



Preparing for a Career or Graduate Program in Health Promotion or Public Health

****A graduate degree in health promotion or public health is not required to enter the field but may help with advancement in the future. Many students enter the workforce directly after the BBH degree and go onto a graduate program at a later time. For information on employment after graduation, please meet with a career counselor in the Bank of America Career Services Center. ****

Considering a career in public health? This website <http://www.aspph.org/discover/> is a great place to start.

Students may also want to pursue the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) credential offered through the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC). Visit www.ncheec.org and click "Exams" for details.

- Courses that may help in preparation for the CHES exam are BBH 316, BBH 416, BBH 417, CAS 253, CAS 453.

COURSEWORK:

- Typically, there are **no required courses** for a career in health promotion or public health. However, if you plan to go directly onto a graduate program, you should consult that program's website for any specific course requirements.

GRADES:

- Students who wish to go onto graduate school should aim for a minimum GPA of 3.0. Some programs will specify a minimum GPA requirement.

EXPERIENCE:

- Some graduate programs may require a certain number of hours or variety of experience related to health promotion or public health. Review the websites of the programs you are considering to determine if you meet their requirements. Suggestions for Fieldwork Opportunities are below.
- Even if experience is not a requirement for admission to a graduate program, it is important to understand what the day-to-day job is for the field that you are applying to. You want to make sure that you will like your job after the investment of a graduate degree.
- Experience will also help you to formulate your personal statement or essay as part of the application process.
- A successful experience will also help you to secure letters of recommendation needed as part of the application process.

APPLICATIONS:

- Check the website of each school you are interested in for information on application requirements and deadlines.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:

- May require 1 or 2 academic letters of recommendation from a faculty member (i.e., not an adviser)
- May require or allow one personal letter of recommendation.
- Letters of recommendation may need to be submitted on an official recommendation form provided by the program to which you are applying. It is recommended that you check with the program to verify the type of letter preferred, how many letters are required and to get information on where to find the required form. Please note that anyone affiliated with Penn State will need you to complete and provide to them the form at http://www.registrar.psu.edu/student_forms/request_for_recommendation.pdf for each individual recommendation you are requesting.

GRE (GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION):

- Some schools have stated minimum scores. See schools' websites for info. GRE information can be found at www.ets.org/gre.

HOW TO CHOOSE A GRADUATE PROGRAM

- Allow yourself enough time before application deadlines to research programs.
- Google search key words to create a large list and then visit websites to narrow it down.
- Consider rankings as a place to start but don't use that as your only resource.
- Work with Career Services.
- Ask current professionals in the field, your professors, or on-site internship coordinators where they went to school and if they have advice on specific programs.
- Narrow down your area of interest within public health/health promotion (e.g., Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Environmental Health, Global Health)
- Visit the campus
- Talk with alumni and current students in the program.

FIELDWORK OPPORTUNITIES:

See <http://bbh.hhd.psu.edu/undergraduate/field-opportunities> for ideas to consider and suggestions for preparing for fieldwork. In addition, look within organizations like:

- Global Public Health Brigades
- United Way agencies (e.g., Red Cross, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, Food Bank)
- YMCAs
- Retirement communities and nursing homes
- Youth programs
- Government Agencies (e.g., Office for Aging, Parks and Recreation, WIC)
- Training and internship programs through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Human Resources units for corporations, agencies, and institutions
- Global Medical Brigades (student organization)
- BBH Society (student organization)
- Research studies in health promotion or public health.
- Penn State Alternative Breaks.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES:

Public Service Organizations can provide great stepping stones to a career in health promotion/public health.

- Peace Corps
- Americorps
- Teach for America
- Idealist.org
- National Health Corps