



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

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University Council

March 11, 2022

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2021-2022

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the College of Public Health to offer a new Graduate Certificate in Social Determinants of Health will be an agenda item for the March 18, 2022, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Sanchez, Chair

University Curriculum Committee

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu  
Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro

## PROPOSAL FOR A CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

**Date:** January 8, 2022

**School/College/Unit:** College of Public Health

**Department/Division:** College of Public Health

**Certificate Title:** Social Determinants of Health

**Effective Term:** Fall 2022

**Which campus(es) will offer this certificate?** Athens

**Level (Undergraduate, Graduate, or Post-Baccalaureate):** Graduate

**CIP:** 51221201

**Program Abstract:** The purpose of the College of Public Health's Graduate Certificate in Social Determinants of Health is to prepare students to address the challenges of an increasingly complex society, in which the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, and play largely determine quality-of-life outcomes. The need for this program has increased with widespread recognition of society's health disparities and the role of public health in addressing those disparities. A graduate certificate in the Social Determinants of Health would reach an audience that is motivated to go into public health and work on the most salient challenges facing the profession--especially in the area of improving health equity. The certificate will be 12 credit hours, in which all students will complete one three credit hour core foundational course (HPAM 8340, Social Determinants of Health and Health Disparities, or HPRB 7990, Diversity and Social Justice in Public Health) and then choose an additional nine credit hours. The program will be housed in the College of Public Health's Dean's Office.

### 1. Purpose and Educational Objectives

**State the purpose and educational objectives of the program. How does this program complement the mission of the institution?**

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are "born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age" that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes. The SDOH are grouped into five domains: economic stability, education access and quality, healthcare access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context (*Healthy People 2030*). The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) framework is now one of the foundational components of an education in public health. The purpose of the proposed Graduate Certificate in SDOH is to prepare students to address the *public health* challenges where disparity and inequity in the five domains listed above are an important component. The need for this program has increased with the global SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, where communities of color have been disproportionately impacted and the root of this inequity are SDOH. The concurrent racial justice movement also brings the key role of structural racism and how it impacts mortality and morbidity in minority populations. This certificate would allow the college to meet the needs of

the workforce, students, and communities served in working to improve the health of all Georgians.

The objectives of the Graduate Certificate in Social Determinants of Health are:

- Prepare graduate students with an understanding of, and skills in, the Social Determinants of Health so that they may contribute to the public health workforce as leaders in promoting health equity
- Communicate data-based insights on how to address health disparities
- Discuss what the Social Determinants of Health are, and the role of these factors in society on the public's health
- Inspire discovery of graduate degree programs and careers in research on the SDOH across public health and health services, including health policy and management, epidemiology and biostatistics, environmental health, and health promotion and behavior

## 2. Need for the Program

### Explain why this program is necessary

There is a considerable and increasing workforce need for people with training in public health, health services provision, health promotion and behavior, and health policy and administration. There is meaningful, significant, and growing demand for public health professionals in the U.S. workforce in addition to healthcare providers who provide clinical services. These professionals are essential to meet the needs of the population, especially those in marginalized and underserved communities.

In October 2021, there were over 5,000 open positions posted on *LinkedIn* that were specifically seeking professionals trained and experienced in the Social Determinants of Health. The growth of such jobs is projected to continue in increasingly large increments. In a March 2021<sup>1</sup> article published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, Plepys and colleagues presented evidence on the first-destination employment outcomes for public health graduates from 2015 to 2018, and showed that 73% of public health graduates were employed immediately after graduation, while an additional 15% went on to further their education. Of those entering the workforce, graduates took on roles in diverse sectors that included healthcare, private corporations, academic, nonprofits, and government jobs. The authors conclude that demand for such graduates would only grow and there would need to be significant growth in the public health workforce to keep pace with positions that are emerging to address the needs arising due to the pandemic.

