

**East Carolina University
College of Health and Human Performance
Department of Health Education and Promotion**

Master of Arts (MA) in Health Education



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Introduction to the MA in Health Education Degree Program

Program Description

The Master of Arts (MA) in Health Education program is offered by the Department of Health Education and Promotion at East Carolina University (ECU). This distance education (fully online) program provides academic training for individuals employed or planning to seek employment as health educators in academic, clinical, community or corporate settings. Program graduates are prepared to use social and behavioral theories and models to design, implement and evaluate interventions aimed at improving community and population health. The program requires a minimum of 30-semester hours. All students take 18-semester hours of required courses and select from one of three pathways: (1) coursework, (2) thesis, or (3) internship. The MA) in Health Education is not a licensure program, so students do not receive a license to teach upon graduation.

Admission to the Program

Application

To apply to the Master of Arts in Health Education program, please follow the application process described by the East Carolina University Graduate School. The following webpage will provide you with the necessary information about the application process, as well as the related application documents <https://gradschool.ecu.edu/apply/>.

Prerequisites

The applicant must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution to be considered for admission into the graduate program. Applicants with undergraduate degrees in areas other than Health Education may be required to take additional courses. These courses can usually be taken as co-requisites to the student's regular graduate program.

Admission Criteria

Along with the ECU Graduate School application form, application fee, three letters of recommendation, a statement of purpose, and official transcripts, are required. Submit all materials to the ECU Graduate School by the deadlines provided below. The following materials are used in making decisions regarding candidates' appropriateness for the program:

- ECU Graduate School application form
- Statement of purpose that includes the following: why the applicant is interested in this program, how this program will build on prior experience and professional preparation, and how this graduate program will contribute to career goals.
- Three (3) Letters of Recommendation from academic or professional sources who can speak to the applicant's academic and/or professional qualifications and abilities.
- Official Transcripts – Preferred GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for all undergraduate work

Application Deadlines

Applicants seeking admission into the MA in Health Education program should send all required materials to the ECU Graduate School. The ECU Graduate School will then forward the required documents to the MA in Health Education program.

May 1 - Summer I Admission

June 15 – Summer II Admission

August 1 - Fall Admission

December 15 -Spring Admission

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MA in Health Education Course Requirements

The basic curriculum plan for the MA in health education requires 30 s.h. All students take 18 s.h. of required courses and select from one of three pathways: thesis, internship, or course work. Students select electives in consultation with their advisor.

Required Courses

HLTH 6001, 6011, 6101, 6110, 6600, 6650	18 s.h.
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Thesis Option

HLTH 7000	6 s.h.
BIOS 7021	3 s.h.
Guided Electives	3 s.h.

The student writes and orally defends a thesis. The student's advisor approves the thesis proposal along with a committee comprised of three faculty members from the Department of Health Education and Promotion.

Internship Option

HLTH 6990, 6991	6 s.h.
Guided Electives	6 s.h.

The student completes a 240-hour internship experience and weekly activity report, and a major culminating project for which you are responsible during the internship experience, and a final internship report.

The student also completes a comprehensive examination covering the required courses.

Course Work Option

Guided Electives	12 s.h.
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The student completes a comprehensive examination covering the required courses.

Minimum Grade Requirement in Required Courses

To maintain academic eligibility in the MA in health education program, students are expected to earn a B or better in required courses (HLTH 6001, 6011, 6101, 6110, 6600, 6650). Students will be placed on academic probation after earning a C in any of the required courses. Students earning 2 Cs in required courses will not be eligible to take classes or the comprehensive exam in the Department of Health Education and Promotion until the student has retaken one of the courses in which the C was earned, resulting in a minimum grade of a B.

Required Courses

6001. Foundations of Health Education and Promotion* (3) Prerequisite: Admission to the MA in health education or consent of instructor. Content: Health behavior theory, ethics, and the practice environment.

