

Dual Degree Program
PHARMD/MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
and School of Public Health

The Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy and the School of Public Health have developed a dual degree program that provides exceptional pharmacy students with a pathway to complete both the PharmD and the MPH in less time than it would take to complete both degrees sequentially. The program is available only for PharmD candidates in the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy. Students will continue full-time study in the PharmD program and graduate on time with their classmates. However, by taking selected MPH core courses while in the PharmD program, these students will be able to complete the MPH with approximately one year of full-time study or two years of part-time study, immediately following the completion of the PharmD degree.

This program combines the educational strengths of the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy with those of the School of Public Health. Graduates of the dual degree PharmD/MPH program will have in-depth complementary training as pharmacists and public health experts. Graduates will build on their pharmacy training with a sound understanding of public health fields, such as organization of health services, pharmacoepidemiology, healthcare policy, biostatistics, and environmental health.

1. Rationale

Public health and pharmacy intersect in contributing to solving America's health problems. Rising healthcare costs pose a growing threat to families, businesses, and government, while millions lack access to even the most basic healthcare. Many health-focused efforts, such as advances in patient drug therapy, increased use of pharmacies in the delivery of vaccinations, and the necessity for full emergency preparedness and response efforts throughout communities, call for increasing the participation of pharmacists in all levels of public health. An advanced degree in public health will provide PharmDs with the knowledge and skills to play a greatly expanded professional role in the healthcare system.

The six-year Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program provides students with a strong foundation in basic and clinical sciences coupled with an emphasis on patient-centered care. The program offers diverse opportunities and experience in clinical practice, industry, public health agencies, managed care, and laboratory and computational research. The curriculum includes two years of pre-professional study and four years of professional study.

The Master of Public Health (MPH) program provides students with a clear understanding of the core disciplines in public health, including health systems and policy, health education and behavioral science, biostatistics, environmental health, and epidemiology.

The dual PharmD/MPH program will help to prepare students with the skills in population-based healthcare, as well as the skills for enhancing and promoting public health. The need for individuals with such training exists in the area of drug safety and pharmacoepidemiology, as well as drug use policy. Students will gain expertise in the fields of pharmaceuticals and public health and be able to solve problems common to both fields. The PharmD/MPH dual degree will be the sixth such program among accredited U.S. schools of public health.

2. Goals

The goals of the dual degree program are to educate promising pharmacy students with a sound understanding of public health issues, including:

- Knowledge of public health principles and concepts and pharmaceutical knowledge
- Skills necessary to assume leadership positions at the intersection of pharmacy and public health
- Ability to apply pharmaceutical knowledge to the public health field
- Skills to communicate effectively with colleagues in healthcare settings and with peers in science and public health.

3. Description

This program will allow pharmacy students to complete their PharmD and MPH degrees in seven years, instead of the eight years that would be required if the two degrees were completed sequentially. Students may choose any of the areas of specialization offered by the MPH program.

To take full advantage of the dual degree program, PharmD students will take the five required MPH core courses while they are still in the PharmD program. They will accomplish this by substituting two of the core courses for two pharmacy professional electives and by taking the remaining three required core courses in the evening, in the summer, or online. These three core courses will be taken in addition to courses required for the PharmD.

Beginning in the summer after the first professional year, PharmD students interested in the dual degree may substitute two (3-credit) approved School of Public Health core requirements for two (2-credit) pharmacy professional electives. Students will choose two courses from the following list of SPH core courses:

- Health Systems and Policy: PHCO 0501
- Principles of Epidemiology: PHCO 0502
- Introduction to Biostatistics: PHCO 0504 (PharmD students will be exempt from taking the quantitative skills assessment which is required before registering for the Introduction to Biostatistics core course.)
- Health Education and Behavioral Science in Public Health: PHCO 0505

Ideally, students will complete all five MPH core requirements (the four courses listed above and Introduction to Environmental Health: PHCO 0503) while in the PharmD program. MPH core courses are generally offered in the evening, in the summer, or online, so there should be few class scheduling conflicts. To take maximum advantage of the dual degree program, students may take MPH core courses during the summers after Years 1 and 2 of the professional program and will have to carry heavy course loads during the fall and spring semesters. Note, however, students may not take more than 20 credits per semester, without special permission from the Office of the Dean at the School of Pharmacy.

Normally PharmD students will not be able to take any MPH courses in Year 4 of the pharmacy professional program, since they will have to complete eight five-week advanced pharmacy practice rotations.

Dual degree students will matriculate into the School of Public Health in the summer or fall following the completion of the PharmD.

Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy graduates will be given six credits of advanced standing in the MPH program for their PharmD coursework in the biological sciences and three credits for one more PharmD course (selection of course to be transferred depends on MPH chosen).

Summary of MPH Advanced Standing Options for dual degree students:

1. 9 credits of advanced standing for courses required for the PharmD
2. Up to 6 credits for MPH core courses taken in lieu of two pharmacy professional electives
3. Up to 9 credits for MPH core courses taken in addition to PharmD curricular requirements

4. Student Pool and Admission Requirements

Applicants to the program will be limited to students who are enrolled in the PharmD Program at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy. Interested students should begin taking MPH classes in the summer after the first year (P1) of the professional program or in the fall of the P2 year. Applicants may formally apply to the dual degree program after completing at least two MPH core courses. They must apply no later than April 1 of their fourth professional year. To apply, students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.2. The GRE requirement is waived.

Recruitment policies will reflect the commitment of the Schools of Pharmacy and Public Health to provide educational opportunities for persons underrepresented in the health professions, many of whom are financially and/or educationally disadvantaged minority students.

5. Competencies of Graduates

Graduates of the dual degree program will demonstrate the same competencies as candidates for the individual PharmD and MPH degrees.

6. Curriculum and Requirements for the Dual Degree

PharmD students complete the full PharmD curriculum. They may substitute two approved MPH core courses for pharmacy professional electives and they may take additional MPH core courses as their schedules permit. Students are expected to complete a minimum of four of the required MPH core courses while enrolled in the PharmD professional program. The dual degree program requires the satisfactory completion of the degree requirements for both the PharmD at the School of Pharmacy and the MPH at the School of Public Health.

7. Program Coordinators

Carol S. Goldin, PhD – Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Rutgers University
Kitaw Demissie, MD, PhD, MPH – School of Public Health.

8. Fees and Financial Support

The fees will be the same as those in place for the MPH and PharmD degrees within the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy and the School of Public Health. Students may apply for financial aid through Rutgers and the School of Pharmacy until completion of the PharmD; after completion of the PharmD, full-time students at the School of Public Health may apply for aid from Rutgers.