### Enrollment Information:

- a. Semester/Year of Program Initiation:** Fall 2022
- b. Semester/Year of Full Implementation of Program:** Fall 2022
- c. Semester/Year First Certificates will be awarded:** Spring 2024
- d. Annual Number of Graduates expected (once the program is established):** 15-20
- e. Projected Future Trends for number of students enrolled in the program:** Please see above for workforce projections. Future trends for enrollment in the program of study for the graduate certificate are only expected to increase over time.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2020.306038>

### **3. Student Demand**

**a. Provide documentation of evidence of student demand for this program, which may include a student survey.**

**b. Provide evidence that demand will be sufficient to sustain reasonable enrollment.**

Over the last twenty years, there has been steady growth in degree conferrals in public health at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This has been documented in the literature, particularly for graduate education. In a 2018 study published in *Public Health Reports*, authors used data from 1992 through 2016 to show longitudinal trends in graduate degree conferrals in public health among Masters of Public Health and doctoral programs. During the study period, mean annual growth for both master's and doctoral degrees was 5 to 6%. Over the entire observation time frame, composite estimates showed a growth in degree conferral by 330% for M.P.H. degrees and 302% for public health doctoral degrees. Data for this study came from the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH).<sup>2</sup>

In spring 2021, the College of Public Health's Office of Outreach, Engagement, and Equity launched a new Health Equity Fellows student initiative. The Health Equity Fellows program selects students through a competitive process and then connects each student with a city in the state of Georgia to work on a SDOH-related project for the municipality with which they are partnered. In the process of selecting both the first and second cohorts, student applicants were asked whether they would be interested in an SDOH certificate program. Of the 33 students who have applied for the Health Equity Fellows program in the last two academic years, 100% indicated they would be interested in a SDOH certificate program and related coursework.

**c. To what extent will minority student enrollments be greater than, less than, or equivalent to the proportion of minority students in the total student body?**

Over the last decade, and especially since the onset of the COVID19 pandemic, careers that are dedicated to addressing and intervening in the social determinants of health continue to emerge. Some examples of this kind of work include conducting community health needs assessments, planning and implementation for addressing community health needs, targeting interventions for addressing health disparities for underrepresented groups including Black and Indigenous People of Color and rural families, and policy advocacy and analysis of such interventions. It is expected that minority student enrollment will be greater than the proportion of minority students in the total student body because of current interest and demand for courses in the Social Determinants of Health among minority students in the College of Public Health.

### **4. Program of Study**

The Graduate Certificate in Social Determinants of Health will be housed in the College of Public Health's Dean's Office. The coursework for the certificate is already established and being offered, and the certificate draws on every department and institute in the college given

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<sup>2</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0033354918791542>

its transdisciplinary nature and subject matter. This means faculty, administrative support, and technological capacity are already established and existing resources will be used to deliver content.

The certificate will be managed and continually evaluated by the program coordinator. Faculty from the College of Public Health will teach all SDOH courses. All SDOH courses are scheduled consistently for both spring and fall semesters, and course schedules are projected ahead by two years. Faculty in the College of Public Health have developed all core courses required for the certificate, and the coursework has been approved and offered for many semesters. The foundational course options (HPAM 8340, Social Determinants of Health and Health Disparities, or HPRB 7990, Diversity and Social Justice in Public Health) on health disparities have been approved and are being offered in fall 2022. Enrollments in SDOH-related courses have steadily grown since the coursework has been made available. Students complete these courses on varying schedules, but the average enrollment range for these courses is between 10 and 25 students.

### **Student Support Services**

Each student will be advised one-on-one by the program coordinator. The program coordinator is the Assistant Dean for Outreach, Engagement, and Equity, and has experience advising students both as non-degree seeking students and as students seeking other graduate degrees who choose to add the certificate to their studies. Advising can be done in person, via email, the phone, or online collaboration tools such as Zoom.

### **Provide a detailed program of study for the certificate program, including:**

#### **a. Specific course prefixes, numbers, and titles**

##### **Program Content**

All students will complete one of the core foundational courses (HPAM 8340, Social Determinants of Health and Health Disparities (3 hours) or HPRB 7990, Diversity and Social Justice in Public Health (3 hours)) and must also select an additional 9 credit hours of courses for a total of 12 credit hours. The recommended courses below will meet the requirements, though appropriate substitutions may be made with permission of the graduate coordinator. All courses listed below have been approved in the UGA CAPA system, and by the end of the 2021-2022 academic year, all will have been taught at least once.

