

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH (MCHS)

Graduate Degree Program
College: Public Health

Abstract

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) is an interdisciplinary field in which empirical research, epidemiological data, and policy analyses are used to understand individual, family, community, and sociocultural factors that influence health behaviors, health outcomes, and use of health services by mothers, fathers, children, adolescents, and their families. The MCH doctoral program prepares students to advance research, policy, and practice to improve the health, safety, and well-being of these groups, with a particular emphasis on low-income and ethnic minority populations. The program equips students to address MCH issues at both the family and population levels. It is unique in its focus on the whole family system and family health policy.

Ph.D. graduates in MCH are prepared for academic and research positions in colleges and universities; high-level administrative or research positions in city/county/state/national health and human service agencies; and leadership positions in nongovernmental and advocacy organizations. MCH graduates are also increasingly hired by private healthcare organizations such as hospitals, HMOs, and health insurers.

The Department of Family Science prepares students to describe, explain, and improve the quality of family life through applied research, education, therapy, human services, policy analysis, and advocacy. The approach is interdisciplinary, emphasizing individual, interpersonal, and social change. The program of study is based on a systems or ecological paradigm, combining the perspectives of interrelated professional fields of maternal and child health, family science, couple and family therapy, family policy, behavioral science, and human services. Graduates are prepared for careers in the public, non-profit and private sectors, including university teaching, research, family policy analysis, and administrative positions in human service and public health programs.

Contact

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Website: sph.umd.edu/phd-maternal-and-child-health (<https://sph.umd.edu/academics/doctoral-degrees/phd-maternal-and-child-health/>)

Relationships: Family Science (FMSC) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/family-science-fmsc/>)

Courses: FMSC (<https://umd-curr.courseleaf.com/graduate/courses/fmsc/>)

ADMISSIONS

The Ph.D. in Maternal and Child Health program has a two-part application process: applicants must submit the SOPHAS application (sophas.cas.myliasion.com (<http://sophas.cas.myliasion.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

- 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 & UMD Supplemental application
- Master's degree in a relevant field
- The statement of purpose should include career and educational goals, professional experience, areas of interest, and the faculty you are interested in working with
- Resume or curriculum vitae
- Three letters of recommendation
- One writing sample is required. Examples of writing samples include published manuscripts, undergraduate or graduate theses and research papers. If you submit a published manuscript and you are not the first author, describe the contributions you made to the publication
- Supplemental Application (required):
 - Please provide a personal statement (1 page) addressing the following: (1) how your personal and professional experiences contribute to the social, intellectual, or cultural diversity within a campus community and the discipline and (2) any past experiences with advancing social justice, as well as your vision for how your scholarship will contribute to advancing social justice in the discipline
 - Upload the statement using the specific form (linked above)
- Alignment between the applicant's professional goals and expectations and the program's degree competencies and faculty expertise.
- GRE scores are waived for this program and won't be reviewed.
- Applicants being considered for the program will be invited for an interview

Note for applicants with foreign credentials:

- The SOPHAS application requires that applicants submit a WES credential evaluation (https://help.liasionedu.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/)

- TerpEngage requires uploading unofficial transcripts issued in the original language 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/>)
- 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	December 4, 2026
	The priority deadline to apply is November 8, 2026.
International Applicants	
F (student) or J (exchange visitor) visas; A, E, G, H, I and L visas and immigrants	December 4, 2026
	The priority deadline to apply is November 8, 2026.

RESOURCES AND LINKS

Program website: sph.umd.edu/phd-maternal-and-child-health (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/maternal-child-health-mchs/sph.umd.edu/academics/doctoral-degrees/phd-maternal-and-child-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/>)

Department Graduate Assistantship Policies: <https://umd.app.box.com/s/ivvw3ccbchudy4vj18e0yth5eg82r9qv> (<https://umd.app.box.com/s/ivvw3ccbchudy4vj18e0yth5eg82r9qv/>)

REQUIREMENTS

- Maternal and Child Health, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/maternal-child-health-mchs/maternal-child-health-phd/>)

FACILITIES AND SPECIAL RESOURCES

Center for Healthy Families: This Center is the training and research arm of the Couple and Family Therapy Program in the Department of Family Science. Departmental graduate students and faculty provide clinical and

educational services to families from surrounding communities in this state-of-the-art facility. Master's and doctoral students use data collected at the Center for research projects.

The University's close proximity to the nation's capital, the state capital in Annapolis, federal executive departments, and headquarters of national professional and public interest associations provide research and internship placements for studying family policy unmatched by any other graduate program in the discipline. The Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area offers rich opportunities for research on culturally and socioeconomically diverse families. The campus and department have excellent computer facilities. Students have ready access to the University's extensive library systems, as well as holdings from the Library of Congress, the National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, National Archives, and many other library collections.