



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

School of Public Health

SPH.USASK.CA

## Master of Public Health, Thesis Option (MPH-T)

Student Handbook 2022-23

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction and support information .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Introduction .....	5
SPH contact information .....	5
STUDENT EMAIL AND COMMUNICATION .....	5
Graduate student support.....	5
<b>2. School and program overview .....</b>	<b>6</b>
School of Public Health overview .....	6
Master of Public Health (MPH) program overview .....	6
MPH Thesis option (MPH-T) overview .....	7
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MPH AND MPH-T .....	7
THESIS PROJECT AND ADMISSION INTO THE MPH-T STREAM .....	8
<b>3. Registration, terms, tuition and fees .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Registration.....	9
Terms.....	9
Tuition and fees .....	9
THESIS TUITION REDUCTION POLICY .....	9
<b>4. Scholarships, awards costs and stipends .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Scholarships and awards .....	10
Costs and stipend .....	10
<b>5. Academic advising, grades, transcripts and appeals .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Advising information for courses and registration .....	10
Academic standing requirements .....	10
Grades, transcripts and proof of enrolment.....	10
ACADEMIC APPEALS.....	11
<b>6. MPH Thesis student and supervisor responsibilities .....</b>	<b>11</b>
The student.....	11
STUDENT ADVICE AND CONCERNS .....	11
The graduate supervisor.....	11
SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES .....	12
SUPERVISORS ON SABBATICAL OR OTHER LEAVE .....	12
<b>7. The graduate advisory committee .....</b>	<b>12</b>
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS .....	13
ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.....	13
ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR.....	13
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS.....	13
<b>8. MPH Thesis field research and practicum course (PUBH 993.9) .....</b>	<b>14</b>
MPH-T practicum overview .....	14
Course objectives .....	14
Practicum requirements, prerequisites, duration and timing.....	15

PREREQUISITES.....	15
REQUIREMENTS.....	15
DURATION AND TIMING.....	15
<b>Ethics and reporting deliverables.....</b>	<b>15</b>
RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION.....	15
INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT.....	15
SECOND PROGRESS REPORT.....	16
RESEARCH POSTER.....	16
<b>9. MPH Thesis option curriculum and requirements.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Core required courses.....	17
Elective courses.....	17
Thesis.....	18
REQUIREMENTS FOR PERMISSION TO WRITE THE THESIS.....	18
THESIS WRITING TOOLS AND SUPPORT INFORMATION.....	18
Thesis defence.....	18
REQUIREMENTS FOR PERMISSION TO DEFEND THE THESIS.....	19
ORAL EXAMINATION OVERVIEW.....	19
<b>10. On-site/residency requirements.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>11. Student absences and changes to program engagement.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Leaves of absence.....	20
Withdrawal.....	21
Requirement to Discontinue (RTD).....	21
Extensions to time in program.....	21
<b>12. Student conduct and academic integrity.....</b>	<b>22</b>
Guiding principles.....	22
Academic integrity.....	22
WHAT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY MEANS FOR STUDENTS.....	23
INTEGRITY IN NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES.....	23
Academic misconduct.....	23
ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT DEFINED.....	23
Procedures following suspected academic misconduct.....	25
INFORMAL PROCEDURE.....	25
FORMAL PROCEDURE.....	25
APPEALS IN ACADEMIC MATTERS.....	26
NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY AND PROCEDURES.....	26
STUDENT CONDUCT AND APPEALS INFORMATION SHEETS.....	26
<b>13. Student services and information tools.....</b>	<b>26</b>
Academic calendar.....	26
Access and Equity Services.....	26
Aboriginal Students' Centre (ASC).....	26
Applying to graduate.....	26
Co-curricular record.....	26
Exam information and scheduling.....	26

Frequently used forms.....	27
IT Support Services .....	27
International student information .....	27
Jobs and volunteering .....	27
Pride Centre.....	27
Protective Services .....	27
Recreation Services facilities .....	27
Student Affairs and Outreach .....	27
Student Central.....	28
Student Employment and Career Services.....	28
Student Learning Services .....	28
Student Wellness Centre.....	28

# 1. Introduction and support information

## Introduction

Students who are currently enrolled in the Master of Public Health (MPH) program are eligible to apply to the Master of Public Health Thesis option (MPH-T). The MPH-T provides MPH students with the research experience necessary to pursue a PhD.

Students admitted to this program will have sufficient time to complete the course load for the MPH program in addition to a thesis that is consistent with the expectations for an MSc at the University of Saskatchewan.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students with:

- important information regarding the requirements needed to complete the MPH Thesis option.
- the policies and expectations of the University of Saskatchewan and the School of Public Health.
- the support tools necessary to assist with frequently encountered student needs or requests.

**NOTE: This handbook differs from the one used by MPH students who have not undertaken the MPH Thesis option.**

## SPH contact information

For further guidance, please contact:

### Darla Mitchell

Thesis-based Graduate Program Assistant &

Executive Assistant

School of Public Health

[darla.mitchell@usask.ca](mailto:darla.mitchell@usask.ca)

(306) 966-2675

## STUDENT EMAIL AND COMMUNICATION

Upon enrolment, each student is issued a University of Saskatchewan (USask) email account by Information Technology Support Services.

**This email address will be used as the primary form of communication with the student. The School of Public Health is not responsible for sending or receiving SPH student communications involving non-University of Saskatchewan email addresses.**

## Graduate student support

The University of Saskatchewan College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) website is an important source of information for current graduate students. It offers advice on a range of topics including how to manage a graduate program, how to apply for a leave from a program, available academic help, guidance on teaching and professional skills, and more.

→ <https://cgps.usask.ca>

**A number of additional student support resources are listed near the end of this handbook.**

## 2. School and program overview

### School of Public Health overview

In collaboration with the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS), the University of Saskatchewan School of Public Health offers unique and innovative training opportunities exclusively to graduate students, with the aim of educating and preparing public health professionals of the future for the constant evolution and challenges that await them in the field.

