

DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM, MS ANTHRO AND MPH PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

The Public Health Practice Experience (PHPE) is a 600-hour, yearlong experience that MPH students are expected to complete as part of fulfilling degree requirements. PHPE is an opportunity to apply what has been learned in the classroom. Students will create projects that align with at least 3 foundational MPH competencies and 2 concentration-specific competencies and that will make a meaningful contribution to their Practice Sites. Because of this, any overlap in PHPE and thesis-related work will be contingent on being able to relate this work to public health competencies.

All dual degree students are eligible to apply for a waiver of 300 hours. This waiver does not change the mandatory yearlong length of the PHPE. Deadlines to submit this paperwork depend on the semester that the student will start practice. These dates can be found in the forms section of the MCH Practice Experience webpage: <https://www.unthsc.edu/school-of-public-health/mph-practice-experience/>

Students are encouraged to complete PHPE (PHED 5297) and the UNT Applied Thesis (ANTH 5950) concurrently, with flexibility to enroll non-concurrently in consultation with the committee chair and graduate advisors. Ideally, PHPE should be conducted in the last 3 semesters of the degree program to allow students to apply more of their coursework in the practice experience. However, students are eligible to begin practice as soon as their core Public Health coursework (the five 5300 courses) are completed. See subsequent sections for a discussion of the impact of timing on the flow of the practice experience and applied thesis.

Given the flexibility in timing for the start of PHPE, there are three (3) potential pathways for dual anthropology and public health students to complete their practice and applied thesis-related degree requirements:

1) CHRONOLOGICAL, SUMMER START



This pathway is an opportunity for dual degree students to start their PHPE on the same timeline as MPH cohort students. Student who follow this pathway can also take advantage of the Matching Interview process as a way to identify, interview with, and potentially secure a practice placement. Applied thesis research is conducted as part of the work with the Practice Site.

Preparing for Practice

- To begin PHPE in the summer, students must begin preparing in SEPTEMBER of the previous year by attending an Interlude on the Practice Experience. There are additional deadlines throughout the fall and spring before the PHPE; a timeline of these can be found in the forms section of the MCH Practice Experience webpage: <https://www.unthsc.edu/school-of-public-health/mph-practice-experience/>. Close attention should be paid to the deadlines so that students will be able to start PHPE in their desired semester.
- Students starting PHPE in summer can participate in a Matching Interview process, which allows them to interview with multiple potential sites. At that time, they can also discuss opportunities for **applied thesis projects** at those sites. Most students complete 4-5 brief interviews. The matching process is *competitive* - students and sites will rank desired placements. Based on the interview ratings and rankings received from students and potential site supervisors, recommendations are made to proceed ahead with a formal interview at an organization. The selection of the site is ultimately a choice made by the student and students and sites are under no obligation to proceed with the recommended match. A small percentage of students do not receive a recommended match after the brief interviews and they are provided with a list of opportunities they may pursue, or they make seek their own placement elsewhere.

2) CHRONOLOGICAL, FALL OR SPRING STARTS



This pathway is an opportunity for dual degree students to start their PHPE on a timeline that best suits their progress through coursework, especially if a summer start is not ideal. Student who follow this pathway will work to identify their own practice sites, and will also complete applied thesis research with the practice site.

Preparing for Practice

- Students who plan to start their PHPE in the Spring have deadlines similar to those with a summer start, and must begin to prepare for practice in October of the previous year. Those who plan to begin in the Fall have deadlines starting from May of the same year. The timeline of these can be found in the forms section of the MCH Practice Experience webpage: <https://www.unthsc.edu/school-of-public-health/mph-practice-experience/>.
- Students starting PHPE in Spring or Fall should work closely with their advisors to identify and secure Practice Sites. During this process, students should also discuss opportunities for **applied thesis projects** at perspective sites. Close attention should be paid to the deadlines so that students will be able to start PHPE in their desired semester.

FOR PATHWAYS #1 AND #2: PHPE WITH APPLIED THESIS DONE CONCURRENTLY

- Whether starting in summer with MPH cohort students, or in Spring or Fall, students will be placed in a Canvas course with a Faculty Course Coordinator, who will work closely with students and supervisors at the placement site throughout the year. Students will have a number of synthesizing assignments to complete in addition to their work at the Practice Site, including reflection papers, a policy analysis and brief, presentations, and co-learning meetings.
- Students will carry out their proposed work plans, which can include elements that fulfill their applied thesis requirements as long as any applied thesis-related tasks align with MPH and degree specific competencies and result in a tangible product that is not the applied thesis document (see table below). Appropriate products for the practice experience are likely to align with the Department of Anthropology’s client deliverable requirement that work to translate important methods, results, interpretations, discussion, health education and so forth into formats accessible by the public/practice site. This means that applied products that represent the practical applications benefiting your client/Practice Site can be used as part of your practice experience when they align with MPH competencies. Students who wish to carry out PHPE and applied thesis concurrently in international settings must ensure that work plans (with related tasks, competencies, and deliverables) cover the entire PHPE length of one year, even if not physically at the practice site for the full year.
- Because the applied thesis will be done *within* the practice experience setting and with approval of the Practice Site, students may log hours for applied thesis-related tasks that align with the competencies and applied deliverables in their work plan. Note that there are opportunities to revise the work plan in each semester as needed; if the details of the applied thesis project are still being determined in the first semester, applied thesis-related tasks can be added to the work plan in later semesters. Some examples might include:
 - FC 3: Analyze quantitative & qualitative data using appropriate biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming & software
 - FC 7: Assess population needs, assets & capacities that affect communities' health
 - Please refer to the MPH competencies document, found in the forms section of the MPH practice experience page: <https://www.unthsc.edu/school-of-public-health/mph-practice-experience/>

PHPE WORK PLAN

| MPH Competency | Tasks | Product |
|--|--|---|
| The student would write out the full competency in this field, so they would have the 3 foundation and 2 concentration specific competencies identified. | In this field, students would chronologically list the tasks that will be employed to complete an aspect of their final product(s) associated specifically with that competency. | In this field, the students will identify the title of the product and provide a narrative description of the product components that align with the competency and tasks. In this respect, it is possible that there will only be one title for some students, but different descriptions about specific parts of the product that can be clearly traced back to the competency and tasks. |

3) PARALLEL



Thesis not done at the Practice Site. Timing does not have to align.

