all department and university deadlines. The Graduate Coordinator will register all MPH Students for DPH courses once the advisement form is signed and submitted, exceptions may apply.

**Student Organizations**

Graduate students who maintain a 3.0 GPA may be invited to join the Alpha Iota chapter of ETA SIGMA GAMMA. Founded on the campus of Ball State University (Muncie, Indiana) in 1967, ETA SIGMA GAMMA is an honorary society dedicated to the promotion of excellence in teaching, research, and service in the health education disciplines. The University of Southern Mississippi’s Alpha Iota chapter was established in the late 1970s. Each year in conjunction with the initiation of new members, DPH sponsors an annual lecture hosting a distinguished member of the community in the health field. For more information, please visit [https://www.usm.edu/community-public-health-sciences/eta-sigma-gamma-honorary-society](https://www.usm.edu/community-public-health-sciences/eta-sigma-gamma-honorary-society).

Health Administration Student Association (HASA) for our students, which include: Undergraduate and Traditional M.P.H. students in the Health Policy and Administration emphasis area, Executive M.P.H. in Health Services Administration students, Any Public Health undergraduate and/or graduate students who are interested in health administration; and any University of Southern Mississippi students in the areas of business, marketing or other related fields. HASA will provide students with professional
networking opportunities, career planning and workshops and presentations by healthcare administrators from local, state and national levels. For more information, please visit https://www.usm.edu/community-public-health-sciences/health-administration-student-association-hasa.

Graduate students who plan to pursue a career in health management should join the American College of Healthcare Executives as a student associate. For more information, please visit www.ache.org.

The MPH students also elect officers each year to serve as a liaison between faculty and students. The student president provides a student perspective at faculty meetings, as well as participates in recruitment efforts and other service projects.

In addition to the above mentioned MPH related organizations, The University of Southern Mississippi offers over 270 student organizational opportunities. For more information, please visit https://www.usm.edu/student-activities.

**FINANCIAL AID AND ASSISTANTSHIPS**

**Financial Aid**
Questions regarding financial aid should be directed to the Office of Financial Aid (601) 266-4774 or www.usm.edu/financialaid.

DPH has a number of scholarships and awards made available by donations from friends of the program. The availability of awards varies by emphasis area. For more information, please visit https://www.usm.edu/community-public-health-sciences.

**Assistantships**
DPH has a limited number of graduate assistantships that include waiver of tuition and a stipend. Only full-time students meeting the requirements for regular admission are eligible for an assistantship. Graduate assistants are an integral part of the Department’s faculty and staff and they work approximately 20 hours a week. Some may be given the opportunity to teach a course on their own after the completion of eighteen (18) hours of graduate course work and at least one semester serving as an assistant to one of the regular faculty. Additional graduate assistantships may be available through special grants administered by Department faculty. Students interested in graduate assistantships must fill out graduate assistantship request forms together with their program admission forms or shortly after admission is granted. Depending on availability, all assistantship applications are reviewed by a committee and selection made thereafter.
ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Satisfactory Academic Progress

- Students pursuing the MPH degree are allowed only one “C” grade (C or C+), which may be repeated. If a grade of C- is earned, the course must be repeated and the subsequent grade must be a B- or above. If a second “C” (C-, C, C+) is earned, the student is terminated from the program (this includes a repeated course). If two or more “Cs” (C-, C, C+) are earned in the first semester of the program, the student is terminated.

- If one grade of “D” or “F” is earned, the student is terminated.

- A 3.0 overall GPA is required to maintain graduate status. If the cumulative GPA drops below 3.0 the student is terminated from the program.

- Academic misconduct will result in a recommendation to the Office of Graduate Studies for termination from the program.

Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy

The following Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy was by the faculty of the Department of Public Health on November 5, 2014.

Integrity is of the highest importance in the academic community and at The University of Southern Mississippi. Faculty, staff and students are expected to conduct themselves with complete honesty and integrity at all times.

Policy

Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action.

The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and multiple submissions.

Cheating: the unauthorized giving, receiving, or use of material or information in exams, quizzes, assignments or other course work, or trying to do so with the attempt to influence a grade.

Plagiarism: the use of ideas, data, or specific passages or others that are unacknowledged or falsely acknowledge, with the purpose of influencing a grade. Any paraphrasing or quotation must be appropriately acknowledged.

Unauthorized collaboration: Collaboration not explicitly allowed by the instructor to obtain credit for examinations or course assignments.

