UAB SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

UAB HEERSINK SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Master of Science Global Health

Graduate Student Handbook

Academic Year 2023 - 2024

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1 Introduction

1.1 General Information & Points of Contact

The purpose of this document is to outline the policies, procedures, and milestones for the Master of Science in Global Health degree (MS in Global Health). This document should be used by students in the Master of Science in Global Health Graduate Program for guidance in their graduate studies, and by advisors in advising students on the various required milestones in each of the degree programs.

This Handbook is designed to provide you with information about the Master of Science Global Health program. Students should become familiar with the information in the Handbook but should feel free to consult with the program staff if they have any questions or concerns. Although we will make our best efforts to abide by this Handbook, we reserve the right to interpret and apply its procedures and policies, and to deviate from these guidelines, as appropriate in particular circumstances and in accordance with the mission and goals of the program and UAB. We also reserve the right to address issues not covered in this Handbook and to update the policy without advance notice. Please refer to our website for the most up-to-date version:
https://www.uab.edu/soph/home/graduate/programs/ms-global-health.

This handbook does not constitute a contract between the student and UAB.

The field of global health is a dynamic and exciting field of research and practice. No other university in the state of Alabama currently offers a Masters in Global Health or a similar program. A study conducted by the Workforce Subcommittee with the Consortium for Universities for Global Health (CUGH) and in collaboration with USAID, showed/reported that graduates of Global Health and MPH programs with a concentration in global health are employed in schools of public health and schools of medicine, not for profit/non-governmental organizations, and other health related educational institutions with a job title focused on "project management."

The MS Global Health is an interdisciplinary, joint degree program in the UAB School of Public Health and the Heersink School of Medicine and involves faculty from across campus and the hospital. Global Health graduate students take a set of core courses with the remainder of their coursework selected for relevance to their research area and career goals. Each graduate student's individual degree plan is developed collaboratively by the student and the GH graduate program staff.

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1.2 Important & Helpful Sources of Information

This handbook supplements the UAB Graduate Catalog and the UAB Graduate School website, which presents policies for all graduate students at UAB. All graduate students in the MS in Global Health are expected to abide by the Graduate School handbook policies.

UAB Graduate Catalog
http://www.uab.edu/graduate/graduate-catalog
For the academic year 23-24, courses for the MSGH program can be found here:
https://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/addenda/.

UAB Graduate School Academic Policies & Progress:
https://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students

Other important sources of information:
• Global Health Graduate Program website
https://www.uab.edu/soph/home/graduate/programs/ms-global-health

• BlazerNET
https://www.uab.edu/blazernet

• Graduate School Forms
https://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students/academic-policies-progress/forms

• UAB Thesis and Dissertation website
http://www.uab.edu/graduate/theses-and-dissertations-at-uab

• UAB Graduate Faculty Listing
https://www.uab.edu/graduate/faculty-staff/graduate-faculty/graduate-faculty-listing

• UAB Student Health Services
http://www.uab.edu/studenthealth/

• UAB Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training
https://www.uab.edu/research/home/uab-rcr-training

• UAB Institutional Review Board (IRB)
https://www.uab.edu/research/home/irb

• UAB Graduate Academic Ethics and Misconduct Policy
http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/academicprogress/#academicethicsandmisconducttext

2 Master of Science in Global Health (MSGH) Program

The Master of Science in Global Health defines global health as an area for collaborative, transnational research and practice that places a priority on improving health and achieving health equity for all people worldwide (i.e., health for all). The program at UAB places a priority on exploring health equity. Each required (core) course in this program will explicitly address key elements of health equity.

The program has two different tracks: the thesis track and the scholarly project track. The thesis track will help direct graduates towards the post-secondary training in more scholarly and academic settings, including the position as medical or health scientists. The scholarly project track is intended to build and strengthen skills in roles such as program management positions and intervention/translation science. Those skills are particularly aligned with managers of medical and health services, health education specialists, and community health worker roles.

The MSGH engages a wide international network of colleagues, students, and international health organizations through:

- **Sparkman Center for Global Health (SCGH)** – (https://www.uab.edu/sparkmancenter/)
- **Mary Heersink Institute for Global Health (MIGH)** - (https://www.uab.edu/medicine/globalhealth/)
- **Global Health Consortia** - (https://globalhealth.mcmaster.ca/partnerships/global-health-consortium/)

UAB is well-positioned to offer this innovative degree with more than 40 years of global health engagement experience and cross-disciplinary partnerships in over forty countries. Through the Sparkman Center's population health perspective and with clinical expertise from the MHIGH, students who successfully complete this program will gain a more holistic grasp of the complex health issues that impact the world.

