Physical Activity and Health, MS

Would you like to improve health and chronic disease outcomes across the human lifespan or develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of exercise and fitness programs? This flexible program helps prepare you for a variety of careers in corporate, clinical or community settings.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: MS Physical Activity and Health
The MS program in physical activity and health offers an opportunity for advanced training in exercise science, physical activity and aging, or physical activity and health promotion alongside faculty who are immersed in the latest research.

This program prepares students to translate and apply evidence-based exercise science, fitness and lifestyle behavior change approaches to improve health and well-being and prevent chronic disease across the lifespan.

Students in the program develop competencies in research design, statistical methods and the ethical conduct of research studies. They have the opportunity to conduct a mentored research project as part of a thesis, if desired. They also learn to apply theoretical models of behavior change for the development and implementation of interventions to facilitate the adoption and maintenance of physical activity and other health and wellness behaviors. Students develop and demonstrate their knowledge of the causes, risks factors and impact of exercise, physical activity and fitness on the disease process in cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, cancer, musculoskeletal health and functional fitness through a critical examination of epidemiological research and exercise intervention studies.

The skills and knowledge acquired during the course of training enables each student to develop professional competencies that can be applied to significant problems and issues within the fields of exercise science and health promotion.
At a Glance

- **College/School:** College of Health Solutions
- **Location:** Downtown Phoenix

Accelerated Program Options

This program allows students to obtain both a bachelor's and master's degree in as little as five years. It is offered as an accelerated bachelor's and master's degree with:

**Clinical Exercise Science, BS**

Acceptance to the graduate program requires a separate application. During their junior year, eligible students are advised by their academic departments to apply.

Degree Requirements

32 credit hours and a thesis, or
32 credit hours and a written comprehensive exam, or
32 credit hours and an applied project (EXW 593)

**Required Core (9 credit hours)**
EXW 501 Research Statistics (3)
EXW 536 Physiological Aspects of Physical Activity and Chronic Disease (3)
EXW 542 Health Promotion (3)

**Research (5 credit hours)**
EXW 500 Research Methods (3)
EXW 591 Exercise and Wellness Seminar (2)

**Electives (12-18 credit hours)**

**Culminating Experience (0-6 credit hours)**
EXW 599 Thesis (6) or
EXW 593 Applied Project (6) or
written comprehensive exam (0)

Additional Curriculum Information

All students must focus their plan of study in one of three areas: exercise science, physical activity and aging, or physical activity and health promotion. The focus determines the choice of electives available to students. For a list of approved elective courses, students should contact their academic unit.

Exercise science --- This is focused study in areas such as advanced exercise physiology, muscle physiology, fuel metabolism, exercise endocrinology, advanced exercise testing and prescription, physiology of physical activity and chronic disease, biomechanics and motor control. This focus area is a
good option for students who are interested in pursuing further graduate study in the area of exercise science and chronic disease prevention and management.

Physical Activity and Aging --- This is focused study in areas such as advanced exercise physiology, advanced exercise testing and prescription, physiology of physical activity and chronic disease, physical activity and aging, biomechanics and motor control. This focus area is a good option for students who are interested in pursuing careers in gerontology, working with older adults in the fitness industry, or students who may be pursuing further graduate study in applied exercise science, physical therapy or the medical fields.

Physical activity and health promotion --- This is focused study in areas such as health promotion program planning; implementation and evaluation; physical activity policy in public health; health behavior change theory; motivational interviewing; physiology of physical activity and chronic disease; exercise for obesity; aging and sleep; and the role of mindfulness in stress, health and health behavior. This focus area is a good option for students who are interested in pursuing careers in health promotion, corporate wellness or public health and who may be pursuing further graduate study in health promotion or public health.

All students are admitted to the nonthesis option but may apply to the thesis option.

The nonthesis option requires an applied project or a written comprehensive exam as the culminating experience. The nonthesis option is an appropriate choice for those students who cannot devote full-time to their research endeavors or for students who are seeking to continue their education, advance their skill level as practitioners or advance their current careers. Students who take the written comprehensive exam are required to take six additional elective courses in the focus area.

In the thesis option, the thesis is considered the final integrative experience of the degree; it involves conducting research that is guided by a recognized research paradigm (e.g., scientific, interpretive) and producing a scholarly report of the process and results. The thesis option is a good choice for students who are interested in pursuing more advanced graduate study in the field.

**Admission Requirements**

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the College of Health Solutions.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree in a related field from a regionally accredited institution. Students are expected to have the coursework and undergraduate credit for the basic courses required for a BS degree in exercise and wellness. Students who do not have these course competencies can be admitted with deficiencies. Deficiencies are determined upon admission, and these courses must be completed, usually by the end of the first year of study. These courses are not considered part of the graduate plan of study. A graduate course may be substituted for a deficiency but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. statement of career or research interests
4. three professional letters of recommendation
5. proof of English proficiency

**Additional Application Information**

An applicant whose native language is not English must submit proof of English proficiency regardless of current residency.

BIO 201 and BIO 202 must be completed prior to admission to the master's degree program. Other deficiency courses may be taken prior to or during the master's degree program. The corresponding ASU course can be found in parentheses:

- Human Anatomy and Laboratory (BIO 201 Human Anatomy and Physiology I)
- Human Physiology and Laboratory (BIO 202 Human Anatomy and Physiology II)
- Human Nutrition (NTR 241 Human Nutrition)
- Exercise Physiology and Laboratory (SSP 315 Exercise and Sport Physiology)
- Kinesiology and Laboratory (EXW 330 Kinesiological Foundations of Movement)
- Exercise Testing and Laboratory (EXW 420 Exercise Testing)
- Exercise Prescription (EXW 425 Exercise Prescription for Health and Wellness)

An undergraduate course in statistics is strongly recommended.

Students should see the program website for application deadlines.

**Application Deadlines**

**Fall**

**Career Opportunities**

Professionals with expertise in exercise science and chronic disease prevention, physical activity and health promotion, wellness, or exercise across the lifespan are in demand across sectors and industries including commercial fitness and wellness centers, health care systems, corporate fitness and wellness programs, research settings and public health.

Career examples include:

- corporate fitness coordinator or director
• exercise physiologist
• fitness and wellness coordinator
• fitness trainer or aerobics instructor
• health promotion specialist or health educator
• personal trainer
• research coordinator

Contact Information

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