Pre-Public Health Resources

Interested in Public Health? There are four programs of study with competitive applications leading to a Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSPH). Applications are due during the second semester of your sophomore year and vary by department.

- Biostatistics [1]
- Environmental Health Science [2]
- Health Policy and Management [3]
- Nutrition [4]

For more information on these programs, please see the links and departmental contacts provided or visit the Gillings undergraduate programs [5] page.

As you prepare your application, consider how you want to present yourself:

- When/how/why did you become interested in the BSPH program?
- What experience (volunteer or paid) contributed to your interest in the field?
- What do you feel you have to offer to the program and field?
- How will this program prepare you for your projected career?

University Career Services can assist you with your resume [6] and personal statement [7] for application to these programs. We can also conduct mock interviews [8] as needed (HPM is the only program requiring interviews).

How to be competitive:

- Grades
  Because these programs have small cohorts, there is a competitive GPA requirement. Average GPAs of admitted students range from 3.0 to 3.7 depending on the program. Prospective students are required to complete the prerequisite courses with a grade of C or better prior to beginning the program. Students should aim to take the prerequisites during their first year or sophomore year and as many as they can before the application due date. See details within the links above.

Experience
While experience is not a requirement, it is to your advantage and assists in answering the questions above. You may gain experience through internships/work, research, and/or volunteer/leadership.

**Internships and/or work experience? find an opportunity to work in the field**

- Consider the population or topic you want to focus on (examples might include farmworkers, children, nutrition, access to healthcare, environmental sustainability, etc.).
- Search for public health? and/or other keywords on Handshake [9], indeed.com [10], idealist.org [11], or other job search databases.
- Network for opportunities using your own connections and/or alumni through LinkedIn [12].

**Research experience? work with a faculty member or center/institute at UNC.**

- Consider the population or topic you want to focus on (examples might include farmworkers, children, nutrition, access to healthcare, environmental sustainability, etc.).
- Learn about the types of research and work being done at Gillings [13] ? reach out to faculty to express interest and conduct an informational interview [14].
- Find opportunities at the Office of Undergraduate Research [15].
- Search for your keywords of interest on the UNC researcher database [16].
- Network for opportunities using your own connections and/or alumni through LinkedIn [12].

**Leadership or volunteerism in student or community organizations? get involved at UNC and in the Triangle.**

- Consider the population or topic you want to focus on (examples might include farmworkers, children, nutrition, access to healthcare, environmental sustainability, etc.).
- Search the UNC student activities database [17] for groups related to your interests.
- Find opportunities to volunteer in the community through Carolina Center for Public Service [18], Campus Y [19], and idealist.org [11].

**References**
Students need two ? three letters of recommendation; review the suggestions and requirements for each department. In general, at least one of the letters should be from a teacher or faculty member in a discipline related to the prospective program of study. Students may ask a high school teacher if they do not know their UNC-Chapel Hill professors or TAs well. While two letters from two college professors would be ideal, the admission committee realizes many second-year students may not have this option.
Both references should be academic (teachers) or professional rather personal. Relevant references (college or high school) are most highly weighted, followed by science teachers, followed by teachers from other subjects or professional references.

Not sure the BSPH is right for you, but still interested in pursuing a career in public health? There are many paths to get into the field.

- **Consider alternate majors and/or a combination of classes.** Ideas could include global studies with the global health track, a medical anthropology minor, entrepreneurship minor with the public health track. Consider stand-alone courses like SPHG 620, Public Health Fields, or SPHG 101.
- **Gain experience.** See the list above for ideas for finding internships, research, leadership, and volunteering.
- **Pursue a graduate degree.** Take a look at the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health [20] for information on the breadth of public health disciplines, degree requirements, and schools.

I’m a senior and just learning about public health as an option. Where can I work after graduation to gain experience? There are many options depending on where you want to take your interests.

- **Ask yourself**
  - what am I most interested in?
    - math | science | education | creative ventures | policy | business | environmental issues | etc
  - what am I good at?
    - data analysis | communication | teaching | management | research | etc
  - what kind of environment/industry do I want to work in?
    - academia | research center | government | school/educational setting | non-profit | hospital/patient care setting | etc
- **Then, think about the answers to these how these could translate to jobs**
  - research assistant on a study | health educator for an urban school district | administrator in a doctor’s office | policy research for a health department | internship with a sustainable farm | global volunteer service | etc
- **Once you’ve focused in on some areas of interest, you can use the resources above to find jobs and opportunities in the field.** UCS counselors can also help you refine your searches and prepare your application documents.

Source URL: https://careers.unc.edu/students/pre-public-health-resources

Links