PHYSICAL THERAPY AND PUBLIC HEALTH DPT/MPH

Degree Requirements

The following requirements are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, those requirements outlined in The Graduate School Policy Guide (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures/).

The combined DPT/MPH degree is available to incoming physical therapy students in the Feinberg School of Medicine. Students in the combined degree program can earn both the DPT and MPH degrees in three years.

The program is designed for students seeking to:

- Be high-quality, public health-oriented practitioners for people and communities with potential or existing movement dysfunction
- Contribute to the knowledge base in population health through nationally recognized research
- Drive efforts to improve population health and reduce health disparities.

Required MPH Courses for DPT/MPH Degree

Total Units Required: 12.5 MPH units

The DPT is an eight-trimester program consisting of 50 courses with a curriculum designed around the premise that the PT must be able to perform in the realm of practitioner, educator, researcher, and consultant. The curriculum includes the basic sciences and courses that cover both clinical concepts and professional issues. There is a strong emphasis on managing the patient as a person instead of a diagnosis and understanding the various environmental factors that contribute to how a person responds to their health status. The clinical education component consists of integrated and terminal experiences. Integrated (part-time) clinical education experiences begin in the 1st trimester and continue throughout the curriculum. Full-time clinical education experience include two, 6-week experiences and two, 13-week experiences. The 1st six-week full-time clinical experience occurs after the completion of the 1st year of didactic course work. The 2nd six-week full-time clinical experience occurs after the winter trimester of the 2nd year of didactic course work. Clinical Experience III and IV occur after completion of all didactic coursework. The DPTHMS Directors of Clinical Education are supportive of dual degree students and will work with students on an individual basis to ensure that DPTHMS clinical education requirements are met while allowing the students to meet MPH requirements.

Other Degree Requirements

The MPH Culminating Experience (MPH-CE) is a capstone-style extensive research or practice-related project in the area of public health completed during students’ final year of study. The MPH-CE process provides the structure that allows the student to take responsibility for and to succeed in the development, conduct, and completion of a public health focused research or practice project. The student also gains experience in writing and publicly presenting the MPH-CE project. Students complete a paper similar to what might be submitted to a journal for publication and give a presentation of their Culminating Experience. Students will enroll in PUB_HLTH 560-0 Culminating Experience in the quarter in which they plan to submit the MPH-CE paper and deliver the presentation. Students enrolled in the dual degree program may register for PUB_HLTH 560-0 Culminating Experience and present the MPH-CE earlier in their graduate careers, but the MPH degree will not be awarded until the DPT is conferred.

Students will also complete an Applied Practical Experience (APEx), a 160-hour practice experience in a public health agency in the Chicago area or elsewhere in the world. It is not a research project although some students collect data or in some other manner participate in a research project as part of their experience. The MPH Professional Experiences Committee (PEC) assists students with APEx placements, and is responsible for reviews of APEx proposals. After completing their applied practical experiences, students make a poster presentation and submit a 5-page paper summarizing their APEx.

Additional Resources:

- Department website (https://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/sites/pthms/)