

HEALTH SERVICES POLICY AND MANAGEMENT, PH.D.

The PhD program prepares students to conduct rigorous health services research designed to inform health policy and practice. Graduates are equipped for careers in academia, government, and various public and private agencies and organizations in the health care sector. The program provides students with foundational knowledge, a strong emphasis on research design and analytic methods, and professional development in health services policy and management. Students select additional coursework in one of three concentration areas: 1) Health Economics and Outcomes Research; 2) Health Policy and Politics; or 3) Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health. All students must complete a doctoral dissertation that demonstrates the ability to conduct original research.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate domain expertise in the following two broad areas: a) structure and functioning of health systems, in general, and the US health system in particular (system design, financing, reimbursement for care, population care access and disparities, and health system performance), b) health services content and delivery, major issues, process and outcome measures of performance.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of health services research methodologies, selection and application of appropriate methodologies, skills of data management and analysis, and inference/interpretation of findings.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to plan conduct original health services research and communicate the findings through professional written communications and oral presentations.

Admissions

Applicants should submit an application packet through the School of Public Health Application Service (<http://www.sophas.org>) unless advised otherwise by the department.

Admission Requirements

- While applicants with only a baccalaureate degree will be considered, strong preference is given to applicants with a Master's degree in public health, health administration, business administration, public administration, public policy, or a related field.
- The Ph.D. degree requires an approved program of 60 hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. Students with a relevant master's degree may complete the PhD in Health Services Policy and Management by completing a minimum of 46 additional credit hours (including 12 credit hours of dissertation preparation). A student without a prior master's degree will be required to complete a minimum of 60 graduate credit hours to graduate.
- A grade point average of 3.00/4.00 or higher is required on previous undergraduate and graduate course work.
- For international applicants, a satisfactory score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) - minimum score of 80 internet-based, 230 computer-based, or 570 paper-based - or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic Course Type 2 exam - minimum overall band score of 6.5. This requirement may be waived for applicants that have earned a prior degree from a US institution.

Application Requirements

- Resume or CV
- A personal statement that explains why you are interested in pursuing your PhD, outlines your research interests, and describes what appeals to you about our program, including potential faculty with whom you would like to work.
- Three letters of recommendation from academic and/or professional sources
- Official transcripts from **all** schools or colleges previously attended
- Non-US institution transcripts must be verified by World Education Services (WES) or equivalent evaluation service. Please submit a comprehensive course-by-course evaluation (WES ICAP).
- Scores for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) are optional.
- TOEFL or IELTS scores are required for those whose native language is not English
 - TOEFL: Scores should be submitted electronically using the USC Institutional code: 5818
 - IELTS: Scores should be mailed directly to the USC Graduate School:

The Graduate School

University of South Carolina

1705 College Street, Suite 552

Columbia, SC 29208

Graduate Assistantship

All full-time PhD students are guaranteed to receive full coverage of tuition, fees, and health insurance, as well as a generous stipend during their first two years in the program. In exchange, they work with department faculty as graduate research assistants and graduate teaching assistants to gain applied experience and enrich the learning process beyond the classroom. To qualify for an assistantship, a student must be fully admitted to a degree program, be enrolled full-time, and maintain a 3.00 GPA.

Profiles of Admitted Doctoral Students

Ph.D.

For Fall 2022, there were 19 applicants. Thirteen were accepted. Six enrolled. Their mean graduate GPA was 3.68 (on a 4.00 point scale).

Degree Requirements (60 Post-Baccalaureate Hours)

Doctoral Seminar (4 Hours)

Public Health Core Courses (6 Hours)

Course	Title	Credits
PUBH 700	Perspectives in Public Health	3
EPID 701	Concepts and Methods of Epidemiology	3
Total Credit Hours		6

Advanced Topics in Health Policy and Management (6 Hours)

Course	Title	Credits
HSPM 845	Advanced Study in Health Policy Management I	3
HSPM 846	Advanced Topics in Health Policy and Management II	3

Total Credit Hours 6

Research Methods Cognate (9 Hours)

Course	Title	Credits
HSPM 717	Health Services Research Methods I	3
HSPM 719	Health Services Research Methods II	3
HSPM 791	Selected Topics	1-6

Total Credit Hours 7-12

Note: All doctoral students are expected to complete courses on statistical software packages like STATA and SAS by the end of first year if not proficient in the use of the softwares. These hours can be counted towards electives.

Health Services Policy and Management Concentration (9 Hours)

Approved Electives (14 Hours)

Dissertation (12 Hours)

Examinations

The qualifying examination must be taken following the completion of course requirements listed under Advanced Topics in Health Policy and Management and Research Method Cognate. Qualifying examination is a cumulative exam that tests students on the content areas of five departmental courses in these two core areas. The examination will be given as two separate sections: (i) Research method and data and (ii) Health policy and management. The qualifying examination is offered once per year, in late spring or early summer (May/June).

A comprehensive examination is arranged in consultation with the major professor of the concentration area, Doctoral Program Director and the Graduate Director of the Department. Students must pass the qualifying examination, complete all doctoral seminar and concentration area courses prior to taking the comprehensive examination. This examination has two components: a written component and an oral presentation component. The written component is a take-home examination in which the student is required to write an NIH R03 type proposal on a specific research topic.

Proposal and Dissertation Defense:

Each student must prepare and defend a dissertation proposal consisting of a minimum of three chapters describing the importance of the research topic chosen, reviewing the relevant literature, and outlining the data and methods to be used.

Each student must prepare and defend a dissertation that contributes significantly to knowledge regarding the organization, financing, or delivery of health services.

Degree Requirements (Minimum of 46 hours Post-Masters)

Doctoral Seminar (4 Hours)

Public Health Core Requirements (6 Hours)

If the graduate degree is not in public health

Course	Title	Credits
PUBH 700	Perspectives in Public Health	3
EPID 701	Concepts and Methods of Epidemiology ((or equivalent))	3

Total Credit Hours 6

Advanced Topics in Health Policy and Management (6 Hours)

Course	Title	Credits
HSPM 845	Advanced Study in Health Policy Management I	3
HSPM 846	Advanced Topics in Health Policy and Management II	3

Total Credit Hours 6

Research Methods Cognate (9 Hours)

Course	Title	Credits
HSPM 717	Health Services Research Methods I	3
HSPM 719	Health Services Research Methods II	3
HSPM 791	Selected Topics	1-6

Total Credit Hours 7-12

Note: All doctoral students are expected to complete courses on statistical software packages like STATA and SAS by the end of first year if not proficient in the use of the softwares. These hours can be counted towards electives.

Health Services Policy and Management Concentration Area (9 Hours)

Dissertation (12 Hours)

Examinations

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Teaching Requirements

All doctoral students in the PhD program are required to participate in teaching activities of the department. The requirements must be completed between the time of matriculation and the dissertation proposal. The requirements can be fulfilled by completing the following items:

- Teaching Assistant training course offered by Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE),
- Presenting at least once in the doctoral student seminar series arranged by the department

Research Experience Requirement

As part of research experience, all PhD students are required to:

- complete CITI training during their first semester
- give at least one presentation (podium or poster) as the lead author at a national or international conference prior to the dissertation defense.
- author or co-author an article published in a reputable peer-reviewed journal prior to the dissertation defense.

These requirement must be completed prior to dissertation defense.