Overview of the Focus Area

For students who entered the major fall 2015 and later

WHAT IS THE FOCUS AREA COURSE REQUIREMENT?
The focus area allows students to explore areas of particular interest and relevance to public health, drawing connections between disciplines. Think of the requirement as your focus area within public health. The classes that you choose will enhance your understanding of the field and better prepare you for a career as a public health professional. At least 12 credits are required in this area, at the 300 level or higher. The course material must be relevant to the study of public health.

OPTIONS TO FULFILL THE FOCUS AREA REQUIREMENT
The courses must be relevant to Public Health and form a coherent set of courses. Courses can be taken in public health, another department, abroad or at one of the 5 Colleges. The course material must be relevant to the study of public health and pre-approved by the Program Advisor.

HOW TO GET APPROVAL FOR THE FOCUS AREA
You must submit a “Focus Area Proposal Form,” which demonstrates how you plan to fulfill the focus area courses requirement. This form is required! The Undergraduate Program Advisor must accept the form before courses are able to count toward the requirement. On this form, you will include the course number, Spire description, semester taken/taking, number of credits, and rationale for your choices. If you want to make any changes after approval, you will have to fill out a “Course Exception Form.” Return form to Peer Advising Office, 330 Arnold. For your records, you should also keep a copy of the form.

ADDING THE APPROVED COURSES TO SPIRE
Once you enroll in the last proposed course, please email the Program Advisor and ask her to update your Academic Requirement Report (ARR).
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DOES SPIRE TRULY REFLECT WHETHER YOU FULFILLED YOUR FOCUS AREA REQUIREMENT?

- NO! SPIRE does not always sort the focus area correctly. Even if you got approval for your focus area, the courses will not always go directly into the appropriate section. Thus, it is important that you keep track of what you listed on your Focus Area Proposal Form.

- Once you are enrolled in the last proposed focus area course, contact the Program Advisor to have her enter the correct courses on your ARR.

HOW DO I MAKE A CHANGE ONCE MY FOCUS AREA IS APPROVED?

- The Form is a type of contract. If you want to take another course than what is listed on your Proposal Form then you will have to fill out a Course Exception Form. For your records, you should keep a copy of the form.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DON’T FILL OUT A FOCUS AREA PROPOSAL FORM?

- There is a chance that a class that you took will not be counted towards the Focus Area requirement. If this happens, it may prevent you from graduating on time.

WHAT IF I WANT TO STUDY ABROAD?

- Studying abroad is the perfect opportunity to complete Focus Area requirements. Make sure to get your courses approved by Gloria DiFulvio before going abroad.

CAN I USE A LANGUAGE COURSE FOR MY FOCUS AREA?

- You may only count one 3 credit 300+ level language course toward your Focus Area. You may, however, use cultural studies for your Focus Area as long as the classes are relevant to Public Health.

CAN I USE COURSES TOWARD BOTH MY FOUNDATIONS REQUIREMENTS AND MY FOCUS AREA?

- No, you are not allowed to count any course toward two different Public Health requirements. For example, you may not count a Foundation course toward your Focus Area Course Requirement.
DEPARTMENTS THAT MAY HAVE PUBLIC HEALTH RELATED COURSES
Afro-American Studies
Anthropology
Biochemistry & Molecular Biology
Biology
Chemistry
Communication Disorders
Communications
Computer Science
Economics
Education
Environmental Sciences
Food Science
Geology
Information Technology
Kinesiology
Latin American Studies
Mathematics & Statistics
Microbiology
Natural Resources Conservation
Nursing
Nutrition
Political Science
Psychology
Science (interdisciplinary)
School of Management
Social Thought & Political Economy
Sociology
Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies

FIVE COLLEGE (5C) AND UMASS CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS THAT MAY HAVE PUBLIC HEALTH RELATED COURSES
African Studies (5C)
Asian & Asian American Studies
Asian/Pacific/American Studies (5C)
Criminal Justice
Culture, Health and Science (5C)
International Agriculture Studies
International Relations (5C)
Latin America, Caribbean & Latino Studies
Latin American Studies (5C)
Middle Eastern Studies (5C)
Native American Indian Studies
Native American Indian Studies (5C)
Population Studies
Public Policy & Administration
Civic Engagement Certificate

SEVERAL SUGGESTED FOCUSES EXPLAINED
Here are a few popular certificates and programs that may help you fulfill your Focus Area requirements. When considering these programs it is important to remember that they have different requirements than the Public Health requirements. Make sure you still meet the 12 credits at the 300 level or higher requirement.

CITIZEN SCHOLAR’S PROGRAM
About: One remarkable program offered through CESL is the Citizen Scholars Program, is a two-year, academic service-learning program that links real-life experience to academic coursework. This course sequence is a great way to fulfill some public health requirements.
Who: This program is open to ANY sophomore and junior UMass students who have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Students who might be interested in the program include those with a passion for social justice and community engagement, those who wish to strengthen their leadership skills and those interested in nonprofit or government work.
Requirements: For this program there is a requirement that students be on campus for four semesters.
For more information: http://cesl.umass.edu/citizenscholars/apply

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE CERTIFICATE
About: This certificate provides students with hands on experience, promoting social change. It enhances student skills and knowledge of activism and citizenship.
Who: This certificate is a good option for those committed to social justice, community organizing, public policy, or political theory. If you’re in Citizen Scholar’s Program, you only need two additional classes to complete the certificate.

Requirements: Students must complete a minimum of six courses (each three credits or more) for a minimum of 18 credits that fulfill specific requirements.