Therefore, the program is not just designed to train students how to work in the professional setting, but to also introduce and connect graduates with non-profits working in global health, including other schools of public health and medicine here in the US and abroad. Networking through the design of this program will allow students the opportunity to develop and foster a professional network in areas that fit their career goals.

2.1 MSGH Program Learning Outcomes and Goals
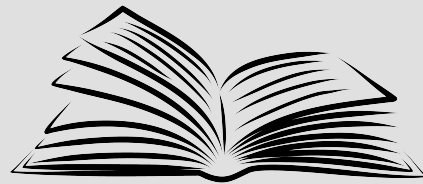
The primary program goals for the MSGH are:

a. Describe the major causes of morbidity and mortality around the world, and how the risk of disease varies by different regions (e.g., high-income/ low-income settings, high-resource/low-resource settings).

b. Describe major global health efforts, including program and policy efforts, to reduce the burden of the major causes of morbidity and mortality as well as disparities in global health (such as Sustainable Development Goals and Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria).

c. Describe how global trends in healthcare practice contribute to the quality and availability of health and healthcare locally and internationally.

d. Exhibit effective team-building skills and interprofessional values that demonstrate a respect for, and awareness of, the unique cultures, values, roles/responsibilities, and expertise represented by other professionals and organizations that work in global health, particularly within the local health context.

e. Understand the cultural context, including the major psychological, social, economic, and political determinants of health and their impacts on the access to and quality of health services, water and sanitation and climate-related health concerns; and exhibit intercultural competence and communication when examining cross-cultural issues in a variety of global health foci.

f. Collaborate and strengthen innovative capacities with host or partner organizations to assess the organizations' operational capacity and to co-create innovative strategies to strengthen community capabilities and continue to reduce health disparities and improve community health and primary healthcare.

g. Design and evaluate initiatives to address priority global health problems and to advocate for their translation into policy if successful.

2.2 Program Elective and Recommended Academic Focus or Specialty

Our program offers a series of electives that can help students identify a specialty in their research and career interest. Please refer to the UAB catalog for course descriptions and details regarding academic degree plans as well as course descriptions. The students choose elective courses to fulfill the degree requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that the elective chosen to take is an approved elective declared by the program. See the Appendix for a list of approved electives in the program. If you are interested in taking an elective not on the list, discuss this option with your academic and program advisors.

Electives provide students with the opportunities to build out their expertise on a topic and specialize their academic interests. Below are program strengths with recommended coursework as electives; and students can collaborate with their academic advisors and faculty mentors to tailor a program more specific to their interests.

Specialty/ Academic Focus	Description	Recommended Coursework
Global Health Epidemiology	A focus on the technical skills, as well as international context and values of collaborative practice, that will allow students to work as epidemiologists in any setting, domestic or global.	EPI 610; GHS 601; GHM 604
Global Health Medicine	A focus on the unique constraints of the provision of high-quality medical care in resource limited settings. Attention will be given to innovative adaptions of care models and multilateral best practice examples.	GHM 680; GHS 601; GHM 604
Global Infectious Disease	A focus on new and re-emerging diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and viral hepatitis, and comorbidities that complicate clinical outcomes in patients with these infections. Special focus in Sub-Saharan Africa and tropical medicine in Latin America.	GHS 601; GHS 604; EPI 682
Maternal Child Health	A focus on the health of women and children as vital to creating a healthy world. Maternal health is the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period. Special focus in Sub-Saharan Africa.	GHS 606; GHS 601; GHS 603
Refugee and Global Migration Studies	A focus on understanding of the complex nature of global refugee movements and the diverse local, national, and international responses to forced displacement. Students may go on to work in non-governmental organizations, international organizations, governmental agencies, and research institutes as policy analysts, researchers, educators, or advocates.	GHS 603; GHS 649

The MSGH has two curriculum pathways: Plan I (thesis track) and Plan II (scholarly track) and is a part of a larger Global Health Educational Consortia. Read below to learn more about these critical components of the program.