Proudly located on Treaty 6 Territory of the Homeland of the Métis, the School of Public Health is housed within the University of Saskatchewan's Health Sciences Building — a state-of-the-art, integrated facility that supports and enables collaboration between students, faculty and researchers across all health disciplines.

The school offers academic and research excellence in a number of areas:

- Indigenous Peoples' health
- Agricultural and rural public health
- Applied public health
- Environmental health
- Global health
- Human-animal interface in infectious disease
- Social and behavioral health
- Vaccinology and Immunotherapeutics

### Master of Public Health (MPH) program overview

The Master of Public Health (MPH) program trains public health professionals to measure, assess and manage increasingly complex population and public health issues. The program's aims and objectives are:

1. To prepare students to work in the public health field by providing foundational knowledge within the five core areas of public health:
  - **Biostatistics** — Collection, storage, retrieval, analysis and interpretation of health data; design and analysis of health-related surveys and experiments; and concepts and practice of statistical data analysis.
  - **Epidemiology** — Distributions and determinants of disease, disabilities and death in human and animal populations; the characteristics and dynamics of populations; the natural history of disease; and the biological basis of health.
  - **Environmental Health Sciences** — Environmental factors, including biological, physical and chemical factors that affect the health of a community.
  - **Health Services Administration** — Development, organization, administration, management, evaluation and policy analysis of health programs.
  - **Social and Behavioural Sciences** — Concepts and methods of social and behavioural sciences relevant to the identification and the solution of public health problems.

2. To partner with public health agencies in Canada, as well as the international community, in order to provide opportunities in which students can apply their foundational public health knowledge in the field and gain practical experience.
3. To familiarize students with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) core competencies and how the PHAC competencies relate to the five core areas of public health.
4. To regularly review and adapt its curriculum to reflect the current needs in public health, as identified by stakeholders.

### **MPH Thesis option (MPH-T) overview**

The MPH Thesis option is only open to students currently enrolled in the MPH program. The MPH-T is a stream *within* the Master of Public Health program. It provides students with the same professional public health credentials as the MPH plus the research experience necessary to pursue a PhD.

Students in the MPH Thesis option will acquire:

- training in the core competencies for public health outlined by the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- applied training in public health study design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and the writing of a thesis/manuscript.
- an in-depth understanding of important, current issues in public health practice.

### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MPH AND MPH-T**

#### ***ACADEMIC STANDING REQUIREMENTS***

In order to apply for the MPH-Thesis option, students must have attained an average of at least 70% in the first academic year of the MPH program. Following acceptance into the thesis stream, students must maintain an average of at least 70% for the remainder of their program.

#### ***GRADUATE SUPERVISOR AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

MPH Thesis students work with a graduate supervisor and a graduate advisory committee in order to receive guidance, mentorship and opportunities for successful thesis defences.

#### ***PRACTICUM***

The practicum component for MPH-T students consists of a minimum 16-week practicum in place of the typical 12-week practicum course taken by students outside of the MPH-T stream.

#### ***ELECTIVES***

In order to free time for research during the regular term, MPH-T students must complete three 3-credit unit elective requirements during the second year of the program.

#### ***SUMMER TERM ENROLMENT***

In order to finish writing and then defend their theses, MPH-T students typically enrol at the beginning of the summer term following the second regular term.

## THESIS PROJECT AND ADMISSION INTO THE MPH-T STREAM

### *THESIS PROPOSAL*

MPH Students must write up a thesis project proposal acceptable to a prospective thesis supervisor. MPH students must successfully defend a thesis proposal in order to complete the MPH-T stream. The thesis proposal is developed in consultation with the graduate supervisor. As such, the student defends the proposal in the presence of the supervisor and advisory committee. If the thesis proposal is successfully defended, the student is formally accepted as a candidate for the MPH-T program.

### *ADMISSION INTO THE MPH-T STREAM*

The MPH-T admissions process has been developed with, approved and implemented by the USask College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS). Although applicants may meet the minimum expectations for transfer to the MPH-T program, entry into the MPH-T program is at the discretion of the School of Public Health.

All applications to the MPH-T program are reviewed through the process approved by CGPS with the following primary objectives:

- To ensure that the thesis projects meet the standards of the practicum (including ethical and engagement requirements).
- To ensure that projects are structured for students to meet the requirements for defence and the degree (manuscript style thesis with two publishable papers).
- To ensure that thesis projects are structured to allow students to complete their program within a two-year time frame — no longer than an additional semester extension for full-time students.

**NOTE:** Students are allowed to enrol in part-time studies (up to five years) to complete the degree.

**Students will not be accepted if they do not meet academic performance requirements or have not identified a graduate supervisor plus a clearly defined and appropriate project by the end of their year of study.**

- Some students may be required by their advisory committee to take additional classes to make up for deficiencies in their knowledge base. Graduate students may be granted permission by their advisory committee to take one undergraduate class to make up for deficiencies.

### *EXITING THE MPH-T STREAM*

The student will be permitted to revert back to the non-thesis-based MPH program in cases where:

- the advisory committee finds the practicum is not sufficient to build a thesis.
- the student cannot successfully defend any necessary final edits to the proposal completed after practicum experience.
- the student is making unsatisfactory progress.



## 3. Registration, terms, tuition and fees

### Registration

- All MPH-T students will maintain continuous registration in PUBH 990 and PUBH 994 throughout their programs.
- Degree thesis students shall be considered full-time for every term throughout the duration of their programs, including the May to August summer term.

### Terms

There are three terms per year:

- **Fall** — September 1 to December 31
- **Winter** — January 1 to April 30
- **Spring/Summer** — May 1 to August 31

### Tuition and fees

- Most students registering in a thesis program will pay a fixed amount per term from the beginning to the end of their program of studies.
- Tuition does not include student fees.
- Tuition will not be assessed when a student is on an approved leave.
- Students are required to pay tuition for any courses they take which are not part of their program of studies.
- In cases where MPH-T students are taking approved graduate courses that are not offered at the University of Saskatchewan, tuition will be charged at USask, (not the host university) and any fees will be assessed at the host institution.