6011. Introduction to Epidemiology (3) Prerequisite: Admission to a graduate program or consent of instructor. Content: Overview of principles of epidemiology, including major epidemiologic study designs, measures of association, clinical trials, bias, confounding, and other topics.

6101. Research Methods in Health Education (3) Prerequisite: Admission to the MA in health education or consent of instructor. Content: Basic knowledge and skills regarding design, implementation, analysis, and interpretation of research in health education and promotion.

6600. Needs Assessment in Health Education and Promotion* (3) Prerequisites: HLTH 6001, admission to the MA in Health Education or consent of instructor. Content: Needs assessment planning, implementation and evaluation.

6110. Intervention Strategies for Health Education and Promotion* (3) Prerequisites: HLTH 6001, admission to the MA in health education or consent of instructor. Content: Application of existing research and best practices in methods/strategies utilized by health education professionals.

6650. Evaluation of Health Education and Promotion Programs* (3) Prerequisites: HLTH 6001; admission to the MA in Health Education or consent of instructor. Content: Principles and procedures to evaluate the process and impact of health promotion/disease prevention programs in community, clinical and corporate settings.

*Recommended course sequence: (1) 6001, (2) 6600, (3) 6110, (4) 6650.

Internship Option

6990, 6991. Internship in Health Education (3,3) Prerequisite: Minimum of 18 s.h. in health education program or consent of chair. Supervised observation and practice in health education setting.

Thesis Option

BIOS 7021. Biostatistics for Health Professionals I (3) Prerequisite: MATH 1065 or equivalent or consent of instructor. Content: Introduces basic statistical methods applicable to health sciences fields.

7000. Thesis (3) May be repeated. May count maximum of 6 s.h.

7001. Thesis: Summer Research (1) May be repeated. No credit may count toward degree. Students conducting thesis research may only register for this course during the summer.

Other MA Health Courses Offered by Our Department

6002. Maternal and Child Health Education (3) Content: Theoretical base and appropriate education strategies for delivery of community health education programs (not offered regularly).

6410. Sexuality Education in Health Education (3) Prerequisite: Admission to the MA in health education or consent of instructor. Content: Knowledge and skills in planning, developing, implementing and evaluating sexuality education in a community context (not offered regularly).

6355. Substance Use Prevention (3) Prerequisite: Admission to graduate program or consent of instructor. Content: ATOD abuse education and prevention theory and approaches.

6501, 6502, 6503. Independent Study (1,2,3) Prerequisite: Consent of advisor. Content: Investigates current research and methodology in health education.

6901. Health-Based Nonprofit Management (3) Prerequisite: Admission to the MA in health education or consent of instructor. Content: Theories, strategies, and skills for managing health-based nonprofit organizations (not offered regularly).

6905. Social Marketing (3) Prerequisite: Admission to the MA in health education or consent of instructor. Content: Strategies for health-related nonprofit and public health agencies (not offered regularly).

7001. Thesis: Summer Research (1) May be repeated. No credit may count toward degree. Students conducting thesis research may only register for this course during the summer.

7100. Qualitative Research: Analysis and Interpretation (3) Same as NURS 7100, OCCT 7100 Prerequisite: Consent of instructor. Content: Application and evaluation of qualitative research design and methods including data collection, management and analysis approaches, and the art and science of interpretation

Courses in other programs or departments that may be of interest

The School of Communication offers a master's program in health communication. Several of the courses are applicable to public health practice.

Adult Education (ADED) courses are designed to develop those skills necessary to design, initiate, and implement effective educational programs in adult populations. Thus, they serve the interests of several MA students.

Biostatistics offers the basic statistics course (BIOS 7001) required of those completing a quantitative thesis as well as more advanced classes.

Environmental Health (EHST). In the public sector, awareness of the need and benefits of environmental health protection are important for health educators.

