

HEALTH LITERACY AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNICATION (HLHC)

Graduate Degree Program
College: Public Health

Abstract

The Master of Public Health (MPH) degree in Health Literacy and Public Health Communication trains students in the theory, methods, and application of health literacy and health communication for public health information, messages, materials, and campaigns. Designed for public health practitioners, the degree integrates academic study with hands-on training through an internship and a capstone project.

Graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be effective designers and communicators of audience-focused, clear, useful, and culturally relevant health information distributed in a range of formats and channels. The degree includes public health informatics, which involves the use of technology to improve public health. The MPH degree in Health Literacy and Public Health Communication in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health is designed as a practice-oriented degree to prepare social and behavioral science professionals to create, select, share, and promote health information that supports personal and organizational health literacy and informed decisions about health.

Contact

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ADMISSIONS

The MPH in Health Literacy and Public Health Communication program has a two-part application process. Applicants must submit the SOPHAS application (sophas.cas.myliaison.com) (<http://sophas.cas.myliaison.com>), the centralized application service for schools and programs of public health, and the UMD Supplemental application (<https://terpengage.umd.edu/community/CustomLoginPage/?GradApp=True>). Both applications must be submitted, complete with all required documents and verified by the scheduled deadline (<https://sph.umd.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-application-process/>). Applications will be reviewed once both the SOPHAS and UMD Supplemental applications are complete.

GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- A Bachelor's degree
- Minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA
- Transcripts from all previous coursework
- English proficiency test score (TOEFL, IELTS or PTE) (international applicants (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/english-language-proficiency-requirements/>))

- Statement of purpose and objectives
- Response to personal experiences question(s)

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- SOPHAS application and the UMD Supplemental application
- Statement of purpose should outline 1. who you are (personal and professional experiences and accomplishments) 2. where you are going (educational, professional/career goals), and 3. how the BCH program will help get you there (include alignment with BCH courses, competencies and specific faculty you are interested in working with)
- At least one undergraduate math course
- Resume or curriculum vitae
- Three letters of recommendation
- Alignment between the applicant's professional goals and expectations and the program's degree competencies and faculty expertise.
- Official GRE Test Score submission is not required
- A writing sample is optional

The admissions committee assesses the overall packet for bi-directional fit for the program: Does the BCH program fit the student's professional goals? And does the student's background and goals fit the BCH program?

Note for applicants with foreign credentials:

- The SOPHAS application requires that applicants submit a WES credential evaluation (https://help.liaisonedu.com/SOPHAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Sending_Your_Official_Transcripts_and_Test_Scores_to_SOPHAS/Sending_Official_Transcripts_to_SOPHAS/2_Foreign_and_French-Canadian_Transcripts/)
- The UMD supplemental application requires uploading unofficial transcripts issued in the original language, along with a literal English translation. Visit the Graduate School website for additional information (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/international-admissions/>)
- Evidence of English Language proficiency is required if the applicant does not hold a degree from a U.S. institution or from one of the English-speaking countries listed on the Graduate School website (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/english-language-proficiency-requirements/>)
 - The Department of Behavioral and Community Health only admits students with English Language Proficiency test scores in the Full Enrollment range
- Language scores must be submitted both to SOPHAS and the UMD supplemental application

For detailed instructions on how to apply, please visit the School of Public Health Website: sph.umd.edu/graduate-application-process (<https://sph.umd.edu/graduate-application-process/>)

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Type of Applicant	Fall Deadline
Domestic Applicants	
US Citizens and Permanent Residents	April 2, 2027
	The priority deadline for both the SOPHAS and the UMD applications is January 15, 2027.

International Applicants

F (student) or J (exchange visitor) March 5, 2027
 visas; A,E,G,H,I and L visas and
 immigrants

The priority deadline for both the
 SOPHAS and the UMD applications
 is January 15, 2027.

RESOURCES AND LINKS:

Department Website: sph.umd.edu/department/bch/mph-behavioral-and-community-health (<https://sph.umd.edu/department/bch/mph-behavioral-and-community-health/>)

Program Website: sph.umd.edu/mph-behavioral-and-community-health (<https://sph.umd.edu/academics/masters-degrees/mph-master-public-health/mph-behavioral-and-community-health/>)

Application Process: sph.umd.edu/graduate-application-process (<https://sph.umd.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-application-process/>)

Admissions FAQ: sph.umd.edu/graduate-application-faqs (<https://sph.umd.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-application-faqs/>)

REQUIREMENTS

- Health Literacy and Public Health Communication, Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/health-literacy-and-public-health-communication-hlhc/health-literacy-and-public-health-communication-mph/>)

FACILITIES AND SPECIAL RESOURCES

The Department has research specializations in a variety of areas including:

- Minority health/social inequalities in health
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Safety and health
- Sexual health
- Adolescent health and risk behavior
- Violence prevention/community violence
- Public health communication
- Treatment of nicotine dependence

Specialized laboratories operating within the Department include:

- The Prevention Research Center
- The Center for Health Behavior Research
- The Center for Young Adult Health and Development

The proximity of the nation's capital, the National Institutes of Health, the National Library of Medicine, the Food and Drug Administration, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and numerous public health focused private and not-for profit organizations/agencies render the University of Maryland unusually well suited for graduate work in behavioral and community health.