

## The protection and promotion of population health

*Reductions in morbidity and mortality during the 20th century resulted in large part from effective health promotion and disease prevention programs. In the 21st century, these activities will continue to be central to improving population health and reducing health disparities. The Population Health Sciences (PHS) Graduate Program prepares students to conduct, communicate, and apply research aimed at achieving these goals.*



Council on Education for Public Health



The PHS Graduate Program accredited by Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) trains students to develop and carry out independent and collaborative interdisciplinary research relevant to disease prevention and health promotion and restoration in human populations. Training emphasizes the development and mastery of high-level quantitative skills in data collection and analysis.

The accredited curriculum provides an ecological perspective on population health that explores the interplay of individual biological and behavioral factors with aspects of the physical, social, and policy environments. Research focuses on health risks, determinants, outcomes, and interventions in clinical and community settings and in unique occupational or patient groups. Getting a degree in Population Health Sciences prepares graduates to apply the theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences to the study of health determinants and outcomes and access to and utilization of health care.

## Research Facilities

### PHS Graduate Program Research Areas

Minority Health and Aging

Health Disparities

Stress, Culture, and Health

Environments and Health

The PHS Graduate Program includes faculty members from multiple clinical and basic science departments, providing students access to facilities across the campus. PHS faculty members have access to and experience with a wide range of population health data sets, including: the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES), the Hispanic Epidemiologic Study of the Elderly (H-EPESE), cancer data from the SEER Program, the Mexican Health and Aging Study (MHAS), Medicare data, the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), mortality data for the Department of Energy nuclear workers, and health insurance claims data on approximately 36 million United Health enrollees.

## Curriculum

The MS and PhD curriculum plans include core program requirements as well as curriculum specific courses. Research projects and elective courses can be tailored to meet individual student's interests and career goals.



Degree requirements include:

- Core courses in population health sciences
- Biostatistics
- Epidemiology
- Prevention and Public Health
- Research Design and Methods
- Curricular track and elective courses
- An Ethics of Science course
- Written and oral qualifying examinations (PhD)
- Completion of an original research project resulting in a written thesis (MS) or dissertation (PhD)
- An oral presentation and defense of the dissertation research (PhD)

The typical PhD curriculum plan includes two years of course work, providing the student with strong quantitative research skills and an understanding of theory and methods within the specific curricular area. Students also work on mentored research projects during these academic years. The student takes the qualifying examination in the third year to demonstrate proficiency in the required knowledge and skills and to show readiness to conduct independent research. Submission of an approved dissertation proposal advances the student to candidacy for the degree. Completion, presentation, and defense of the dissertation project are the final requirements in the curriculum plan.

PHS courses and curricula provide a unique interdisciplinary and interprofessional experience. MD and PhD teaching faculty members come from a range of clinical and population health science disciplines and have varied areas of research expertise. Students enrolled in PHS and its affiliated degree programs (Clinical Science, Public Health, and Rehabilitation Science) include medical students, residents and fellows, nurses, physical therapists and other health professionals, and traditional graduate students.

## Benefits

Your benefits include a graduate assistantship stipend of \$28,000 in addition to comprehensive health insurance coverage, valued at over \$6,200/year. Dependent coverage, and dental and vision plans are available for a nominal charge. Your tuition and fees are also paid. Other benefits include free membership in the Field House, a free Student Wellness center, and discounts at many local businesses and restaurants.

### For additional information contact:

<http://pmch.utmb.edu/education/population-health-sciences-program>

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Scan this QR code on your phone to link to the Population Health Sciences website.