Multiple submissions: presentation of a paper of other work for credit in two distinct courses without prior approval by both instructors.
Procedure

1. If dishonesty is witnessed, discovered or brought to the attention of an instructor:
   A. If an instructor witnesses, discovers or becomes aware of an event of student dishonesty, the instructor “may award failing grades either on the pertinent assignment or for the course; and, at their discretion, report the student to the Office of the Dean of Students for possible judicial proceedings under the University's Code of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty might involve cheating on examinations, plagiarism, or any violation of reasonable terms and conditions duly established on written course syllabi (USM Faculty Handbook, May 2007, p. 37).”
   B. If the instructor refers the case to the dean of students of the university, “the dean of students will then investigate any such allegation, and if the dean, in his/her discretion, finds significant basis for the allegation, then the dean will deliver to the student a written notification that the disciplinary proceedings are being initiated (USM Student Handbook, p. 20).”
   C. If the student is not satisfied and/or does not accept the decision of the instructor, the student may then appeal his/her case to the dean of students. If a disciplinary decision is appealed, no action will be taken except those measures necessary to ensure the safety of the university community and property and to promote an academic environment until the appellate process as described in the USM Student Handbook has been exhausted (adapted from USM Student Handbook, Disciplinary Procedures for Prohibited Conduct, Section D, p. 20).

2. If dishonesty is witnessed or discovered by another student:
   A. If a student witnesses or discovers an event of academic dishonesty that student should report that event either to the instructor of the course in which the event occurred or directly to the dean of students.
   B. Once the instructor or dean of students is made aware of the event of dishonesty, the procedures as described in section 1 above are to be followed.
   C. Students are referred to sections on “Academic Honesty,” “Prohibited Conduct,” and “Disciplinary Procedures for Prohibited Conduct,” in the Student Handbook for information regarding the process and penalties for violation of the provisions contained in this policy and procedure.
Information Sharing Protocol
The intent of sharing information is to eliminate repeated offenses by the same student within the department, to provide support for faculty/instructors, and to establish protocol for managing violations.

- Any Department of Public Health major or minor who commits any action that violates the University’s Honesty policy in a DPH prefix course will be reported to the respective coordinator of their program (Undergraduate student will be reported to Susan Dobson; traditional graduate students will be reported to Vickie Reed; executive graduate students will be reported to Ala Cibotarica.)
- Program Coordinators will maintain a list to include:
  - Student’s name and ID#
  - Instructor of record, the course and the semester that the violation occurred
  - Nature of the violation
  - Action taken
- Program Coordinators during monthly faculty meetings will report any student submitted to the list since the faculty last met.
- At the time of the first violation, the instructor of record should provide the student with education regarding their violation and may take appropriate action as outlined in the University Honesty policy (included below).
- At the time of the second violation, the program coordinator will notify the Academic Integrity Committee who in consultation with the instructor of record and the Chairman will discuss if further action may be taken on behalf of the department. Action taken by the department does not prevent the instructor of record from taking appropriate action as outlined in the University Honesty policy (included below).
- The instructor of record may request assistance from the Academic integrity Committee or the Chairman on the first offense depending on the severity of the student’s violation.
CURRICULUM

Overview
The MPH degree consists of forty-five (45) semester hours of course work including a nine-hour internship.

Core Curriculum
All MPH candidates are required to take the following core courses in order to gain an understanding of 1) the multidimensional factors affecting community health, 2) the organization, financing, delivery, and administration of health services, and 3) methods for monitoring, analyzing, and assessing community health needs:

- DPH 622 Epidemiology
- DPH 623 Biostatistics
- DPH 625 Health Administration (exception: HPA)
- DPH 655 Environmental Health
- DPH 656 Social and Behavioral Aspects of Health
- DPH 611 Internship 9 hours

Emphasis Areas
Students may choose one of the following emphasis areas within the MPH program:

- Epidemiology and Biostatistics (also available with dual degree in Anthropology)
- Health Education (also available with dual degree in Anthropology)
- Health Policy and Administration (also available with dual degree in Business Administration)
- Health Services Administration (Executive format)

For more information about this emphasis area, please contact the Executive MPH Program Director at (601) 266-5435.