The Ethnic and Rural Health Disparities courses, offered by the MPH program, are designed to improve public health professionals' skills in cultural competency and to better prepare public health graduates in rural health disparity issues.

The Departments of Sociology, Anthropology, and Nutrition also have courses that MA Program students have found useful.

You can locate a list of courses for these departments at the University Graduate Catalog: <https://registrar.ecu.edu/about-catalog/>

Graduate Certificates

Students in the coursework option may consider certificate programs as a means of fulfilling the Program's 30 s.h. requirement. For a complete list of certificate options at ECU, please visit <https://gradschool.ecu.edu/find-your-program/> and select "Certificates" from the Program Level dropdown box.

Some Relevant Online Certificate Options:

Environmental Health Foundations
Community College Instruction
Ethnic and Rural Health Disparities
Public Health Foundations and Practice
Health Care Administration
Health Informatics
Substance Abuse Counseling
Gerontology

*Please check with your advisor for approval to seek a certificate that is not one of the above options.

Registration

You will be enrolling yourself in the courses you wish to take each semester.

Please see this link to determine when you can begin registering for classes.

<https://registrar.ecu.edu/registration-schedule/>

Each semester a list of available classes will be sent to you. There are screen shots of every step of registering for classes, which makes it very easy to follow. This can be found on the MA Canvas site. If you have taken the necessary prerequisite (HLTH 6001), none of the HLTH courses are blocked, so you should be able to register yourself for those courses. However, other departments may restrict their courses. If that is the case, you will need to contact the instructor of the course to request permission to take the course. The program director (Dr. Martin) or department chair (Dr. Wallen) cannot override the registration of students in courses in other departments.

For internships courses: You only register for these courses IF you have discussed the internship option with Dr. Martin. These courses will be monitored to ensure only approved students are in these courses.

HLTH 6990 = first semester of internship

HLTH 6691 = second semester of internship

For thesis courses: You only register for these courses IF you are currently working on a thesis supervised by a faculty member in the department. Remember to sign up for the section that your thesis chair is listed (e.g., if Dr. Martin is supervising your thesis, you would sign up for the section with him listed as the instructor).

Registration Tips

- Only enroll in the internship course if you have completed ALL required courses AND have documented approval from Dr. Martin.
- Nine hours of graduate coursework qualifies a student for full-time status. Students are not advised to take over nine credit hours in a semester.

Financial Aid

For questions about Financial Aid and the number of hours that qualify for partial or full aid, see the Financial Aid graduate eligibility website: <https://financialaid.ecu.edu/graduate/graduate-professional/>

MA in Health Education Thesis Option

The thesis option is particularly important for students with an interest in research or those who plan to pursue a doctoral degree at some point in their careers. A thesis is a report of a student's research project usually conducted in the final six months to one year of a graduate program. It must be completed prior to graduation. Those who undertake a thesis are exempt from the comprehensive examination.

The following checklist offers a general outline of the process associated with doing a thesis:

	Meet with the MA Program Director for initial advisement and to identify any coursework deficiencies.
	After taking 18 hours of course work, select a thesis advisor (also called a thesis chair or director). With his/her consultation, choose a thesis committee and contact these individuals to ascertain their willingness to serve. Three tenured or tenure track professors from the Department of Health Education and Promotion should complete your committee. You can allow for additional members outside the department.
	Submit a thesis proposal to the thesis advisor, and (once approved by the advisor) to committee members for approval. If approved by the committee and the study will involve human subjects, submit a completed human subjects proposal to the thesis advisor for input and then to the University Human Subjects Review Committee
	Guided by input from thesis advisor and committee, complete thesis research and prepare a thesis report. Submit the manuscript of the report to the thesis advisor for review and revision. The manuscript is prepared consistent with the "Manual of Basic Requirements for Theses and Dissertations." http://libguides.ecu.edu/vireo/etd
	Submit the thesis manuscript to other members of the thesis committee for review and revision.
	Schedule with thesis committee and complete an oral presentation/ defense of the thesis. Schedule this meeting at least ten working days prior to the defense.
	Make revisions recommended by committee
	Once the final thesis is approved by the thesis advisor and sometimes the committee, electronically submit your thesis as directed by the Graduate School website.
	Graduate!