For up-to-date information about program tuition and fees, payment and due dates, and to view an account summary, visit:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/money/tuition-fees/graduate-tuition.php>

### THESIS TUITION REDUCTION POLICY

Students who defend their thesis prior to the end of a term may be eligible for a tuition refund. This policy does not apply to course-based or project students. This refund applies only to tuition. Student fees are non-refundable.

Tuition reduction requirements include:

- a completed *Graduation Application* via <https://students.usask.ca/academics/graduation.php>
- all necessary student and academic unit paperwork
- successful submission of thesis via <https://etd.usask.ca/>

To request a refund, MPH-T students who have met the above criteria must complete the *Request for Refund* form:

[https://jira.usask.ca/servicedesk/customer/portal/7/create/362?q=request%20a%20refund&q\\_time=1667859870166](https://jira.usask.ca/servicedesk/customer/portal/7/create/362?q=request%20a%20refund&q_time=1667859870166)

Eligible students can expect to receive the credit on their account approximately one month after completion of requirements. Credits are pro-rated monthly and will be placed on the student's account by Registrarial Services.

For further details, please contact [gradfees@usask.ca](mailto:gradfees@usask.ca).

## 4. Scholarships, awards costs and stipends

### Scholarships and awards

There are a variety of funding sources for graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan. Many students are eligible to apply for a combination of SPH-exclusive awards, fellowships, or scholarships; university-wide competitions; department-specific opportunities; and national or external awards. Scholarships and awards are categorized as *University, Department, Tri-Agency, National and External*. Each scholarship and award has its own eligibility criteria and application process.

To search for scholarships and awards, please visit:

→ <https://grad.usask.ca/funding/scholarships.php#University>

### Costs and stipend

The School of Public Health does not provide financial support for MPH-T students. MPH-Thesis supervisors must be able to fund MPH-T students at the current standard USask College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) rate for Master's students, pro-rated, for the study period. Students are strongly encouraged to identify external funding opportunities in discussion with potential supervisors.

Where practica are concerned, students are not guaranteed to receive stipends and, therefore, must plan their finances accordingly. In addition to the registration costs associated with **PUBH 993.9**, students are also responsible for living expenses and other potential expenses incurred while attending the practicum.

## 5. Academic advising, grades, transcripts and appeals

### Advising information for courses and registration

For comprehensive information about searching for classes, when to register, making changes, registration deadlines and more, please visit the link below:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/academics/classes.php>

### Academic standing requirements

- Students must maintain 70% GPA throughout their time in the program.

### Grades, transcripts and proof of enrolment

Student grades can be viewed in PAWS. Information on understanding grades and how to receive transcripts is available at the links below:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/academics/grades.php#Grades>

→ <https://cgps.usask.ca/policy-and-procedure/Academics/Coursework.php#57ADHERENCETOACADEMICSTANDARDS>

For students requiring a confirmation of enrolment letter, please visit:

**To request a confirmation or enrolment letter**

Go to the [Registration channel in PAWS](#).

### ACADEMIC APPEALS

Appeals regarding evaluation, grading, and academic standing will be managed according to University Council's *Procedures for Student Appeals in Academic Matters*. The first formal step in a grievance procedure is to be taken within 30 days of the alleged grievance.

→ <http://policies.usask.ca/policies/student-affairs-and-activities/student-appeals.php>

## 6. MPH Thesis student and supervisor responsibilities

### The student

Students are responsible for the success of their degree, although the faculty, advisory committee and the program chair will always be available to help with issues that may arise.

Student responsibilities include:

- timely registration for courses and payment of fees owing.
- maintaining academic performance at a level commensurate with the program.
- attending and participating in the weekly departmental seminar series.
- a commitment to research.
- adherence to University regulations concerning Academic Integrity.
- maintaining a spirit of collegiality with peers, laboratory co-workers, and faculty.
- Completion of a [student-supervisor agreement](#) within the first 12 months of enrollment in the MPH-T program.

### STUDENT ADVICE AND CONCERNS

It is the students' responsibility to seek advice from their advisory committees where appropriate. Students having any program concerns or other issues should consult their supervisor and/or the graduate chair. Student concerns about a supervisor should be directed to the graduate chair or the executive director.

### The graduate supervisor

An appropriate graduate supervisor must be available before a student will be recommended by the admissions committee (the group that reviews and approves all application packages) for admission into the MPH Thesis option. This is determined by the admissions committee through consultation with faculty whose research interests correspond to those of the student. Faculty serving as graduate supervisors must be associated with the School of Public Health as standard appointees, primary- or secondary-joint

appointees, associate members, or adjuncts, and must be a member of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS).

### **SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The graduate supervisor is a mentor and senior colleague to the student, and provides a safe, respectful learning environment.

The supervisor has the following responsibilities to the student:

- Ensuring the student meets all the requirements of the program. This includes timelines and all ethics documents, approvals, written reports and oral presentation materials.
- Providing timely information on policies, regulations, expectations and standards of the School of Public Health and the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
- Calling the meetings of the graduate advisory committee by working through the School of Public Health graduate program assistant to arrange meetings of the student, chair, and committee members.
- Encouraging and being accessible for regular meetings with the student.
- Providing timely evaluation of written work and provide the student with the opportunity to present research at conferences.
- Providing students information about funding opportunities.
- Respecting course work, research, scholarship, intellectual property, academic integrity, safety, ethics, thesis, collaborative work, authorship, acknowledgements, conference presentations, and professionalism.
- Ensuring the eligibility of the thesis for examination, provide the names of potential suitable external examiners, prepare the student for defence and relevant advisory meetings.
- Providing timely letters of recommendation upon request and to arrange for continued supervision and student support during absences.
- Completion of a [student-supervisor agreement](#) within the first 12 months of enrollment in the MPH-T program.

