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LSU
Health
NEW ORLEANS
School of Public Health

DVM/MPH Joint Degree Program

LSU School of Public Health's Mission

The LSU School of Public Health's mission is to "Advance the public's health and well-being through education, research and service with a focus on issues affecting Louisiana." We do that by having a vision of a healthier Louisiana with a workforce addressing the core functions of public health, equipped with data and knowledge, and supported by LSU's faculty, students and staff.

Your education here will give you real-world, practical experience to make the world a healthier place.

Goals of the DVM/MPH Joint Degree Program

DVM/MPH students will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to promote health, prevent disease, and enhance the delivery of evidence-based services in the community. Students will build interdisciplinary skills and transdisciplinary professional identity by developing an understanding of the breadth of each field and its interface. DVM/MPH graduates are uniquely qualified to contribute in ever-expanding ways to foster both human and animal health and to contribute to discovery as part of the biomedical workforce.

The DVM/MPH dual-degree program is designed to prepare graduates for work in various interdisciplinary settings.

This program supports the mission of One Health as espoused by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): "Recognizing that human health (including mental health via the human-animal bond phenomenon), animal health, and ecosystem health are inextricably linked, One Health seeks to promote, improve, and defend the health and well-being of all species by enhancing cooperation and collaboration between physicians, veterinarians, public health officers, and other scientific health and environmental professionals by promoting strengths in leadership and management to achieve these goals."

DVM/MPH dual-degree students will satisfy the requirements for 176.5 – 184.5 DVM credit hours and a minimum of 38 MPH credit hours (with 9 hours of transfer credits) . It is recommended that you begin your MPH studies in the summer immediately before you begin your DVM.



The Student Perspective

Katie Como
DVM/MPH Alumni

What was/has been the biggest challenge about deciding to go for your DVM and MPH at the same time?

The biggest challenge with the DVM/MPH program is no different from the major struggle everyone has: learning to be adaptable. There's currently another DVM student and I pursuing the combined program, and it has required us to be flexible and willing to compromise. While the simultaneous DVM/MPH has tested my time-management skills (and occasionally, nearly defeated my time-management skills), the SPH professors have been incredibly understanding throughout the program, and I have to thank them for their geniality. As we've continued through the program, we've learned what works and what doesn't, and I hope that more students continue to explore the world of veterinary public health!

Challenges aside, what was the best part of focusing your studies all at once?

While the program has its challenges, it offers major benefits. Since the School of Veterinary Medicine is located in Baton Rouge, veterinary students miss out on opportunities to interact with other health professionals in a scholastic setting. Through the MPH program, I've had the pleasure of building rapport with students outside of my future profession, and I've made wonderful friends that I would have otherwise never had the chance to meet. Being in classes with other combo-MPH students revealed a variety of perspectives, because everyone in the classroom had completely different motivations for pursuing their MPH. While not all of the public health coursework is entirely relevant for typical veterinarians, the vast majority is relevant for humans navigating human life. My mentor, Dr. Mark Mitchell, classically asks, "why be a clinician

when you can be a clinician-scientist?" Clinicians treat the problem sitting directly in front of them, but clinician-scientists take one step further by making hypotheses, asking more questions, finding correlations, and learning from their daily endeavors. I would challenge anyone considering doubling up to take the opportunity to reflect on why they are considering the program. There are many careers that require a DVM and an MPH or additional public health studies; however, the MPH is a valuable additional tool for veterinarians of any specialty looking to best fulfill our obligation to promote public health and the advancement of medical knowledge, as written in our oath.

Thoughts from a Faculty Member

"As a trained tropical medicine specialist and medical toxicologist, I thoroughly enjoyed working with youth and families in the community for many years. PH and ENHS offer students the opportunity to take the training from their DVM program and apply it at animal and people population levels with public health skills.

The biggest thing the SPH offers students is access to true practitioner scientists. Every faculty in ENHS continues to actively practice in the field and brings that current knowledge and experience into the classroom. Both DVM and public health have their beginnings in population science and health maintenance. I truly believe as students learn the skills taught by both fields, the change we can bring to animals, people and their communities is endless and more holistic than ever. "



James H. Diaz, MD, MPH&TH, DrPH, FACOEM, FASTMH
Faculty Member - Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences-School of Public Health