2.3 Global Health Consortia

A key component of this program is participation in the Global Health Education Consortium (https://globalhealth.mcmaster.ca/partnerships/global-health-consortium/). UAB has joined seven other diverse academic institutions to collaborate to provide a best practice model for international higher education. This consortium was formed in 2010 and exists to leverage shared resources and knowledge. UAB MSGH students will learn from a global classroom as they enroll in the Foundations of Global Health I and II (GHM 601 & 602) courses. These two courses will be administered through the Canvas of Maastricht University in the Netherlands and will feature a variety of faculty from the universities participating in the consortium. Students will work in small groups that will be facilitated with the help of experienced global health tutors. To best facilitate participation in these global courses, UAB MSGH students will still retain a defined UAB-based faculty member serving in the course director role.

Additionally, each spring the Global Health Consortium holds an annual learning symposium. Historically, this symposium has taken place in Manipal, India. This optional opportunity for the UAB MSGH students will provide a forum for professional networking, immersive education, and research/scholarly work dissemination.

2.4 Requirements for the MSGH Plan I (thesis track)

A master's thesis for the MSGH is defined as original research written under the direction of a faculty advisor and committee. The purpose of a master's thesis is to showcase a student's academic knowledge, professional capabilities, and original investigation into a global health problem or issue. Students are expected to complete all their own work on this project, including the data analysis. A thesis is usually between 60-100 pages long (double spaced) and demonstrates the student's ability to analyze data, think critically, and present findings in a professional manner. This is not a collaboration with faculty. This document is original to the student's effort and advised alongside by faculty.

Early in the program, typically by the end of the first semester, students will need to identify a faculty advisor for their thesis. If a student is struggling to identify a thesis advisor, they will need to contact the Co-Directors to discuss next steps. The thesis advisor will begin to help shape and frame a research question that can be answered using either primary data collection (i.e., field-based research) or secondary data collection (i.e., existing data sets, such as the Demographic and Health Surveys Database, https://dhsprogram.com/data/, or existing data with a current faculty advisor, or existing literature for a systematic literature review). The general steps are:

- Student identifies a Faculty Advisor affiliated with the MSGH program.
- With the Faculty Advisor, student identifies up to two more committee members affiliated with the MSGH program.
- Student works on their proposal and schedules a defense for candidacy.
- After advancing to candidacy, student enrolls into 6 credit hours towards their thesis research and works on their data collection and analysis then reports to the committee for review.
- All students will enroll in IDGH 690 to provide dedicated time to write the final thesis document. Once a thesis document is drafted and appropriate feedback has been obtained from all thesis committee advisors, the student may schedule their defense and apply for graduation.

The thesis must match the format required for publication with the UAB Graduate School. For information about the program requirements and deadlines, please go to https://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students/theses-dissertations/your-thesis-and-dissertation.

2.5 Requirements for the MSGH Plan II (scholarly track)

The scholarly track is defined as a research document driven by a single hypothesis and supported with either primary or secondary data. The scholarly document may take the form of any acceptable forms of research publications such as: research symposium poster, peer-reviewed article or research note manuscript, program evaluation report, white paper, proposed intervention, literature review, or a policy brief. Each format will have varying requirements in terms of length and audience; however, the core fundamental requirements are as follows:

- Strong thesis/ hypothesis
- Mastery of theories and concepts in the field
- Mastery of methods of inquiry
- Quality of writing and presentation of data
- Originality for potential contribution to the field of global health

Once the student has completed GHM 601 and GHS 600, they are eligible to take the IDGH 687 Scholarly Prep course. This course is designed to guide a student through the development of a research proposal for their scholarly project. This includes identifying a faculty advisor for the project and completing IRB training. If a student is unable to identify a faculty advisor for their research, their default advisors will be the co-directors of the MSGH program.

After the student completes the IDGH 687 course, they will enroll in IDGH 688 which provides dedicated time for completing the research analysis for the project. Once the research hours are complete, the student will enroll in IDGH 690 which will provide dedicated time to write up the final project. With advisement of their faculty member, the student may pursue additional steps to publish the document; however, this is not a requirement of the scholarly track program.

All work must be completed by the student and reflect their ability to independently create a research question and hypothesis that can be answered with scientific evidence and data.

3 Additional Information

3.1 Registration

Registration is completed using Blazernet. Students should follow the registration guidelines regarding registration. For assistance with course registration, please use the following link below and/or contact the program manager.

- https://www.uab.edu/students/academics/register-for-classes

3.2 Funding Options

The MSGH program is self-funded, and it is the student's responsibility to pay all tuition and fees related to application, enrollment, and tuition. There are no scholarship opportunities within the MSGH program at this time for both in-state and out of state students.

3.3 Field-based Practice and Research Opportunities

There are a number of providers for field-based practice research opportunities. You may want to consider these for the MSGH research project or thesis, or you may want to consider these post-graduation for additional experience and to build your resume.