### **SUPERVISORS ON SABBATICAL OR OTHER LEAVE**

Students can expect their supervisors to ensure that adequate provision has been made for continued supervision during their absence or leave of any kind. Students can expect their supervisors to recognize that the thesis and examinations required by the MPH-T are important events. In order for students to schedule their work appropriately, they should be informed well in advance about the supervisor's plans for forthcoming leaves or absences.

## **7. The graduate advisory committee**

Early in the program, each MPH Thesis student will consult with a graduate supervisor to choose members of a graduate advisory committee that will provide guidance and mentorship to the student. In all instances, the graduate advisory committee needs to make a positive recommendation for the student to progress through the MPH Thesis option.

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Master's committees are composed of at least three members:

- 1 chair (non-voting except to break a tie);
- 1 graduate supervisor;
- At least one other faculty member with a disciplinary background diverse from the supervisor but possessing academic or research expertise applicable and complementary to the student's research topic

**NOTE:** The Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) is an ex-officio member of every advisory committee.

### ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- To assist the student in completing program requirements.
- To provide the student with mentorship, advice and guidance in a respectful manner.
- To consult with the student on the thesis — beginning with clear expectations and a projected timeline with milestones.
- To remain engaged with the research project and the student's progress.

### ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR

The chair of the MPH Thesis program also acts as the chair of the advisory committee. The chair of the advisory committee will also be responsible for chairing the student's final thesis defence.

Duties of the chair include:

- counselling individual graduate students.
- ensuring necessary resources, facilities and support are available to graduate students while maintaining the standards, fairness and integrity of the process for students and faculty.
- attending all meetings where a decision is made and to vote where required.
- completing the minutes of each meeting, record votes, and file the records with the graduate secretary.

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Ideally, there will be two graduate advisory committee meetings per year:

- **Year 1**
  - **First meeting:** Held in Term 2, prior to the student commencing the nine-credit unit Public Health Practicum (**PUBH 993.9**).
  - **Second meeting:** Held following the completion of the practicum.
- **Year 2:**
  - **First meeting:** Held at the end of Term 1.
  - **Second meeting:** Held in Term 2, prior to the Thesis defence.

- Students will give an oral presentation of their proposal for 20-25 minutes which will be followed by questions and comments from individual members of the advisory committee.
- The progress report must be emailed to the committee one week before the meeting.
- Should further work by the candidate be required, the chair must see that the committee states clearly, for the candidate and the CGPS, what work is to be done and whether or not the examining committee shall meet again before the thesis can be accepted.

## 8. MPH Thesis field research and practicum course (PUBH 993.9)

### MPH-T practicum overview

**PUBH 993.9 — Field Research and Practicum in Public Health** is a nine-credit requirement that provides an opportunity for students to integrate classroom learning with research conducted in public health. Through work with an individual, research group/team or an organization engaged in public health research, students will receive advanced research training in a public health area relevant to their core areas of academic and research interest. Through the work completed, students will advance the current state of knowledge and enhance their research techniques and skills associated with a public health topic.

For complete MPH Thesis option practicum details, please review the *PUBH 993.9 Course Outline* which is made available to students once they have been accepted into the MPH-T program. The student and graduate supervisor will be responsible for meeting the evaluation and document requirements as outlined in **PUBH 993.9**.

### Course objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an in-depth research experience in an area of public health. Under the supervision of the graduate supervisor and graduate advisory committee, students will begin developing an expertise within their public health area of interest.

The specific objectives of the course are:

- to continue developing core public health competencies specific to a public health research project
- to develop and enhance skills needed to complete research in an area of public health. These skills include:
  - interpersonal skills; written and oral communication skills; problem identification; research design (quantitative or qualitative); data collection and analysis; knowledge mobilization; critical and analytical thinking; and problem solving
- to begin developing academic and research expertise in a public health area of interest
- to integrate the content knowledge attained in the core MPH courses and apply this knowledge in order to conduct research and make new contributions in the form of research evidence to advance the current state of knowledge within public health.

## Practicum requirements, prerequisites, duration and timing

### PREREQUISITES

MPH-Thesis option students may start their practica after MPH prerequisite courses are completed (**PUBH 800, 803, 804, 805, 807, 810, 867, GPS 960 and 961**) and a minimum GPA of 70% has been maintained. When the student has completed the prerequisites and secured a practicum placement, the School of Public Health will grant the student permission to enrol in **PUBH 993.9**.

### REQUIREMENTS

This is a field research experience course. In order for students to enrol in this course, they must have:

- identified a graduate supervisor;
- written and successfully defended a thesis proposal; and
- been accepted into the MPH Thesis option.

### DURATION AND TIMING

**The MPH Thesis option practicum course is a 16-week course with a minimum of 480 hours of contact with the research individual/group, organization or institutional agency.**

MPH-T students are expected, at minimum, to engage in a standard work week. Students should be prepared to spend time in tasks such as literature review, gathering and collecting data, data interpretation and analysis, composing their presentation, poster and abstracts as well as the research report that will lead toward two academic publishable papers. For more information, please refer to the *PUBH 993.9 Course Outline*.

The MPH Thesis practicum is most generally completed between May and the end of August, beginning after final grades from the first year of study have been received (usually the first week of May). In some instances, practica may be completed in the fall or winter terms — provided that students have successfully completed the practicum prerequisites and have received approval from the graduate supervisor.

## Ethics and reporting deliverables

### RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION

A *Research Ethics Application* must be completed in consultation with the graduate supervisor. The application must be submitted to the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board (REB) for approval. A certificate of approval must be obtained by the REB prior to the initiation of research activity.

For guidance on the process for application, submission and ethical requirements for research, please visit:

<https://research.usask.ca/rei/researchers/ethics/human-ethics.php>

### INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT

By the end of the first eight weeks of the course — the halfway point of the 16-week course duration — the student will provide an *Interim Progress Report* outlining the research work completed to that point.

The progress report will be submitted to the graduate supervisor for review with subsequent circulation to the advisory committee for any additional comments.