Epidemiology and Biostatistics
The knowledge and skills of epidemiology and biostatistics are crucial for many careers in public health research including disease control and prevention, health care delivery, and health management. The epidemiology and biostatistics emphasis area provides epidemiologic knowledge about the distribution and determinants of disease and other health-related conditions in human populations, and develops the methodological and analytical skills for study design and analysis of data. Graduates are qualified for health service or research positions in local health departments, hospitals, nursing homes, academic institutions, industries, and government agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Courses for this emphasis area are the following:

- DPH 620 Chronic Disease Epidemiology
- DPH 680 Research Methods
- DPH 722 Infectious Disease Epidemiology
- DPH 723 Biostatistics II
- DPH 785 Data Management and Analysis in Public Health
- DPH 786 SAS
- DPH 793 Advanced Biostatistics Methods for Public Health
**Health Education**

Health education is an applied social science that focuses on preventing disease and promoting health for individuals, groups, and communities. Health educators are actively engaged in promoting healthy behaviors and lifestyles through education that empowers people for healthy living. Health education focuses on the forces that affect health-related behaviors and the role they play in the maintenance, promotion, and improvement of health. Majors are eligible to take a certifying examination for entry-level health educators, qualifying them as a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). Courses for this emphasis are the following:

- DPH 512  Health Education Methods (if applicable)
- DPH 602  Health Disparities in the United States
- DPH 606  Health Education among Rural Populations
- DPH 609  Community Health Education Planning
- DPH 647  Public Health and Marketing
- DPH 720  Community Organization for Health Education
- DPH 784  Qualitative Research Methods in Public Health

**Health Policy and Administration**

Health administrators are charged with coordinating a wide variety of activities crucial to the effective and efficient delivery of health services and programs. The health administrator plans, organizes, coordinates, and supervise the delivery of services within health care organizations, including hospitals, medical group practices, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, mental health clinics, insurance and pharmaceutical companies. The responsibilities of a health administrator take place in an environment influenced by many regulations and political forces. Consequently, a thorough understanding of the factors influencing health policy is crucial to effective health administration. Courses for this emphasis area are the following:

- DPH 626  Introduction to Health Systems
- DPH 627  Health Policy
- DPH 657  Health Care Accounting for Managers
- DPH 670  Health Law and Ethics
- DPH 716  Health Economics
- DPH 727  Health Care Strategic Planning
- DPH 737  Health Care Org Behavior and Human Resources
- DPH 747  Health Care Marketing
- DPH 757  Health Care Financial Management

**Department of Public Health Academic Partnerships**

The Department of Public Health has academic partnerships with the School of Business and the Department of Anthropology for students pursuing either an MPH/MBA or MPH/MA degrees simultaneously.
**Master of Public Health and the Master in Business Administration Degree Programs**

Students in the MPH Program with an emphasis area in Health Policy & Administration are eligible to apply for admission into the Master of Public Health Program and the Master in Business Administration Program simultaneously. Students must apply and meet the admission criteria of both the MPH and MBA programs in the same semester.

The MPH/MBA academic partnership was developed for those students interested in pursuing higher-level careers in health administration and business administration. Students must apply and meet the admission criteria of the MPH and MBA programs in the same semester.

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<tr>
<th>Pre-Program Requirements for MBA:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer Literacy</td>
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<td>MAT 102</td>
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<td>BA 301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Core Pre-requisite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requirements – for students who</td>
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<tr>
<td>do not have an undergraduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>degree in business:</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGT 300*</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACC 200* &amp; ACC 300*</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECO 201** &amp; ECO 202**</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total business core pre-requisite course work = 24 hours.

* These courses are offered online by the Southern Miss College of Business at least once a year.

** These courses offered online by the Mississippi Virtual Community College (www.msvcc.org).

**Master in Business administration Core Courses (78 hrs. total)**

- MBA 600  Organizational Behavior & Leadership
- MBA 605  Marketing Management
- MBA 610  Analytical Decision Making
- MBA 611  Managerial Accounting
- MBA 620  Global Economy
- MBA 640  Financial Management
- MBA 650  Global Business Systems
- MBA 660*  Strategic Management

Choose 9 hours of Advisor Approved Business Electives**

- DPH 611  Internship 6 hours***
- DPH 622  Epidemiology
- DPH 623  Biostatistics (pre-requisite DPH 440)
- DPH 626  Introduction to Health Systems
- DPH 627  Health Policy
- DPH 655  Environmental Health
- DPH 656  Social and Behavioral Aspects of Health
- DPH 657  Financial Aspects I
- DPH 670  Health Law and Ethics
- DPH 716  Health Economics
- DPH 727  Strategic Management
- DPH 737  Organizational Behavior and Human Resources Management
- DPH 747  Marketing Health Care Services
- DPH 757  Financial Aspects of Health II (pre-requisite DPH 657)