For more information: http://cesl.umass.edu/certificaterequirements

POPULATION STUDIES CERTIFICATE
About: The Population Studies Certificate examines factors affecting Public Health, which include family dynamics, environmental impacts, labor markets, and population estimates.
Who: This could be a good option for those interested in economics, health policy, community health education, or urban planning. This certificate is straightforward in the guidelines and expected coursework.
Requirements: The certificate requires 15 credits, with five required courses.

For more information:
http://www.umass.edu/ug_programguide/certificate_programs/populationstudiescertificate.html

PUBLIC POLICY & ADMINISTRATION CERTIFICATE
About: The Public Policy & Administration Certificate focuses on various Public Policy issues, including health care policy, education reform, environmental policy, international relations, etc.
Who: This certificate may benefit students who are interested in a career in health policy and management, hospital administration, health care reform or political science within the Public Health field.
Requirements: The Public Policy & Administration Certificate consists of three mandatory courses, in addition to five elective courses. The remaining five elective courses are chosen based on student interests and three of them must be at the three hundred level or higher. Students interested in this certificate must complete an application and a one page proposal for their course plan and explanation.

For more information: http://masspolicy.org/acad_undergrads_reqs.html

CULTURE, HEALTH, & SCIENCE CERTIFICATE
About: The Culture Health & Science Certificate is offered to all students within the Five College program. This interdisciplinary program focuses on areas including research strategies, disease outbreaks, social sciences, cultural experience, the environment, etc.
Who: Many of the courses offered overlap with the Public Health major requirements, making it a good choice for Public Health students. However, you are only allowed to use 3 major courses toward the certificate. Additionally, students have the opportunity to take courses at any of the Five Colleges, which enhances their academic experience.
Requirements: Students are required to complete seven courses, four of which may be counted toward the student’s major. Four semesters of a foreign language are encouraged, but not required. Students must take at least one course from each of the five listed categories. Students are required to pursue an independent research project, which provides students with hands on experience in a particular area of interest. Join the listserv and attend CHS events.

For more information: https://www.fivecolleges.edu/chs/

ICONS
About: The icons program (Integrated Concentration in Science) is an 18 credit academic program with a track in biomedicine and a track in renewable energy.
Who: This program is best suited for freshman, due to course plan, but sophomores are also encouraged to apply. This program is a good fit for freshman and sophomore students who are interested in focused in renewable energy or biomedicine. This rigorous curriculum prepares students for a career in Environmental Health, Epidemiology, or Biostatistics.
Requirements: Application is required. Students enroll in three courses, one each year, and then complete a senior thesis.

For more information: http://www.cns.umass.edu/icons-program/academics
Example of Focus Areas

**DISCLAIMER:** Please note that some of these courses have prerequisites and restrictions. The sample focuses listed below are simply suggestions and examples for some Focus Areas. **Even if you choose to take some of these courses, you still MUST submit a Focus Area Proposal form.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**
These courses encompass environmental policy, environmental health, biology and chemistry knowledge background as well as environmental science concepts.

- PUBHLTH 303: Introduction to Environmental Health Sciences (3)
- ENVIRSCI 315: Principles of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (3)
- ENVIRSCI 342: Pesticides, The Environment, and Public Policy (3)
- POLISCI 387: Energy Policy (4)
- ENVIRSCI 452: Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (3)

**INTERNATIONAL HEALTH POLICY**
These courses have a focus on politics, specifically internationally. An Asian Studies independent study is included as an example of a way that students could expand their knowledge on the health or policy of a different culture.

- POLISCI 359: International Political Economy (4)
- POLISCI 391AF: Politics of Interventions in Africa (3)
- GEOSCI 530: Population and the Environment (3)
- PUP&ADM 190A: The Middle East in Global Policy (4)

**WOMEN’S HEALTH**
These courses focus on the biology, politics and issues of women’s health.

- PSYCH 355: Adolescent Psych (3)
- PUBHLTH 390W: Fundamentals of Women's Health (3)
- POLISCI 391K: Family and the State (3)
- SOCIOL 395K: Domestic Violence (3)

**SCIENCES**
This sample focus shows how classes from different but similar disciplines can be combined to form a well-rounded knowledge of the sciences to compliment your public health degree.

- CHEM 261: Organic Chemistry (3)
- MICROBIO 310: General Microbiology (3)
- MICROBIO 312: Microbiology Laboratory (3)
- MICROBIO 330: Microbial Genetics (3)
- BIO 383H: Gene and Genome Analysis (4)

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS 5-COLLEGE CERTIFICATE**
This is an example of how courses being used to fulfill a certificate can also be used to form - the two may not be identical but you can pull classes from your certificate to build your focus area.

- ECON 322: International Trade (3)
- ANTHRO 336: Political Anthropology (3)
- POLISCI 354: International Relations (3)
- POLISCI 359: International Political Economy (4)
- GEO-SCI 364: Geography of Development (3)
- HISTORY 381: U.S. Diplomatic History II (3)
**Child Development**
These courses give an interdisciplinary understanding to the health and development of a child, both physically and mentally.
- PSYCH 355: Adolescent Psych (3)
- SOCIOLOGY 382: Sociology of Childhood (3)
- POLISCI 391K: Family and the State (3)
- PSYCH 391C: Infancy (3)

**Citizen Scholar’s Program & Other Service Courses**
These courses and community service engagement come together to form a basis of knowledge and experience about working in and serving the community.
- ANTHRO 397H: Grass Roots Community Organizing (4)
- ANTHRO 397S: Community Service Learning (1)
- ANTHRO 397L: Leadership and Activism (4)
- ANTHRO 397CR: Critical Pedagogy for UACT (1)
- PUBHLTH 499N: Public Policy and Citizen Action (4)
- PUBHLTH 499O: Organizing: People, Power, and Change (4)
- SERVCLRNG 393T: Tools for Change (4)