SPECIAL REPORT

OF THE

ACADEMIC MATTERS, GRADUATE
AND PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCILS

concerning an

ACCELERATED MASTER’S PROGRAM:
MPH/MS PROGRAMS IN EPIDEMIOLOGY

Presented at the
753rd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
December 10, 2015

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL


GRADUATE COUNCIL


PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCIL

The Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology is proposing to establish an accelerated option for the MPH (42 credits) and MS (45 credits) in Epidemiology. Under the accelerated option, students would take 12 credits of graduate level coursework while they are undergraduates these would be applied to the MPH or MS. They would take a 3-credit practicum in the summer after completing their bachelor's degree, and then finish the Master’s program with 27 credits (MPH) or 30 credits (MS) taken in the fifth year.

The Program Subcommittee recommends approval of the proposed accelerated option.

At its meeting on October 21, 2015, the Academic Matters Council voted unanimously to recommend Faculty Senate approval of the Accelerated Master’s Program: MPH/MS Programs in Epidemiology, submitted as proposal #1805 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.

The Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee (ASCC) of the Graduate Council met on October 7, 2015 and reviewed the proposal for an Accelerated Master’s Program: MPH/MS Programs in Epidemiology, proposal #1805 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.

On Wednesday, October 14, 2015, the Graduate Council unanimously approved the Accelerated Master’s Program: MPH/MS Programs in Epidemiology.

The Program Subcommittee of the Program and Budget Council met on October 14, 2015, reviewed the Accelerated Master’s Program: MPH/MS Programs in Epidemiology and recommended it for approval.

At its meeting on Wednesday, October 21, 2015, the Program and Budget Council voted to unanimously approve the Accelerated Master’s Program: MPH/MS Programs in Epidemiology. It was submitted as proposal #1805 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Accelerated Master’s Program: MPH/MS 07-16 Programs in Epidemiology, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 16-021.
Proposal Development

A. Briefly describe the Proposal.

The undergraduate program in Public Health Sciences is still young, but since its inception, there has been strong interest shown by students in creating a "4+1" accelerated master's degree option in Epidemiology. Meanwhile, the Epidemiology program has had a strong history of preparing aspiring public health professionals for careers in public health, biomedical research and the life sciences. This proposal outlines an accelerated master's degree program that will allow our brightest undergraduate students to receive their masters in one year after receiving their bachelor of science in Public Health.

B. Provide a brief overview of the process for developing the Proposal.

The Curriculum Committee for the Epidemiology program was charged with developing this proposal, with unanimous approval of the Epidemiology faculty. The Committee then worked to develop a plan for incorporating graduate course requirements into a typical undergraduate schedule. The final proposal was reviewed by all Epidemiology faculty.

Purpose and Goals

Describe the proposal’s purpose and the particular knowledge and skills to be acquired and provide a rationale for creating this accelerated degree program.

Epidemiology prepares students to unravel complex health issues by the study of the distribution of the spread of disease, social factors and other risk factors. Through the design, conduct and analysis of epidemiological research studies, epidemiologists extend basic knowledge of disease processes leading to prevention strategies, and aid in the development and evaluation of such prevention strategies. The discipline makes heavy use of biostatistics, along with the core areas of public health with related health science disciplines. The faculty fosters a unique environment in which practical involvement in transdisciplinary research collaborations enhance learning and provide a dynamic, rewarding environment. A recent McKinsey report claims that “by 2018, the United States alone could face a shortage of 140,000 to 190,000 people with deep analytical skills as well as 1.5 million managers and analysts with the know-how to use the analysis of big data to make effective decisions.” Master's degrees in epidemiology, which require training in applied data analysis, will be major assets for students who complete the master's program. By providing an accelerated option, we extend the opportunity for advanced training in epidemiology to talented and motivated undergraduate students, to provide access to an attractive job market sooner than would otherwise be possible for them.

Accelerated Master’s Information

Does this accelerated master’s option apply to all master’s degrees in this field, or only to certain tracks or concentrations?

This accelerated master's option will apply to the MPH and MS degrees in Epidemiology currently offered by the Department of Public Health / Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology.
What type of degree program does this accelerated master’s option pertain to?

Note: second and third require separate approval.

An existing degree.

Comments: The accelerated master’s pertains to the existing MS and MPH degrees.

Describe the projected course sequence for this degree and the timeline to completion for students.

The projected course sequence is shown in the attached document. The application deadline for admission to this accelerated MPH and MS programs will be established as November 30 of a student’s junior year. Eligible students would need to take 18 credits per semester in each of their junior and senior years. In order to remain on track for completion of both degrees, students applying to the program must be on track to complete a minimum of 78 credits by the end of the first semester of their junior year. Additionally, in the summer after finishing their undergraduate studies, students in the MPH program would enroll in a 3-credit research practicum. Finally, students would finish master’s degree requirements after two semesters of 9 courses in total. Expected timeline to completion is one year after receiving their bachelor's degree. Students in the MS program would enroll in PH 632 in the summer after finishing their undergraduate studies, and finish the master’s degree requirements at two semester each of 5 courses (10 in total during the “+ 1” year).

What undergraduate degree program is this accelerated master's associated with, if any?

Students from any undergraduate major can apply for this accelerated option. At a future date, we may propose a slightly modified option for undergraduate majors in Public Health.

Resources

If this proposal requires no additional resources, say so and briefly explain why. If this proposal requires additional resources, explain how they will be paid for. For proposals involving instruction, indicate how many new enrollments are expected and whether the courses have room to accommodate them.

This program requires no additional resources, as no additional courses need to be taught to accommodate expected enrollment. The Epidemiology MPH and MS programs are currently small (roughly 10 students per year) and the required classes could easily accommodate more degree-seeking students.
Curriculum

Provide a curriculum to the applicable master’s degree as it currently appears in the Graduate Bulletin and explain how this curriculum will be scheduled over the student’s undergraduate and graduate careers. Note that total number of credits must be 30 plus the minimum number required for undergraduate degree (generally 120, making total number of credits required 150).

NOTE: For Master’s programs under 36 credits, a maximum of 9 graduate-level credits taken as an undergraduate may be applied to both degrees. For Master’s programs over 36 credits, a maximum of 12 graduate-level credits taken as an undergraduate may be applied to both degrees.

The requirements for the MPH and MS degrees in Epidemiology are given in the attachment to this proposal. The MPH in Epidemiology is a 42-credit degree program, and the MS in Epidemiology is a 45-credit degree program. As explained above (and illustrated in the attachment), undergraduates will be expected to complete 18 credits per semester in their final two years as an undergraduate student. This will ensure they can complete the 120 credits necessary for their bachelor’s degree plus an additional 12 graduate-level credits above and beyond their bachelor’s degree requirements by the end of their senior year.

Who can apply to pursue this accelerated master’s degree?
(UMass students, Five College Students, Students in specific degree programs, etc.)

Any Five College students, including UMass students.

Are there any admissions exceptions to this degree program, such as a waiver of the GRE requirements?

No.

(For attachments, see Proposal #1805 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.)