Program of Study Details:

All students must complete one of the following foundations courses (3 credit hours)

<b>Course</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Semester offered</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
HPAM 8340 or HPAM 8340E	Social Determinants of Health and Health Disparities	Every Fall	3 hours
HPRB 7990 or HPRB 7990E	Diversity and Social Justice in Public Health	Every Spring	3 hours

Then students should choose 9 hours from the following courses. *Additional courses may be approved by the certificate coordinator.*

Course	Course Name	Credit Hours
EPID 7600	Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology for Public Health Practice	3 hours
EPID(GRNT) 8300	Epidemiology of Aging	3 hours
EPID 8600	Social Epidemiology	3 hours
GLOB 7100 or GLOB 7100E	Foundations of Global Health	3 hours
GLOB 7400 or GLOB 7400E	Global Maternal and Child Health	3 hours
HPAM 7040 or HPAM 7040E	Health, Poverty, Economic Disparity and Socioeconomic Development	3 hours
HPAM 7060	Policy Issues in Women's Health	3 hours
HPAM 7650 or HPAM 7650E	Comparative Healthcare Systems	3 hours
HPAM(GLOB) 8820	Global Health Policy	3 hours
HPRB 7069 or HPRB 7069E	Human Sexuality in Public Health	3 hours
HPRB 7170	Health Promotion and Aging	3 hours
HPRB 7800	Social Inequities in Health	3 hours
GRNT 7700 or GRNT 7700E	Resilience and Health	3 hours

**Sample program of study:**

Year 1	Fall	HPAM 8340 or HPAM 8340E, Social Determinants of Health and Health Disparities (3 hours)
		HPAM 7060, Policy Issues in Women's Health (3 hours)
	Spring	GLOB 7400 or GLOB 7400E, Global Maternal and Child Health (3 hours)
	Summer	HPAM 7650 or HPAM 7650E, Comparative Healthcare Systems (3 hours)
Year 2	Spring	HPRB 7990 or HPRB 7990E, Diversity and Social Justice in Public Health (3 hours)

**b. Identify any new courses created for this program:**

HPAM 8340, Social Determinants of Health and Health Disparities, is a new course.

**5. Model Program and Accreditation**

**a. Identify any model programs, accepted disciplinary standards, and accepted curricular**

**practices against which the proposed program could be judged. Evaluate the extent to which the proposed curriculum is consistent with these external points of reference and provide a rationale for significant inconsistencies and differences that may exist.**

**b. If program accreditation is available, provide an analysis of the ability of the program to satisfy the curricular standards of such specialized accreditation.**

The state of Georgia is currently home to only one other graduate certificate in the Social Determinants of Health, at Emory University. However, UGA's offering would be the only one available at a public university in the state. This program will be marketed to professional audiences by emphasizing the affordability and educational value of the certificate.

This certificate aligns closely with Emory's approach to offering a certificate in the SDOH, and is consistent with the course content and learning objectives for such programs. There are no significant inconsistencies or differences between the graduate certificate that the UGA College of Public Health will offer in the Social Determinants of Health in regard to the course offerings of core learning objectives compared to the certificate offered by Emory University.

## **6. Student Learning Outcomes**

**Describe the proposed learning outcomes for the certificate program.**

Upon completing the SDOH graduate certificate, students will be able to: 1) work collaboratively to solve problems from a Social Determinants of Health perspective; 2) identify and quantify health disparities in communities using population health data across various demographic and socioeconomic areas of life; 3) plan health interventions and public health approaches to improving well-being using a SDOH lens; and 4) assess community needs in the areas of equity and inclusion across domains such as housing, transportation, health, and education.

## **7. Assessment and Admissions**

**Describe how the learning outcomes for the program will be assessed. Describe the process and criteria for how students will be admitted to and retained in the program.**

All SDOH core courses will be reviewed each semester by the program coordinator against UGA-approved student learning outcomes, following UGA's Academic Affairs Policy No. 2.04-4. Per this policy, the College of Public Health has an assessment plan in place already and collects data on at least one of the student learning outcomes each semester.

The certificate is open to UGA graduate students in any program of study and non-degree students (e.g., career-changers or those seeking deeper expertise in their profession) who matriculate through the UGA Graduate School's process for non-degree students. Students will apply as non-degree seeking graduate students through the Graduate School unless they are enrolled in a UGA graduate program. The Graduate School's admissions standards will be used for non-degree seeking students.

Online access to some library resources will be required, but no additional library resources will be necessary to offer the certificate. The current UGA online learning management system known as eLC will be used to offer these courses. Links to those resources are included in all syllabi. No laboratory resources will be necessary.

## Documentation of Approval and Notification

**Proposal:** Graduate Certificate in Social Determinants of Health

**College:** College of Public Health

**Department:** College of Public Health

**Proposed Effective Term:** Fall 2022

School/College:

- College of Public Health Dean, Dr. Marsha Davis, 1/8/22

Graduate School:

- Associate Dean, Dr. Anne Shaffer, 2/10/22