This pathway offers the opportunity for students to completely decouple PHPE and Applied Thesis requirements. This option may be beneficial for students who plan to select or have chosen applied thesis projects with clients that will be time limited, do not easily align with the start of a semester, or will have some difficulty with aligning applied anthropological work with public health competencies.

Preparing for Practice

- Students should determine which semester they will begin their PHPE, and then follow the deadlines found in the forms section of the MCH Practice Experience webpage to ensure that they are prepared to start in their desired semester: <https://www.unthsc.edu/school-of-public-health/mph-practice-experience/>. As previously noted, there are submission requirements as early September for practice experiences that start in the summer, and close attention should be paid to the deadlines so that students will be able to start PHPE in their desired semester.

Applied Thesis

- Discussions for applied thesis projects, seeking clients, and other related activities are a separate process from the PHPE, and timelines do not need to align.
- No applied thesis-related work would apply toward PHPE hours.

Other General Dual Degree Guidelines

- UNT Denton Anthropology students may take their public health courses in an in-person (16 week) or online (8 week) delivery format.
- There is a degree planning document that your UNTHSC School of Public Health advisor will use to help you plan your path. The order of classes in that sample plan is the quickest path possible, which utilizes at least some online coursework. As per the first point, students *can* engage in public health coursework that is entirely face-to-face if they wish – but doing so will require a bit of planning in terms of financial aid and will take longer than the listed 8 semesters. See the information from the UNTHSC Financial Aid Office below.
- The student’s public health advisor will serve as a member of the applied thesis committee.
- Students may identify a PHPE placement that is completely remote, provided that the site can offer sufficient public health practice experience. These experiences might include community contact (which may be virtual) and being a part of professional teams (which may also be virtual). Solely engaging in research and writing tasks without further community engagement (beyond internship supervision) is not sufficient.
- The “Dual Degree” is technically a “credit-sharing” agreement between UNT Health Science Center in Fort Worth and UNT Denton. Although UNT and UNTHSC are part of the University of North Texas System, they function as separate universities. While there is a high level of

cooperation between the programs, students will apply to two universities, be enrolled at two universities, submit separate degree plans to two universities, apply for graduation to two universities, and graduate twice. Students should communicate to administrative offices, particularly financial aid, that they are a dual degree student. Some policies, such as extending opportunities to apply for eligibility for in-state tuition, differ between the two universities. At this time, UNT HSC cannot provide dual degree students with an in-state waiver.

- The information below comes from the **UNTHSC Financial Aid office** that they compiled to help students with general questions while in this SPH/Anthropology dual degree program between UNT and UNTHSC. There may be other specific questions that you have; please be sure to consult with the different financial aid offices about your particular situation.
 - This program does require planning on your part financially.
 - In general, in your first year all of your classes except 1 are at the UNT Denton campus (you will be receiving aid at UNT Denton). Your second year all of your classes are here at UNTHSC (so you will be getting aid here, and your loan limits in the School of Public Health are higher). And your third year, there is the thesis requirement in both areas beginning with the Public Health program in the summer, and then the Anthropology the following summer. This year is where some confusion may occur.
 - UNT Denton campus is known as a *trailer* school (meaning they begin their academic year in fall and end in the summer---fall/spring/summer); UNTHSC is known as a *header* school (meaning we begin in the *summer* and end in the spring—summer/fall/spring). You must go back and forth between UNTHSC and UNT Denton’s financial aid offices while pursuing the dual master’s, because you can only receive aid at one school at a time, and the aid you receive is for the program in which you are getting your degree (ex: working on your Anthropology degree—you must get aid from Denton; when working on your MPH degree you must get aid at UNTHSC).
 - So, you would begin your Public Health thesis over 3 terms/semesters at UNTHSC (summer/fall/spring), and then move on to completing the same the following year at UNT Denton (beginning summer/fall/spring). BUT the summer you begin at the UNT Denton campus you will have exhausted your annual federal loan limits for the financial aid award year at UNT. So with that, there may be a point in pursuing this program (specifically your 3rd year) that you will not have financial aid funding for some of the year.
 - This is due to 2 separate issues: there is an overlap of terms/semesters, and per federal regulations each academic year there is only so much loan funds you are eligible to take out. It is also due to each program having different loan limits (your Anthropology limits are less than the School of Public Health limits); so in your 3rd year when you receive your financial aid at UNTHSC while doing your thesis work, you will have been offered your loan limit eligibility to you at UNTHSC, but will be well over your limit to which UNT Denton can offer you for the summer semester you start there.
 - It is possible to receive financial aid to fund this program, but you **MUST PLAN AHEAD**. If at any point you’re using financial aid from UNT Denton to pay your UNTHSC bill, you will need to coordinate payment with the UNTHSC Student Financials Office. You may contact them at StudentFin@unthsc.edu or 817-735-2026.

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