*MBA 660 is a capstone course that is subject to departmental approval, and is to be taken in the final semester of the MBA program. **MBA approved electives are classes offered by the College of Business. ***DPH 611 is a culminating experience and is taken in the final semester of the MPH program. Graduate students may take one three-hour course with internship.
MPH (Epidemiology/Biostatistics) & the Master in Anthropology Degree Programs

The Department of Public Health has an academic partnership with the Department of Anthropology for students pursuing both an MPH and an MA degree. Students in the MPH Program with an emphasis area in Epidemiology/Biostatistics are eligible to apply for admission into the MPH and the MA Programs simultaneously. Students must apply and meet the admission criteria of both the MPH and MA programs in the same semester.

This MPH/MA academic partnership was developed for those students interested in pursuing higher-level careers in epidemiology/biostatistics. The combination of disciplines prepares graduates for a variety of career opportunities in the public, voluntary, and private community health sectors. Training in social and behavioral studies, statistics, epidemiology, and data analysis from the Department of Public Health combined with training in linguistics, ethnology, and archaeology from the Department of Anthropology, afford an opportunity for the graduates to manage programs concerning health and disease as related to diverse populations with specific cultural backgrounds and associated needs.

The ANT courses (30 hrs.) cover all foundation, as well as highly specific, areas of the program. The DPH courses (45 hrs.) include all Master of Public Health degree core and epidemiology/biostatistics emphasis area requirements for the traditional student in the MPH program. Courses for this dual degree are the following:

- DPH 611 Internship 6 hours
- DPH 620 Communicable and Chronic Diseases
- DPH 622 Epidemiology
- DPH 623 Biostatistics
- DPH 625 Health Administration
- DPH 655 Environmental Health
- DPH 656 Social and Behavioral Aspects of Health
- DPH 680 Research Methods
- DPH 722 Infectious Disease Epidemiology
- DPH 723 Biostatistics II
- DPH 785 Data Analysis and Management
- DPH 786 SAS
- ANT 621 Seminar in Ethnology
- ANT 631 Seminar in Archaeology
- ANT 641 Seminar in Physical Anthropology
- ANT 698 Thesis 6 hours

Choose 3 courses from the following:
- ANT 516 Ethnographic Field Methods
- ANT 522 Ecological Anthropology
- ANT 524 Religion and Healing
- ANT 529 Topics in Cultural Anthropology
  (must be approved by chair)
- ANT 541 Human Variation
- ANT 542 Medical Anthropology
- ANT 545 Bioarchaeology
- ANT 692 Independent Study
- SOC 523 Sociology of Health

Choose 6 hours of approved electives
The Department of Public Health has academic partnerships with the Department of Anthropology for students pursuing both an MPH and an MA degree. Students in the MPH Program with an emphasis area in Health Education are eligible to apply for admission into the MPH and the MA Programs simultaneously. Students must apply and meet the admission criteria of both the MPH and MA programs in the same semester.

This MPH/MA academic partnership was developed for those students interested in pursuing higher-level careers in health education. The combination of disciplines will prepare graduates for a variety of career opportunities in the public, voluntary, and private community health sectors. Preparation in Community Planning, Health Disparities, Social and Behavioral Studies, Qualitative Research Methods for Public Health, and Health Education among Rural Populations from DPH combined with training in anthropological linguistics, ethnology, and archaeology from Anthropology, will afford an opportunity for the graduates to work in Community Health Education settings involving diverse populations with specific cultural backgrounds and associated needs.

The program exceeds the hours required by the graduate school. The Anthropology hours (30) cover all foundation, as well as highly specific, areas of the program. The DPH hours (45) include all MPH core and Health Education emphasis area requirements for the traditional student in the MPH program. Courses for this dual degree are the following:

- **DPH 602** Disparities in the United States
- **DPH 606** Health Education among Rural Populations
- **DPH 609** Community Health Education Planning
- **DPH 611** Internship 6-9 hours
- **DPH 622** Epidemiology
- **DPH 623** Biostatistics
- **DPH 625** Health Administration
- **DPH 647** Public Health Marketing
- **DPH 655** Environmental Health
- **DPH 656** Social and Behavioral Aspects of Health
- **DPH 720** Community Organization for Health Education
- **DPH 784** Qualitative Research Methods for Public Health
- **ANT 621** Seminar in Ethnology
- **ANT 631** Seminar in Archaeology
- **ANT 641** Seminar in Physical Anthropology
- **ANT 692** Independent Study
- **ANT 698** Thesis (6 hours)

