Population Health, PhD

Do you plan to pursue a career in research that has a real impact on the health of people? With its focused tracks, your doctoral program can include research projects conducted hand-in-hand with the communities like those you aim to help.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Population Health

The PhD program in population health brings together multiple disciplines, illustrating the complex factors that affect the health and well-being of populations. The program addresses the interaction between health systems and other sectors of society, sectors that include the private sector; government; nonprofit, and nongovernmental organizations; media; and academia that work together to affect population health outcomes.

Required courses reinforce a strong repertoire of systems science, quantitative and qualitative research methods, epidemiology and biostatistics, and ethics. The practicum offers an applied experience and the dissertation requires novel research on population health.

Students personalize their program of study by completing courses from one of four tracks: health equity, complex adaptive systems, urban environments for health or dissemination and implementation science.

The health equity track trains doctoral students to conduct empathetic research, incorporating the lived experience of populations vulnerable for health disparities into applied research. Students use an asset-based approach to collaborate with populations to improve health outcomes to address social determinants of health.

In the complex adaptive systems track, students learn about theory, principles, models and techniques used to analyze complex systems and data as applied to population health.

Exacerbated by population growth and climate change, city-dwelling populations are experiencing health challenges such as new and reemerging infectious diseases, noncommunicable diseases, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, obesity, poor water quality and injuries from road trauma. The track on urban environments for health prepares students to meet those challenges from an evidence-based and transdisciplinary environmental perspective.
At a Glance

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

Degree Requirements

84 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation, or
84 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation - Dissemination and Implementation Science Track

**Required Core (15 credit hours)**
- BMI 515 Applied Biostatistics in Medicine and Informatics (3)
- EXW 645 Advanced Applied Methods and Data Analysis (3)
- NUR 608 Qualitative Research Design and Methods (3)
- POP 605 Population Health Systems Science and Theory (3)
- POP 633 Population Health Ethics (3)

**Track (15 credit hours)**

**Electives (30 credit hours)**

**Research (6 credit hours)**
- EXW 700 Research Methods (3)
- EXW 701 Advanced Research Methods (3)

**Other Requirement (6 credit hours)**
- POP 591 Seminar: Evaluating the Population Health Literature (3)
- POP 780 Population Health Practicum (3)

**Culminating Experience (12 credit hours)**
- POP 799 Dissertation (12)

Additional Curriculum Information

Students select from tracks in health equity, complex adaptive systems, urban environments for health or dissemination and implementation science.

Other requirement course POP 591 Seminar may be substituted with approval of the academic unit.
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 a master's degree in any field from a regionally accredited institution. Preference is given to applicants who completed a data-based research thesis during their master's degree program.

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. personal statement
4. three letters of recommendation
5. professional resume
6. writing sample (six to 10 pages)
7. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information

An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency regardless of current residency. Applicants must submit a TOEFL score unless the requirements for an exception have been met. Details are available at: https://admission.asu.edu/international/graduate/english-proficiency.

An oral interview with program faculty is required prior to acceptance; the interview may be in person or by videoconference.

The personal statement should indicate research or scholarly interest, primary program area, statement of career goals and the name of a potential faculty mentor from the list of approved faculty mentors.

All applicants must have passed a graduate-level epidemiology course (e.g., EXW 642 Exercise Epidemiology, NTR 557 Nutritional Epidemiology, POP 598 Topic: Epidemiology) and a graduate-level research statistics course (e.g., EXW 501 Research Statistics or NTR 502 Statistics in Research) prior to admission, or if not completed prior to admission, must be completed prior to matriculating.

GRE scores (verbal, quantitative and writing) are not required but are encouraged.

It is expected that students admitted to the program have documented academic training and a strong interest in public health, health care or population health. Thus, depending on the student's academic training, background, scholarly interests and focus area, a student may be asked to take course deficiencies prior to or concurrently with graduate course enrollment.
Application Deadlines

Fall

Career Opportunities

Graduates of this interdisciplinary program are prepared to become:

- executives or analysts in the private industry such as medical device, biotechnology, health IT startups, health insurance or health care delivery organizations
- faculty at research-intensive universities in schools of population health, public health, medicine or health sciences
- leaders and directors of health in local, state and federal government agencies
- program directors and officers for global health organizations such as World Health Organization or the World Bank
- program directors and officers of local and national non-governmental foundations such as the American Cancer Society or American Diabetes Association
- research or policy analysts at federal health agencies such as the National Institutes of Health or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Students are strongly encouraged to pursue postdoctoral research opportunities upon graduation.

Career examples include:

- entrepreneur
- epidemiologist
- global health professional
- health information manager or director
- health scientist
- population health analyst or manager
- postsecondary public health teacher
- professor
- public health consultant or policy advisor
- research scientist

Contact Information

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