The *Interim Progress Report* will consist of a one-page written synopsis of research work completed within the first eight weeks of the course and the student will append a Table summarizing the Public Health Agency of Canada competencies achieved up to this date (see *PUBH 993.9 Course Outline*).

## SECOND PROGRESS REPORT

By the end of the 16th week, the student will provide the graduate supervisor and advisory committee with a *Second Progress Report* as well as a 12-minute oral presentation outlining research work completed within the 16 weeks.

The *Second Progress Report* will consist of a two-page written synopsis of research results and research work completed within the total 16-week period of this course. The student will also append a Table that summarizes the Public Health Agency of Canada competencies achieved up to this date (see *PUBH 993.9 Course Outline*). The oral presentation will provide an update on the research activity, results and timeline to completion.

## RESEARCH POSTER

In consultation with the supervisor, the student will develop a research poster to present at the annual School of Public Health Poster Day. Dates for this annual event will be communicated to students by the School of Public Health.

## 9. MPH Thesis option curriculum and requirements

The Master of Public Health (MPH) Thesis option at the School of Public Health is a professional thesis-based degree with a minimum 16-week practicum.

In order to graduate, students are required to complete the following:

- a minimum of 42 credit units consisting of:
  - 8 core-required classes (24 credit units)
  - **PUBH 993.9** — Field Research and Practicum in Public Health (9 credit units)
  - 3 additional courses related to their area of interest (9 credit units)
- **PUBH 990.0** — Public Health Seminar (required Fall/Winter term)
- **PUBH 994.0** — Master of Public Health Thesis (required every term)
  
- **GPS 960.0** — Introduction to Ethics and Integrity Course **and**  
**GPS 961.0** — Ethics and Integrity in Human Research OR  
**GPS 962.0** — Ethics and Integrity in Animal Research

**The program is designed for completion in two years of full-time study.** Students may also choose to study part-time over a maximum of five years.



## Core required courses

All MPH Thesis students must complete and pass the following eight core courses:

- **PUBH 800.3** — Epidemiology for Public Health
- **PUBH 803.3** — Health Promotion
- **PUBH 804.3** — Foundations of Public Health (offered each August)
- **PUBH 805.3** — Biostatistics for Public Health
- **PUBH 807.3** — Health Program Planning and Evaluation
- **PUBH 810.3** — Environmental Public Health I
- **PUBH 840.3** — Inter-disciplinary Public Health Practice
- **PUBH 867.3** — Health Policy and Politics
- **PUBH 993.9** — Public Health Practicum\*

In addition, students must complete and pass:

- **PUBH 990.0** — Public Health Seminar\*\* (required Fall/Winter term)
- **PUBH 994.0** — Master of Public Health Thesis\*\*\*
- **GPS 960.0** — Introduction to Ethics and Integrity
- **GPS 961.0** — Ethics and Integrity in Human Research **or**  
**GPS 962.0** — Ethics and Integrity in Animal Research

**NOTE:** Courses ending in “.0” are zero-credit courses. Courses ending in “.3” are three-credit courses. Courses ending in “.6” are six-credit courses. Courses ending in “.9” are nine-credit courses.

**\* Students must finish — or be close to finishing — their Public Health Practicum (PUBH 993.9) prior to taking the Inter-disciplinary Public Health Practice course (PUBH 840.3).** Other prerequisites for the course must also have been completed.

**\*\* Students must register each fall and winter term for the Public Health Seminar (PUBH 990 in every Fall/Winter term and PUBH 994 in every term) until degree completion. Attendance at the seminars is mandatory.** Students must attend at least 75% or a minimum of 36 seminar sessions during their program.

**\*\*\*Students must register for PUBH 994 in the spring/fall and winter terms until degree completion**

## Elective courses

The committee and supervisor may guide students on elective course choices only. Based on the student’s area of focus for the research thesis, the graduate advisory committee will identify the most appropriate elective courses to strengthen the student’s program of study. Typically, one elective course would be completed in the second term of Year 1 before the practicum. The remaining two elective courses would be completed in the first term of Year 2.

An MPH Thesis student can take online electives either from USask or from another post-secondary institution. These electives must be approved by the students’ supervisor and committee.

Students can view the course and program catalogue for more information:

→ <http://www.usask.ca/programs/>

## Thesis

A thesis presents a student's research work as a whole, rather than discrete pieces, and the student should be able to justify and defend each part of it — from the introduction through to the conclusion. In the normal course of events during the student's studies, it will become evident to the supervisor and other members of the advisory committee whether the student's research progress is sufficient to indicate that writing of the thesis ought to commence.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR PERMISSION TO WRITE THE THESIS

Permission to write the thesis is given by the advisory committee when there is general agreement that sufficient work on the research project has been carried out. **This agreement has to be recorded in the committee minutes or in writing.**

Permission to write the thesis will normally be granted after:

- all course work and required examinations are completed;
- the thesis topic has been approved by the advisory committee; and
- the results of research findings are available.

### THESIS WRITING TOOLS AND SUPPORT INFORMATION

Students should seek guidance from their supervisor regarding the use of a style manual appropriate to the academic discipline in which they are working as well as other guides needed to write correctly and effectively.

Guidelines and information regarding principles of thesis writing, general form and style, formatting, arrangement of contents and submission of the thesis are available on the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Thesis Preparation webpage:

→ <https://cgps.usask.ca/onboarding/thesis-roadmap/defending.php#Beforethedefense>

**NOTE:** Depending on the contexts of their theses, students should consider investing in a bibliography management program (i.e., EndNote) at the beginning of their graduate program. These programs employ references — including abstracts — downloaded directly from bibliography services such as PubMed and could potentially save students dozens of hours of computer labour.

## Thesis defence

Students will not defend their theses until their graduate advisory committee is satisfied that the thesis meets the required standard for a master's degree at the University of Saskatchewan.

The thesis defence process is outlined on the USask student services and program website. It includes information on preparing to defend, defending the thesis and submitting a thesis following the defence.