Choose 3 courses of the following:
- **ANT 516** Ethnographic Field Methods
- **ANT 522** Ecological Anthropology
- **ANT 524** Religion and Healing
- **ANT 529** Topics in Cultural Anthropology (must be approved by chair)
- **ANT 541** Human Variation
- **ANT 542** Medical Anthropology
- **ANT 545** Bioarchaeology
- **ANT 692** Special Problems
- **SOC 523** Sociology of Health

Choose 6 hours of approved electives
SPECIAL PROBLEMS
Permission of faculty advisor required*

Special problems courses are designed to provide students with an opportunity to conduct an in-depth project in an area identified with the assistance of a faculty member and approved by the student’s academic advisor and the DPH Chair.

After the initial consultation with the faculty advisor, the student should develop a proposal for the independent study project and submit it to the faculty advisor on DPH form, Request to Enroll in Special Problems. After revisions are made, the proposal is submitted to a student’s academic advisor and the DPH Chair for final approval. As noted on the form, the proposal should include project goals and objectives, project overview, time line, and relationship of the project to the student’s professional development.

Examples of successful special problems include:

1. Projects completed in conjunction with the internship experience. Past projects have included an evaluation of the HIV/AIDS component of a state education agency’s comprehensive school health education curriculum, major revision of a workplace employee assistance program (EAP) policy, and the development of a preschool drug prevention program.
2. Implementation and evaluation of a student designed intervention. Projects or programs developed by the student may be implemented in an approved setting, evaluated, and a report written to document the project and its impact.
3. Significant involvement in ongoing faculty research. Faculty research may provide opportunities for meaningful student involvement. Students should consult with faculty in their emphasis area if they have an interest in assisting with research.

* This process should be completed in the semester prior to the semester in which the student proposes to enroll in Special Problems. Students may not register for Special Problems without clearance from the Department of Public Health.

INTERNSHIP

MPH candidates must complete 400 hours of fieldwork. Fieldwork requires you to use knowledge and skills from the academic setting in an off-campus public health facility. The expertise students bring to the fieldwork facility should make a meaningful contribution to the facility, and the experience gained from hands-on work contributes to the student’s professional development.

Your fieldwork course DPH 611 is a culminating experience and should be taken during the last semester of your program. You must be in good academic standing to be approved for fieldwork. Graduate students may take one three-hour course with fieldwork.
Talk with your advisor and the fieldwork director about potential sites and experiences that will develop your professional competency and help fulfill your career objective. Begin this dialogue your first semester. It is well worth your time to visit a few sites to meet with potential preceptors and discuss the role you would play in the organization. Have a current resume with you, and consider the meeting a two-way interview. The fit should be good for both you and the facility.

**YOU MAY NOT BEGIN FIELDWORK UNTIL ALL REQUIRED PAPERWORK IS SUBMITTED AND APPROVED.**

For more information, please refer to the *MPH Fieldwork Program Handbook* located on the DPH website.

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**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

**Purpose**

Comprehensive examinations require students to:

- Demonstrate comprehension of public health, their emphasis area, and the relationship of their chosen emphasis area to public health;
- Frame issues within relevant theoretical frameworks;
- Understand appropriate literature
- Synthesize and apply knowledge learned during the course of study.

Additionally, students are required to provide responses that are well organized, cogent, and logical.

**Eligibility and Time Frame**

Comprehensive examinations will be held at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters and must be taken on the Hattiesburg campus. Announcement of comprehensive examination dates will be made at the beginning of fall and spring semesters. Exams are tentatively scheduled the week prior to the University final exam schedule. Students will be deemed eligible to take comprehensive examinations during their final semester of study and are required to complete the exams within one year (12 months) of establishing eligibility. Students should complete and submit the *MPH Comprehensive Examination Request* form to the Graduate Coordinator early in the semester of their requested examination date.