For guidance from the Graduate School concerning the format and procedures associated with a thesis see the **ECU Manual of Basic Requirements for Theses and Dissertations** @ <http://libguides.ecu.edu/vireo/etd> and refer to the following site: <https://gradschool.ecu.edu/thesis-dissertation/>.

Changing from Thesis Option to Coursework or Internship

In some instances, students decide to change from the thesis option to the coursework or internship option. Students must contact the MA Program Director as well as complete the following form (<https://gradschool.ecu.edu/forms/>). The hours earned for thesis credit will not be counted towards degree completion and must be made up with other courses.

MA in Health Education Internship Option

The internship experience allows a student the opportunity to function as a health educator in a professional setting. The student needs to consider an agency consistent with their interests and ambitions for the future as well as an agency willing to mentor the student in terms of developing health education skills and competencies. Internships are valuable for those students without experience in Health Education.

All students in the internship option are required to complete both HLTH 6990 and HLTH 6991. Each course requires 120 contact hours. These courses may be taken simultaneously or sequentially allowing for flexibility regarding the time period over which the 240 total hours are accumulated. Students must complete all of the program's core classes (Health 6001, 6011, 6101, 6110, 6600, 6650) prior to beginning an internship. They must also have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. For more information on internships please see the MA Canvas site.

Comprehensive Examination

Students selecting the Internship or Course Work Option in their MA program are required to take a comprehensive examination at the end of their degree program. Students who complete the Thesis Option are exempt from the comprehensive examination.

The comprehensive examination is “closed-book” examination administered over the course of four hours and 15 minutes. The exam occurs in 2 parts: an objective section containing multiple choice/matching questions and an essay section. The comprehensive examination is administered three times a year and is generally scheduled during the last month of the Fall and Spring semesters and in June/July. The comprehensive examination covers all required courses. The administration of this exam is subject to change from semester to semester. A study guide will be distributed during the beginning of the semester you take your comprehensive exam. This study guide is always available on the Canvas site for the MA in Health Education. Students may find it helpful to keep textbooks and save any course materials to review for the comprehensive exam. The exam must be proctored at a testing center. Students are responsible for any fees associated with the proctoring center.

The comprehensive examination can be taken twice. In no case will a student who has failed the comprehensive examination be administered a second exam in the same semester in which he/she took the initial exam. Students who fail the exam twice will be terminated from the MA program.

Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) Exam

The curriculum for the MA in health education is aligned with the Responsibilities and Competencies outlined by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC). Students who complete the MA degree are eligible to sit for the CHES examination (offered twice a year), which is the only certification for the field of health education. While health educators are not currently required obtain certification for employment, requiring applications to have CHES certification is becoming increasingly common. To find out more information about NCHEC and the CHES examination, please visit www.nchec.org.

Additional Graduate Information and Requirements

Distance Education Information

All required courses in the MA Program are delivered on-line. Students also may take all of their elective courses online. A student may complete the MA Program while on the ECU campus or at a distance. If the student is on campus, several graduate assistantships are available. For further information about such assistantships, contact the MA program director.

The following web site provides an orientation to distance education <https://online.ecu.edu/students/welcome-aboard/>. At this website, for example, you will learn how to purchase textbooks and how to operate Canvas.

Continuous Enrollment

Graduate students who have previously registered for all credits the program but who have not completed all requirements (e.g., thesis, comprehensive exam, internship, etc.) must continue to register each semester (except summer terms) until all degree requirements are completed and filed with the registrar. Students must be enrolled for at least one credit hour during the semester of graduation except summer, if registered for the prior spring semester. Students who do not complete all degree requirements prior to the published commencement date of the intended term of graduation but complete all degree requirements prior to the first day of class of the subsequent term may petition the Graduate School for a waiver of the registration requirement for that term.