→ <https://cgps.usask.ca/onboarding/thesis-roadmap/defending.php#Beforethedefense>

## REQUIREMENTS FOR PERMISSION TO DEFEND THE THESIS

- The advisory committee must agree that the thesis is ready to be sent to an external examiner. This agreement must be in writing (i.e. email).
- The graduate supervisor must propose the names of three people (in order of preference) who could act as potential external examiners and submit these names to the chair of the advisory committee.
- The chair of the advisory committee will receive approval from other committee members keeping in mind the conflict of interest as per CGPS policy 13.2.1.
- The supervisor or chair can contact the preferred external examiner for potential dates for the thesis defence.
- The date and time of the student's thesis defence will be scheduled based on the availability of the graduate supervisor, the advisory committee and the external examiner.
- For more information on the procedures, visit:  
<https://cgps.usask.ca/policy-and-procedure/Academics/defence.php#82APPOINTMENTOFTHEEXTERNALEXAMINER>

## ORAL EXAMINATION OVERVIEW

The chair of the defence will invite the student to make a brief oral presentation. With certain restrictions to be determined by the School of Public Health, the defence may be open to the public. This 10-15 minute presentation includes:

- a highlighting of the major issues dealt with in the thesis;
- the conclusions which have been reached; and
- the significance of the findings.

This presentation must not be more than 20 minutes.

The examining committee includes:

- the advisory committee;
- an external examiner selected by the advisory committee as an expert in the student's area but from another institution; and
- a representative of the Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)

At the conclusion of the presentation, any individuals who are not members of the examining committee will be asked to leave.

The external examiner, followed in turn by each member of the advisory committee, will ask the student questions about data, experiments or concepts within the thesis. All members of the examining committee are expected to ask relevant and probing questions on the methodology/contents of the thesis, and/or on the research field for 15-20 minutes.

Students will be judged on their ability to speak in an informed way about their research and to respond clearly and cogently to questions on the thesis (results and methodology) and on the thesis topic (knowledge of the academic field and related literature).

During the oral examination, the student should:

- respond to questions directly, in a manner which is informed by the contents of the methodology and contents of the thesis;
- respond to questions as concisely as is appropriate to the question; and
- make clarification if there is the impression that the questions being asked derive from misconceptions about the research material or the literature.

At the conclusion of the examination, the student will be asked to leave the room briefly in order to allow the examining committee to deliberate. The examining committee will discuss any issues, arrive at a conclusion regarding the defence, and then call the student back to share its decision.

**NOTE:** Most often, the examining committee's decision will involve additional editorial changes required for the thesis to be accepted. Normally, students will make these changes in consultation with their supervisor, who will take responsibility for ensuring that the changes are completed before the thesis is declared suitable for submission to the CGPS.

## 10. On-site/residency requirements

On-site/residency requirements for the MPH-T program are in place to ensure that students are physically present throughout the duration of their coursework, research and meeting requirements with their graduate supervisor and advisory committee. Residence requirements for MPH Thesis students include two regular academic sessions at the University of Saskatchewan starting in September and ending in April.

Within the residence period, MPH-T students must have full-time status and must register in **PUBH 994.0** and **PUBH 990.0** plus the minimum number of graduate credit units for the program.

All interpretation regarding residence credit will be made by the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) Dean on the advice of the chair of the student's advisory committee. Formal permission from the CGPS must be obtained in advance if students plan to study or do research elsewhere during the residence period.

Following the residence period, students may continue their research at the place of their choice, in consultation with their supervisor and advisory committee. After fulfilling the residency requirement, students must maintain continuous registration until completion of their program of study.

**NOTE:** At any time during the program, students may be required to spend their time at the University of Saskatchewan in order to remain in good standing.

## 11. Student absences and changes to program engagement

### Leaves of absence

Leaves of absence are available to students for compassionate, medical, parenting, educational, and 'Co-op Program' reasons.

Leaves of absence are normally granted in four-month blocks to coincide with the three registration terms throughout the year:

- **Fall** — September 1 to December 31;

- **Winter** — January 1 to April 30; and
- **Spring/Summer** — May 1 to August 31.

Maternity, adoption, and parenting leave may be granted for eight, twelve, or twenty-month blocks.

The graduate chair or the head of the academic unit has the authority to approve a first-time leave request of up to four months for compassionate or medical reasons. Short-term leaves of less than one month should also be managed within the home academic unit. **Extensions to the initial leave period must be approved by the USask College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS).**

Requests for leaves should be discussed as early as possible with supervisors so that appropriate accommodations can be made prior to the beginning of the leave. Requests should be made in writing by the student for a minimum leave of four months to a maximum leave of twelve months.

The leave period is not included in the time period for completion of the degree and tuition is not assessed during the leave. While a student is on leave, all supervisory processes are suspended.

For information on types of leaves, applying for a leave, and implications of a leave, please visit:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/graduate/appeals-leaves-extensions.php#LeavesofAbsence>

## Withdrawal

Students who wish to withdraw from their graduate program must submit a *Withdrawal from Graduate Program Form* to the USask School of Public Health, which will then submit the form to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. In addition, students must immediately withdraw from any currently-registered courses through the registration channel in PAWS. Failure to do so can result in a faculty action of *Required to Discontinue (RTD)* that will remain on the student's official academic record.

<https://jira.usask.ca/servicedesk/customer/portal/7/create/228>

## Requirement to Discontinue (RTD)

Upon recommendation of the academic unit (academic unit head or graduate chair) or staff within the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS), a student may be required to discontinue at any time for failure to achieve satisfactory progress in any aspect of the graduate program. Such students must be invited to meet with the chair of the graduate program as soon as evidence of unsatisfactory performance is available. The student's advisory committee must be invited to attend the meeting.

When an academic unit or a CGPS staff member recommends to the CGPS Associate Dean that a student be required to discontinue, they must also inform the student in writing by providing a copy of the recommendation. If the CGPS Associate Dean upholds the recommendation, official notification of the *Requirement to Discontinue* will be sent by the Associate Dean to the student.