**Preparation**

Students should be prepared to answer questions from all courses taken during the MPH program. To aid students in preparation an orientation session is scheduled early each semester where students may ask questions and receive further guidance in their preparation.
Examination Format
Closed book discussion questions are given over a two day period according to the following schedule: (This Schedule can vary from semester to semester)

Day One
8:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Environmental Health & Health Administration
1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Emphasis

Day Two
8:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Epidemiology & Biostatistics
1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Social and Behavioral Aspects of Health

Comprehensive Examination Questions
The Graduate Coordinator will assemble faculty representative(s) from each core course and emphasis area to compose examinations. Comprehensive exam questions are developed based on public health core and emphasis area competencies. All students will answer the same set of core questions.

Grading of Examinations
Each exam is labeled with a randomly assigned code and distributed to the graders the day following the examination. Graders will have 3-5 days to arrive at a final grade. Exams are graded as pass with distinction, pass, low pass/oral examination indicated or fail.

Oral Examination
In situations where the quality of answers is marginal, graders may choose, “low pass, oral examination indicated.” Students will be notified of grade and given an opportunity to review substandard answers. Students will also be notified of their assigned appointment for the oral examination. Those present for the oral examination will include, but are not limited to, the faculty representative in the area of the question and the graduate coordinator. At the end of the oral examination, the student’s responses are discussed, and the student is immediately notified of the result. Should a student fail the oral examination, rewrites will be given during the next regularly scheduled comprehensive examination. The student must reapply to take the examination. The student must also process the necessary deferment with Graduate School.

Failure
Students who fail one comprehensive examination area are given the opportunity to rewrite questions in the area of failure during the next regularly scheduled comprehensive examinations. If rewritten answers are marginal, oral examinations may be scheduled. If the student fails the rewrite, remedial course work may be recommended by the faculty.

Students who fail two or more areas of their comprehensive examination will write on the sections they fail and any other sections graded as “low pass” during the next administration of comprehensive exam. Failure of the majority of the comprehensive examination, in the absence of compelling extenuating circumstances, will result in a recommendation of termination from the degree program to the Dean of the Graduate School.
Remedial Coursework
Should the student fail an initial rewrite of a comprehensive examination area(s), three hours of coursework designated by the graduate faculty must be completed in any deficiency area. A grade of B or better must be earned in order to be eligible to take the examination a third time. If the student fails to make a grade of B or better in the prescribed course OR fails the comprehensive examination after completing the course, termination of the student from the degree program is recommended to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Student Access to Examinations
Completed examinations are retained in the Department of Public Health. Students are encouraged to review the examination report form and take notes about any written comments from the graders. Students are not allowed to make or keep copies of the actual test.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMPETENCIES
Competencies define what a successful student in the MPH program at The University of Southern Mississippi should know and be able to do upon completion of their individual graduate programs.

Public Health Core Competencies
Master of Public Health Program at the University of Southern Mississippi

All MPH students, traditional and executive, complete a common set of core public health coursework. The Health Policy and Administration students do not complete the core Health Administration course but do meet the identified competencies for that core area through emphasis area course work. Core competencies are reinforced through the practice experiences required for all MPH students.

Master of Public Health Core Competencies:
Epidemiology (Course Title - DPH 622)
1. Apply appropriate descriptive, observational, and experimental epidemiological methods to identify determinants of disease and in various populations while recognizing the strengths and limitations of those methods.
2. Examine public health problems in terms of magnitude, person, place, and time and calculate basic epidemiologic measures.

Environmental Health (Course Title - DPH 655)
1. Examine the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to an individual that impact public health.
2. Propose methods of preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability related to the interactions between individuals and their environment.
Biostatistics (Course Title - DPH 623)

1. Apply basic statistical concepts for exploring, describing, reorganizing, and analyzing public health data to obtain insight about populations from which data was drawn.

2. Apply common statistical methods for estimation and inference appropriately according to underlying assumptions and study design principles.

Social and Behavioral (Course Title - DPH 656)

1. Interpret social and behavioral concepts and theories and their applicability to contemporary public health problems with the aim of reducing the disease burden on society, enhancing health prevention behaviors and promoting health.

2. Examine evidence-based approaches in the development, implementation, and evaluation of social and behavioral interventions, studies, and programs.

Health Administration (Course Title - DPH 625 for non-Health Policy and Administration emphasis area students; emphasis-area-specific coursework for Health Policy and Administration emphasis area students)

1. Analyze the main components and issues of the organization, financing, and delivery of health services and public health systems in the U.S.