Time Limits for Completing the Program

The time limit for completing all degree requirements (including transfer credit) is six calendar years. A student's time limit for completion starts with the first course approved for inclusion in the degree plan (including transfer credits) or the date of admission to the program, whichever occurs first, and includes planned and unplanned leaves of absence. Students who do not complete their degrees within the required time limits will be dismissed from the program and the Graduate School unless a time extension is granted. All requests for time-extensions must be received by the Graduate School prior to expiration of the degree program's time limit and must use the official form <https://gradschool.ecu.edu/forms/>.

Department for Disability Support Services

East Carolina seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Any student requiring an accommodation should present a letter from Department for Disability Support Services stating the current accommodations required. The Department for Disability Support Services is located in Suite 109 Mendenhall Greenville, NC 27858 and the phone number is (252) 737-1016 and email address: dssdept@ecu.edu.

Academic Probation

According to the East Carolina University graduate catalog, to remain in good academic standing with the Graduate School, graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 once they have a total of 9 credit hours attempted and any additional or higher academic standards as established by their program of study. Students who fail to meet this criterion and/or their program's additional requirements may be placed on probation or dismissed from the program. Please see the graduate catalog for further information.

Incomplete Coursework

Incomplete coursework must be completed in accordance with the East Carolina University calendar deadlines. If a grade of "I" (incomplete) was assigned, it must be resolved within one calendar year or a grade of "F" will automatically be assigned. No exceptions to this policy will be allowed. No student will be allowed to graduate with an incomplete on his or her record.

Graduate School Appeals Procedures

Students who fail the comprehensive exam may appeal the decision with the Graduate School. Details on that process can be found here:

<https://catalog.ecu.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=2125#graduate-student-grade-appeals->

To appeal a grade for a course, information on that process can be found here:

<https://catalog.ecu.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=2125#graduate-student-grade-appeals->

Master of Arts in Health Education Frequently Asked Questions

How will I know if I have been accepted to the MA Program?

You will receive emails from the MA Program Director and the Graduate School.

What should I do after I receive acceptance to the MA Program?

You should email Dr. Martin (martinry@ecu.edu) to be added to the MA Canvas site that offers information on registration, courses, and other resources.

How do I register for classes?

You can view information on registration on the MA Canvas site under the registration tab. This will provide you with a checklist and steps to register. If you have additional questions after reviewing this material, you may contact Dr. Martin (martinry@ecu.edu).

Can I take classes in the MA Program while not being accepted?

*Yes, apply to the Graduate School as a non-degree student. Caution! **You may only transfer NINE (9) semester hours credit taken as an ECU non-degree student** to the MA Program. That means that you must contact the MA program director and advisor, Dr. Martin as soon as you decide to take courses for non-degree credit.*

Can I transfer credits taken at another university to the MA Program?

Yes. However, you can only transfer credits from an unfinished master's degree program and, if approved, you can only transfer 6 of these credits as electives. In addition, you cannot substitute transfer courses for core courses. Further, you need to petition the MA Program Director to request to transfer eligible courses.

How do I buy textbooks, learn how to log on to Canvas, learn about financial aid, etc?

Go to the ECU Online Welcome Aboard site (<https://online.ecu.edu/students/welcome-aboard/>).

Where do I take my courses?

*All courses for the MA in Health Education are offered online. The university has an online course management site called **Canvas** that you will use to take your courses.*

How many credit hours do I have to take?

The program requires a total of 30 semester hours

Does this program result in a license to teach?

The MA program is not a licensure program.

Am I eligible for a graduate assistantship?

Students who are accepted by and enrolled in the MA program and are on-campus may be eligible to be considered for a graduate teaching or research assistantship. For more information, please contact the MA Program Director.