List of Recommended Providers:

- **Child Family Health International (CFHI):** https://www.cfhi.org/
- **Interamerican Center for Global Health (CISG):** http://www.cisgcr.org/
- **Unite for Sight:** https://uniteforsight.org/volunteer
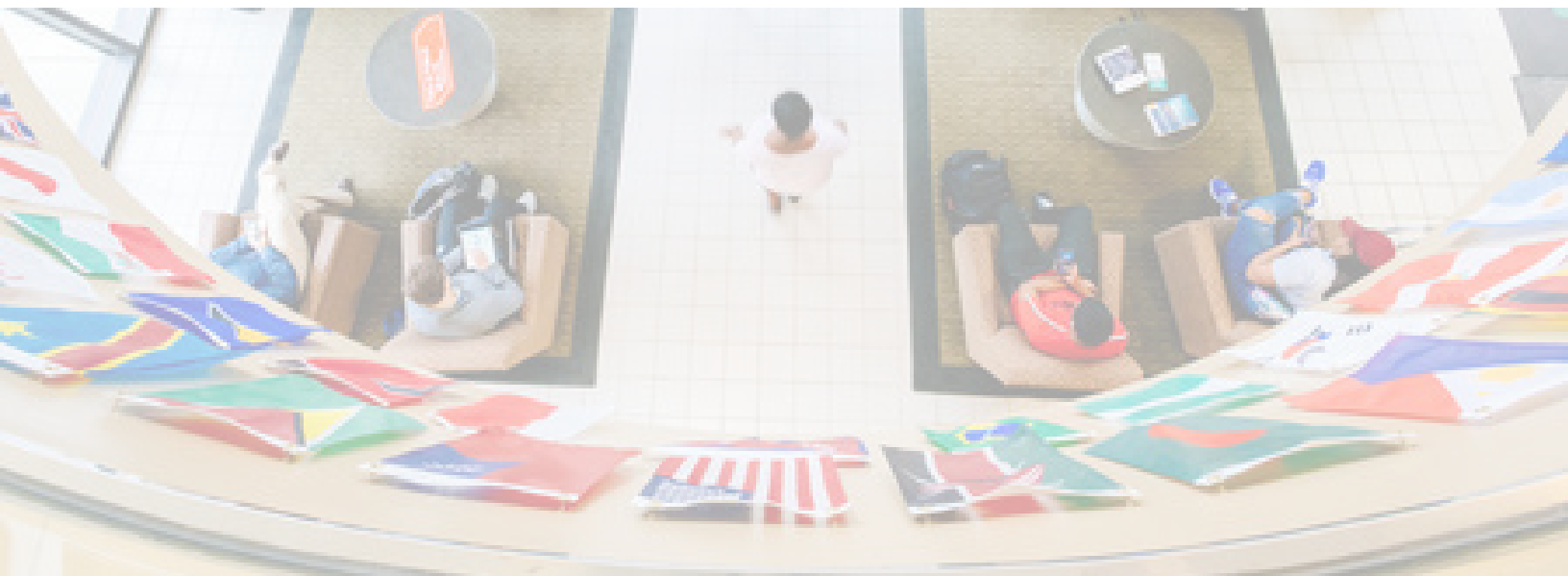
APPENDIX

Appendix A – List of Approved Electives

Appendix B - Curriculum Planning Sheet Thesis Track (Plan I)

Appendix C – Curriculum Planning Sheet Scholarly Project Track (Plan II)

Appendix A – List of Approved Electives

List of Electives offered in the Academic Year 2023-2024

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Delivery	Semester Offered
GHS 601	Global Health Partnerships & Development	3	Online	Spring 2024
GHS 603	Immigrant, Migrant, Refugee Health	3	Online	Fall 2023
GHS 604	Infectious Diseases of Global Health Significance	3	Online	Fall 2023
GHS 606	Critical Issues in Global Maternal and Child Health	3	Online	Spring 2024
GHS 607	Global Health and Gender	3	Online	Summer 2024
GHS 645	Comparative Health Systems and Policy	3	In-person and Online	Spring 2024
GHS 649	Interprofessional Global Health Service Learning	3	Hybrid Online	Spring 2024
GHM 680	Special Topics in Global Health Medicine	3-6	Online	Spring 2024

Alternate Methods Course (methods courses can also serve as an elective)