2. Apply essential management principles of planning, organizing, staffing, influencing, and controlling to public health programs, services, and organizations.
## MPH Epidemiology & Biostatistics Emphasis Area Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epidemiology &amp; Biostatistics Competencies</th>
<th>DPH 620</th>
<th>DPH 680</th>
<th>DPH 722</th>
<th>DPH 723</th>
<th>DPH 785</th>
<th>DPH 786</th>
<th>DPH 793</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the strengths and limitations of epidemiologic study designs and be able to communicate epidemiologic information to lay and professional audiences.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examine determinants and prevention strategies for communicable and chronic diseases, both common and newly emerging, that impact the health status of various populations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a research proposal that includes proposing a study question and hypothesis, investigating and summarizing the current literature relating to the study topic, selecting a study design and developing a research methodology.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply basic ethical and legal principles pertaining to the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of epidemiologic data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct an outbreak investigation utilizing hypothetical data from a mock scenario.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply advanced techniques such as analysis of variance (ANOVA), regression, chi-square test, and other parametric and non-parametric tests for public health problem solving.</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilize statistical software (such as SPSS, SAS) for coding, cleaning, recoding, and analyzing public health data to prepare reports.</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare appropriate analytic approaches for public health research questions, use corresponding statistical method to test and draw conclusions based on the results.</td>
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## MPH Health Education Emphasis Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Education Competencies</th>
<th>DPH 602</th>
<th>DPH 606</th>
<th>DPH 609</th>
<th>DPH 647</th>
<th>DPH 720</th>
<th>DPH 784</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize individual, organizatinal, and community concerns, assets, resources, and deficits for public health education programs, interventions, and policy change.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop, implement, and evaluate public health programs, interventions, studies, and policies.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct public health practices including needs and community assessments and/or evaluation of public health programs.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze the role of individual, social, and community influences in the challenge and resolution of public health problems through interventions or policy change.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the cultural, social, and behavioral determinants of health and health disparities.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design culturally appropriate approaches to contemporary public health problems.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize quantitative and qualitative research methods to inform development of public health education programs, interventions, and policy change.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## MPH Health Policy & Administration Emphasis Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Policy &amp; Administration Competencies</th>
<th>DPH 626</th>
<th>DPH 627</th>
<th>DPH 657</th>
<th>DPH 670</th>
<th>DPH 716</th>
<th>DPH 727</th>
<th>DPH 737</th>
<th>DPH 747</th>
<th>DPH 757</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use legal and ethical principles in public health decision making.</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply quality and performance improvement concepts to address organization performance issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze the impact of political, social, and economic policies on public health programs, services and organizations.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply principles of strategic planning and marketing to public health programs, services and organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply and utilize management and leadership concepts and skills in public health programs, services and organizations.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate health policy and management issues using appropriate channels and technologies.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze the current issues of planning, resource allocation and financing and their effects on public health programs, services, and organizations.</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze current public health systems issues using U.S. and international historical models of health care delivery.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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GRIEVANCE POLICIES

University Grievance Policy
The right of each student to resolve grievances with the university is affirmed, and specific appeal procedures are hereby established to ensure timely and appropriate consideration of each grievance. Student grievances generally originate at the department level, and the resolution of the grievance is sought at the department level. The exceptions to this procedure are the grade review procedure, appeals originating in the Student Judicial Council and the Office of the Dean of Students, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act as amended of 1974.

Instructions regarding the grievance procedure will be available to students at the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Student Government Association office and the Graduate School. A student grievance originating in any of the departmental or administrative units is handled by the department chair or director responsible for the unit in which the grievance originates. The grievance should be made known in writing within 15 days of the occurrence. The decision by the department chair or director should normally be made by the filing of the grievance (Step 1).

The appeal by a student of the decision of the department chair or director must be made in writing within five working days to either the dean exercising jurisdiction over that academic department or to the administrative official having jurisdiction over the nonacademic department involved. This official will render a decision on the grievance in writing (Step 2).

Should the student desire to make further appeal, the written appeal should be directed to the Office of the Provost (for academic issues), the Graduate School (if student is a graduate student for academic issues) or to the appropriate vice president exercising jurisdiction over the matter. The associate provost or vice president, or dean of Graduate School, shall confer with the student, and if the grievance is not resolved, the associate provost or vice president, or dean of Graduate School, shall refer the matter to a standing committee or appoint a committee of three to five persons, including student representation, to hold an official hearing on the matter. The student may either represent himself or herself or request the assistance of another student. The hearing shall be held within 10 days of receipt of the grievance by the associate provost or vice president, or dean of Graduate School (Step 3).