Details regarding the *Requirement to Discontinue* can be found here:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/academics/required-to-discontinue.php#Academics>

## Extensions to time in program

Official program time limits are five years for Postgraduate Diploma and Master's programs, and six years for PhD programs. This time is measured from the beginning of the first term of registration for work in the program (this may be course work done at USask or elsewhere, thesis, project, or practicum), excluding any periods of approved leave. Time extensions may be considered for students who encounter unforeseen problems while actively trying to finish their program. While on extension, students are

expected to be working on their programs full-time. Employment is not a valid reason for an extension request.

MPH Thesis students who have reached — or will soon reach — the time limit of the program without completing program requirements should meet with their graduate supervisor to discuss a plan and timeline for completion, using the *GSR 205: Request for Extension to Time in Program* form as a guide.

→ <https://www.usask.ca/cgps/documents/gsr205Extension.pdf>

Once a plan has been drafted, it should be distributed to the advisory committee and a committee meeting should be scheduled to discuss, finalize, and approve the plan. If the advisory committee supports the extension request, the request is forwarded to the graduate chair for approval. **Only one extension request will be allowed per student, so it is important to plan accordingly and mutually commit to achieving the timelines submitted.**

Once a student's extension has been approved and processed by the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS), the assigned CGPS advisor will send an email notifying the student and the appropriate contacts in the student's academic unit. Students who are on extension are responsible for maintaining continuous registration and paying applicable tuition and fees.

For full instructions and forms involving extensions, please visit:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/graduate/appeals-leaves-extensions.php#ExtensiontoTimeinProgram>

## 12. Student conduct and academic integrity

### Guiding principles

The university documents that lay out USask rules and procedures are the *Student Academic Misconduct Regulations (University Council)* and the *Standard of Student Conduct in Non-Academic Matters (University Senate)*. Both documents are based on the same Guiding Principles from the *Policy on Student Discipline*:

- Freedom of expression
- Mutual respect and diversity
- Commitment to non-violence
- Commitment to justice and fairness
- Security and safety
- Integrity

### Academic integrity

Students shall perform their academic work with honesty and integrity. Integrity is expected of all University of Saskatchewan students in their academic work — class participation, examinations, assignments, research, and practica — and in their non-academic interactions and activities as well.

The USask *Academic Integrity* document is available here:

→ <https://libguides.usask.ca/AcademicIntegrityTutorial>

## WHAT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY MEANS FOR STUDENTS

- Perform your own work unless specifically instructed otherwise. Check with your instructor about whether collaboration or assistance from others is permitted.
- Use your own work to complete assignments and exams. If you are including work you have done previously, be sure to identify that work so it is clear what new work you are presenting.
- Follow examination rules.
- Cite the source when quoting or paraphrasing someone else's work.
- Discuss with your professor if you have any questions about whether sources require citation.
- Discuss with your professor if you are using the same material for assignments in two different courses.
- Be truthful on all university forms.
- Use the same standard of honesty with fellow students, lab instructors, teaching assistants, sessional instructors and administrative staff as you do with faculty.

## INTEGRITY IN NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Misconduct that disrupts the activities of the university or harms the legitimate interests of the university community could be cause for non-academic disciplinary action.

### Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct is the term the university uses to describe cheating. **There is an onus on every student to become informed about academic misconduct.**

Types of cheating are listed in the *Student Academic Misconduct Regulations* of University Council:

→ <https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/academic-misconduct.php>

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT DEFINED

The following constitute academic misconduct that may be the subject matter of an allegation under the *Student Academic Misconduct Regulations*:

1. Providing false or misleading information or documentation to gain admission to the university or any university program.
2. Theft of lecture notes, research work, computer files, or other academic or research materials (including data) prepared by another student or an instructor or staff member.
3. Using work done in one course in fulfillment of any requirement of another course unless approval is obtained from the instructor by whom the material is being evaluated.
4. Alteration or falsification of records, computer files, or any document relating to a student's academic performance.
5. Violation of the university's *Responsible Conduct of Research Policy*:

→ <https://policies.usask.ca/policies/research-and-scholarly-activities/responsible-conduct-of-research-policy.php>

6. Fabrication or invention of sources.
7. Academic misconduct involving examinations such as:
  - a. failure to observe any stated rule with regard to the procedure used in an examination (or an activity undertaken for academic credit) where such a failure could result in the student gaining relatively greater credit.
  - b. altering answers on a returned examination.
  - c. when prohibited, removing an examination (including creating a digital copy) from the examination room.
  - d. seeking to acquire or acquiring prior knowledge of the contents of any examination question or paper with the intention of gaining an unfair advantage.
  - e. attempting to use, possessing, or using notes or other sources of information or devices not permitted by the course instructor in an examination.
  - f. consulting or seeking the assistance of others when writing a “take home” examination unless permitted by the course instructor.
  - g. providing false or misleading information with the intent to avoid or delay writing an examination or fulfilling any other academic requirement.
  - h. failing to observe the terms of any agreement to not disclose the contents of an examination.
  - i. misrepresenting or conspiring with another person to misrepresent the identity of a student writing an examination or engaging in any other form of assessment.
8. Knowingly doing anything designed to interfere with the opportunities of another person to have his or her contribution fully recognized or to participate in the academic program.
9. Preventing others from fair and equal access to university facilities or resources, including library resources.
10. Using or attempting to use personal relationships, bribes, threats or other illegal conduct to gain unearned grades or academic advantages.
11. Knowingly assisting another person engaged in actions that amount to academic misconduct, including the supply of materials prepared by the student to another student for use by that student as the work or materials of that student.
12. Plagiarism (the presentation of the work or idea of another in such a way as to give others the impression that it is the work or idea of the presenter). Adequate attribution is required. What is essential is that another person should have no doubt which words or research results are the student’s and which are drawn from other sources. Full explicit acknowledgement of the source of the material is required.
13. Unprofessional conduct that occurs in academic or clinical settings or other work placements, or that is related to the student’s area of professional practice.