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Delivery	Semester Offered
HCO 628	Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research in Public Health	3	Online	Fall 2023
EPI 610	Principles of Epidemiologic Research	3	Online, In-Person	Fall 2023
BST 621	Statistical Methods I	3	In-Person	Fall 2023
BST 626	Data Management and Reporting with SAS	3	In-Person	Fall 2023
BST 611	Intermediate Statistical Analysis I	3	Online, In-Person	Fall 2023, Spring 2024
HCO 609	Public Health Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation	3	Online, In-Person	Spring 2024
HCO 631	Public Health Demography	3	In-Person	Spring 2024

Appendix B – Curriculum Sheet Thesis Track (Plan I)

Curriculum Planning Sheet
MS Global Health **Thesis Track**

Name:		Banner ID:	
Start Date:		Graduation Date:	

All students in an MSPH, MS, DrPH, or PhD program are required to complete PUH 600: Overview of Public Health. The course must be completed in a single semester; students must complete the course by the end of their first year in the program. Students with prior public health education (BS in Public Health or MPH) or extensive public health experience (5+ years in public health practice) may be waived from this requirement by permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, but this is rare.

Course Name	Term Available*			Credit Hours	Term & Year Complete	Grade
	Fall	Spr	Sum			
Program Requirements: 20 hours						
GHM 601: Foundations of Global Health I	O			3		
GHM 602: Foundations of Global Health II		O		3		
GHS 600: Fundamentals of Global Health	O			3		
PUH 600: Overview of Public Health	O	O	O	3		
IDGH 620: Global Health Ethics			O	3		
IDGH 690: Writing for Global Health	O	O	O	5		
Required Global Health Methods Course: Minimum 3 credit hours. (See Student Handbook for alternative methods courses.)						
GHM 604: Global Health Research Methods		O		3		
Alternate Methods Course	CO	CO	CO	3		
Global Health Electives: Minimum 9 credit hours of regular courses of 600 or higher-level. (See Student Handbook for suggested GHS and GHM electives or alternative methods course.)						
Elective 1:	CO	CO	CO	3		
Elective 2:	CO	CO	CO	3		
Elective 3:	CO	CO	CO	3		
Approved Project Proposal						
Date:			Primary Advisor:			
Master's Directed Research: Minimum of 6 credit hours.						
IDGH 699: Masters Directed Research	CO	CO	CO	3		
IDGH 699: Masters Directed Research	CO	CO	CO	3		
Defense of Master's Project						
Date of Master's Project:						
Minimum Credit Hours Earned for Degree				38		
C = Campus; O = Online; CO = Either Option Available *Please note that course availability is subject to change						

Appendix C – Curriculum Sheet Scholarly Track (Plan II)

Curriculum Planning Sheet						
MS Global Health **Scholarly Project Track**						
Name:			**Banner ID:**			
Start Date:			**Graduation Date:**			
All students in an MSPH, MS, DrPH, or PhD program are required to complete PUH 600: Overview of Public Health. The course must be completed in a single semester; students must complete the course by the end of their first year in the program. Students with prior public health education (BS in Public Health or MPH) or extensive public health experience (5+ years in public health practice) may be waived from this requirement by permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, but this is rare.						
Course Name	**Term Available***			**Credit Hours**	**Term & Year Complete**	**Grade**
	Fall	**Spr**	**Sum**			
Program Requirements: 20 hours						
GHM 601: Foundations of Global Health I	O			3		
GHM 602: Foundations of Global Health II		O		3		
GHS 600: Fundamentals of Global Health	O			3		
PUH 600: Overview of Public Health	O	O	O	3		
IDGH 620: Global Health Ethics			O	3		
IDGH 690: Writing for Global Health	O	O	O	5		
Required Global Health Methods Course: Minimum 3 credit hours. (See Student Handbook for alternative methods courses.)						
GHM 604: Global Health Research Methods		O		3		
Alternate Methods Course	CO	CO	CO	3		
Global Health Electives: Minimum 6 credit hours of regular courses of 600 or higher-level. (See Student Handbook for suggested GHS and GHM electives or alternative methods course.)						
Elective 1:	CO	CO	CO	3		
Elective 2:	CO	CO	CO	3		
Masters Research: Minimum of 7 credit hours.						
IDGH 687: Scholarly Project Prep			CO	3		
IDGH 688: Scholarly Project Directed Research	CO			4		
Defense of Master's Project						
Date of Master's Project:						
Minimum Credit Hours Earned for Degree				**36**		
C = Campus; O = Online; CO = Either Option Available *Please note that course availability is subject to change						