Upon completion of the hearing, the committee will inform the associate provost or the vice president, or dean of Graduate School, of the decision, and the associate provost or the vice president will inform the student in writing. The associate provost or the vice president may utilize the decision of the committee or amend the decision as deemed appropriate (Step 4).

If the student is not satisfied with the decision indicated in step 4, he or she may appeal to the president of the university in writing. The president shall render a final decision in the case normally within 10 days of the written receipt of the appeal (Step 5).
For additional information regarding FERPA and the right to amend possible inaccuracies of student records, contact the Office of the Registrar.

**Student Grievance Process**
Step 1: Department chair or director of nonacademic area
Step 2: Dean or administrative official
Step 3: There are varying processes for undergraduate and graduate students
   A. Undergraduate students - vice president calls a hearing
   B. Graduate students - Graduate School calls a hearing
Step 4: Vice president makes decision based on hearing

**Appeal Procedures**

*Informal Resolution of a Student Grievance*
The first step in dealing with most complaints is generally to discuss the issue with the university faculty or staff individual who is most involved with the issue. Except for the exceptions noted above, if that discussion is not satisfactory, a student should try to discuss the matter with that person’s immediate supervisor (e.g., chair of an academic department, the director of a university service office, etc.).

*Formal Resolution of a Student Grievance*
In those instances where an informal process is not applicable or where the result of that process is unsatisfactory, then the student needs to follow the procedures, which require the submission of a written complaint:

- Grade appeal
- Admissions appeal
- Tuition refund appeal
- Financial aid suspension appeal
- Academic status appeal
- Scholarship cancellation appeal
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act as amended of 1974
- Parking ticket or traffic citation appeal
- Residence Life housing contract appeal
- Student Code of Conduct violation appeal
- Discrimination or harassment complaints (except for harassment or discrimination related to sexual misconduct which use the procedures set forth in [www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-pres-aa-001](http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-pres-aa-001) and [www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-pres-aa-002](http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-pres-aa-002). See also [https://www.usm.edu/sexual-misconduct](https://www.usm.edu/sexual-misconduct).
- Violations of University Policies Reporting Hotline
- Other complaints – See University Grievance Policy.
Graduate Appeals & Grievance Processes

The right of each student to appeal decisions of the graduate academic units is affirmed and specific appeal procedures are hereby established to ensure timely and appropriate consideration of each appeal to the Graduate Appeals Committee.

Specifically, the Graduate Appeals Committee reviews decisions on the following issues: admission decisions, revocation of admission, comprehensive exams, thesis and dissertation prospectus, dismissal from a program, and any other issues the Dean of the Graduate School deems appropriate. This committee does not review grade appeals or disciplinary actions taken by the Dean of Students. The grade appeals process is listed in this Bulletin.

The Appeals/Grievance Process has five steps:*

- **Step 1: Department or School Level.** The chair or director receives a written signed letter from the student within ten (10) working days that states what action the student is appealing, reviews the pertinent materials, meets with the student and faculty if appropriate, and resolution of the appeal is sought at the department or school level.

- **Step 2: Dean of the College Level.** An appeal of the department or school decision must be made in writing within ten (10) working days to the dean of the college that has jurisdiction over the department or school. The dean will review the appeal and render a decision on the appeal in writing.

- **Step 3: Dean of the Graduate School Level.** Should the student desire to make further appeal, the written appeal should be sent within five working days to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean will confer with the student and refer the matter to the Graduate Appeals Committee which will hold an official hearing on the appeal. The hearing will be held within ten (10) working days of receipt of the written appeal letter as long as the university is in session or within ten (10) working days of the university beginning a session. The student may attend the hearing and a representative of the department or school may also attend the hearing or respond to the appeal in writing. The Dean of the Graduate School will send the student a letter indicating the Committee’s decision.

- **Step 4: Provost Level.** Should the student desire to make further appeal, the written appeal should be sent within ten (10) working days to the Provost. The Provost will review all appeal materials and render a decision in the appeal normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.

- **Step 5: President Level.** If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Provost, he or she may appeal to the President of the University in writing. The President will render a final decision in the appeal normally within ten (10) days of receipt of the appeal.

* These steps are also listed in Student Survival Guide, Page 32 (56-page PDF)

**If the appeal concerns the chair, director, or college dean, the student appeal to the next level.