When an instructor believes a student is guilty of academic misconduct, the procedures that follow are used.

## Procedures following suspected academic misconduct

### INFORMAL PROCEDURE

Sometimes misconduct is the result of carelessness, misunderstanding of the rules, or miscommunication. The instructor should discuss the matter with the student informally, where possible.

The instructor is to consult with the college or school's academic administrator to determine whether an informal resolution would be appropriate under the circumstances. If it is determined to be appropriate and the student concedes the misconduct, the instructor has the authority to impose one or both of the following penalties:

- Reduce the grade on the assignment or exam by a percentage appropriate to the degree of the academic misconduct, to as low as zero.
- Require the student to rewrite the assignment or exam.

A student who disagrees with the allegation of cheating or with the suggested penalty may request a formal hearing.

An informal resolution of academic misconduct is recorded on a form (signed by the student and the instructor) that is then kept by the student's college or school for at least five years or until the student completes the degree program. Prior informal resolutions are used to determine if a subsequent offense should go to a formal hearing.

### FORMAL PROCEDURE

For more serious misconduct, or in cases where the student disputes the allegation or the penalty, a college or school hearing board will hear the matter. Procedures for hearings are described in the *Student Academic Misconduct Regulations*.

If the student is found to have committed academic misconduct, the hearing board has the authority to impose sanctions, such as:

- reprimand or censure of the student;
- reduction of the grade on the assignment, exam, or entire course, to as low as zero;
- requirement of the student to rewrite the assignment or exam;
- requirement of the student to submit an essay or a presentation on academic misconduct;
- suspension or expulsion of the student; and
- postponement, denial or revocation of the student degree, diploma or certificate.

A penalty imposed by a hearing board is reported to the student's college or school and to the university, and becomes part of the student's record. In research funded by an external agency, a finding of misconduct is reported to that agency.

Further appeal of a hearing board decision or penalty is permitted only on grounds of lack of jurisdiction, bias, substantial procedural error or new evidence.

### APPEALS IN ACADEMIC MATTERS

→ <https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/appeals-in-academic-matters.php>

### NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

→ <https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/non-academic-misconduct.php>

### STUDENT CONDUCT AND APPEALS INFORMATION SHEETS

→ <https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/index.php>

## 13. Student services and information tools

### Academic calendar

A listing of academic-related events and deadlines at the University of Saskatchewan.

→ <http://www.usask.ca/events/month.php?cal=Academic+Calendar>

### Access and Equity Services

Access and Equity Services is guided by Saskatchewan's Human Rights legislation and the duty to accommodate individuals requiring accommodations based on disability, religion, family status and gender identity.

→ <https://students.usask.ca/health/centres/access-equity-services.php>

### Aboriginal Students' Centre (ASC)

The Aboriginal Students' Centre is dedicated to supporting the academic and personal success of Métis, First Nations and Inuit students. The centre offers personal, social, cultural and academic support through programs, services and events held throughout the academic year.

→ <https://students.usask.ca/indigenous/asc.php>

### Applying to graduate

There are two convocation ceremonies every year at USask — Spring Convocation and Fall Convocation. Students who are nearing completion of their program must apply for graduation even if they are not attending the convocation ceremony. Consult the university calendar for application deadlines.

→ <https://students.usask.ca/academics/graduation.php>

### Co-curricular record

The Co-curricular record (CCR) is a personalized and official record of university-approved and facilitated activities which students have been involved. It will help students find opportunities to learn outside of the classroom and then will capture those activities, and the learning outcomes derived from them, on an official document that the student can use in furthering their employment and educational goals.

→ <https://ccr.usask.ca/home.htm>

### Exam information and scheduling

Information on exam schedules, rescheduling exams, deferred and supplemental exams, appeals and more is available here:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/academics/exams.php>

### Frequently used forms

Frequently used forms such as *Name Change Form*, *Late Enrolment in a Class*, *Request to Extension to Time in Program* and more can be found here:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/forms.php>

### IT Support Services

Email, PAWS, and technology support.

→ <https://students.usask.ca/centres/it-support-services.php>

### International student information

Find everything a person needs to know about life as an international student at USask including immigration matters and information on working and living in Canada:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/international/index.php>

Resources and services for international students and those wanting to go abroad can be found through the International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC).

→ <https://students.usask.ca/international/issac.php>

### Jobs and volunteering

Employers are interested in well-rounded students who have a range of experiences that show their willingness to get involved, take initiative, and take advantage of opportunities to develop themselves. Learn about job postings and search tips, co-ops and internships, working in Canada, and more here:

→ <https://students.usask.ca/jobs/jobs.php>

### Pride Centre

A welcoming place for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

→ <https://ussu.ca/main-page/centres/pride-centre/>

### Protective Services

24-hour assistance with campus safety or security issues.

→ <http://www.usask.ca/protectiveservices/contact-us/index.php>

### Recreation Services facilities

USask students are invited to take advantage of the Physical Activity Complex (PAC), squash courts, pools and more.

→ <https://rec.usask.ca/campus-rec/>

### Student Affairs and Outreach

Offers mental health intake, student outreach, crisis response, and consultation to those concerned about a student.

→ <https://students.usask.ca/health/centres/student-affairs-and-outreach.php>

## **Student Central**

Don't know who to call? Start at Student Central for help with questions about finances, registration, academic life, and more.

→ <https://students.usask.ca/student-central.php>

## **Student Employment and Career Services**

Career and employment skills, workshops, and events.

→ <https://students.usask.ca/jobs/career-services.php>

## **Student Learning Services**

Programs and services to help students develop academic skills plus support for learning in areas such as writing, math, studying, and research.

→ <http://library.usask.ca/studentlearning>

## **Student Wellness Centre**

The Student Wellness Centre offers urgent and non-urgent physical and mental health care to USask students and their spouses and children.

→ <https://students.usask.ca/health/centres/wellness-centre.php>