



MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Academic Handbook

Class of 2023

Welcome

To support your continued learning as professionals, we believe clearly stated expectations can prevent misunderstandings and help create the optimal learning environment for each individual and for each cohort. The purpose of this Handbook is to communicate official MPH Program policies and procedures. Our program policies and procedures are consistent with approved Senate and School of Postdoctoral and Graduate Studies policies, which should be consulted for more information.

Active and Engaged Learning

Many incoming students are accustomed to a passive learning style where the professors determine what to learn, when and how. We are different. To get the most from our program you will need to engage actively in the entire learning process. This means devoting time and energy to preparation before class, both individually and in your learning team, and then during class. This involves listening to others, engaging with their ideas, and being willing to put forward and explain your point of view. Collective reasoning and discovery are critical to the successful application of the case method.

Detailed note taking during class can often be distracting for others and counterproductive to your own learning. Instead, be selective in taking notes during class and consolidate what you have learned at the end of each class.

Professionalism

The MPH Program is a professional program. As such, we expect behaviour that is compatible with a professional public health practice environment. Hence, here are a few ground rules:

- Attend all classes and learning team meetings.
- Be respectful of others' time.
- Remember to value and embrace those whose opinions differ from yours.
- Practice emotional intelligence when dealing with your fellow classmates.
- Do not use profanity with your fellow classmates.
- Do not threaten, harass, or insult your fellow classmates.

Addressing Your Professors

Unless told otherwise by your professor, please address professors as either "Professor LASTNAME" or "Dr. LASTNAME".

Preparing for Class

The assigned readings are designed to guide and stimulate your analysis and preparation. It is assumed that you have done the readings. You will be called upon to apply the tools and concepts contained in the readings to the issues at hand during case analysis or class discussion. Informed discussion of case-specific issues can be assisted by reference to relevant models and concepts. This individual preparation precedes meeting with your Learning Team and discussing each case or topic prior to the class session. Other types of active class participation and experiential learning may be used throughout the course to supplement the case discussion. Cases are complex and benefit from multiple perspectives and sharing your analysis and thoughts with others.

Participation

Because your participation is important both for you and your colleagues' learning, our program-wide policy is that 30% of the final grade in each course is attributed to contribution. In-class contribution, and contributions to your Learning Team are each worth 15% of your final mark in each course.

In-class Contribution (15% of final mark)

Your course professor and your peers will evaluate your contribution to the discussion in each class. You are expected to be present and prepared for every class and ready to share your views in the classroom discussion. The class contribution grade recognizes your *contribution* to the learning of your classmates. Assessment of contribution follows the usual norms. People may be called upon to contribute (some faculty make use of the cold-calling method), but it is safe to assume that waiting to be "cold called" will not earn you a satisfactory contribution grade. You will need to contribute voluntarily.

It is not possible for all students to contribute in every class. Class contribution will be assessed according to the extent to which you have established a meaningful presence in the classroom, over the course of the semester, by making solid contributions on a regular basis. Your goal should be to provide insights that pass the "so what?" test. This can range from helping to sort out the key facts in a complex case to developing an analysis that builds on prior comments to integrating a discussion with material learned in other courses, thereby moving the class discussion forward. **Repeating comments without adding additional value is not positively assessed.**

Below is the rubric that will be used:

	Category	Components of in-class contribution
4	Outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several times a term, a student may make a truly grounded and ground-breaking contribution that lifts the learning experience to a new level of personal and professional meaning for all the participants. • These are memorable, one-of-a-kind, in-the-moment “aha”s that punctuate how a class gets to experience real public health. These contributions are rare and extremely valuable beyond the teaching point at hand.
3	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments add substantial value to the discussion. • Student demonstrates willingness to take risks in attempting to answer difficult or unpopular questions. • Student breaks new ground and raises the flow of discussion to a higher level, often by synthesizing material and applying multiple lenses/techniques.
2	Significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments add value to the discussion, beyond case facts. • There is evidence of analysis rather than just the expression of opinion (although some espousal of opinion is acceptable, even necessary at times). • Comments linked to those of others, facilitating the flow of the discussion. • Student demonstrates knowledge of readings and other relevant course material. • Student incorporates relevant insights from other courses or current affairs. • Adds energy and enthusiasm to the class.
1	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments advance the flow of the discussion (including responses to questions from the instructor). • Student demonstrates clear grasp of case material. • Information presented is relevant to the discussion.
0	Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of case facts; relevance not made clear. • Present, listening, but silent.
-1	Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeats what has already been said, adds no additional value. • Lack of preparation for class discussion; failure to listen. • Criticisms are directed at others versus towards their ideas. • Defensive or disruptive behaviour (e.g., aggression or withdrawal). • Drains energy from class goals. • Inappropriate use of devices. • Failure to e-mail Program of absence.
L	Late Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade accordingly but note an L beside late arrivals
E	Early Departure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade accordingly but note an E beside early departures from class
A	Absent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark an A beside anyone who did not show up for class

Process

Each class, your in-class contribution will be marked by the course professor and by two of your peers. Each of you will have multiple opportunities per course to evaluate your peers’ performance in a class over the course of the term. For each class in which you are an evaluator, you will receive a contribution mark of 2 (Significant). You are allowed, and encouraged, to contribute in every class – and you should not hold back your contributions during the class for which you are assigned an

evaluation role. If you are well prepared for that session, your contributions can earn you a 3 (or even a 4). Appointment of evaluators to classes is done by random assignment by the MPH Program Office.

When your turn comes to be an evaluator, you will receive a seating chart at the beginning of the class. Please keep track of contributions and, at the end of the class, take 5 minutes to assign each participant a score from -1 to 4 according to the grading chart above (for your convenience, this is copied on the back of the seating chart). Please clearly write down who was absent that day, arrived late, or departed early. If you assign a score of -1, please document your observations to justify the score. *Most importantly, please return your marked contribution sheet to your professor at the end of the class.*

The scores peer evaluators assign are confidential. The professor compares the peer evaluators' scores to his/her evaluation for each class and these will inform the appropriate score for each respective class.

Learning Team Assessment (15% of final mark)

Each Learning Team (LT) member is responsible for submitting a final grade *for each other LT member for each course.*

Procedure: The details are in a separate document. This is a brief overview:

1. LT members do not evaluate themselves.
2. Each LT member assigns a score of 1 to 5 for each other LT member. Whole numbers must be used.
3. Scores are done anonymously so no one can tell any other member's score.
4. In Fall semester, each LT will conduct a formative evaluation of their team following the above procedure. There is one formative evaluation of LT participation over all courses. Each team member will receive their average score. The purpose of this evaluation is to encourage early discussion about how your LT perceives and evaluates your participation and contributions to the LT. This score does not count towards your final grade.
5. Towards the end of each semester, a summative evaluation is conducted for each course following the above procedure. These results constitute your 15% LT participation grade.

MPH Policy on Recording of Lectures/Learning Materials

1. Recording of students' voices and faces carries serious implications under privacy legislation.
2. We expect each student to be present (and actively participating) in every lecture, and we do not record faculty presentations. If we have to present virtually at any point this academic year, live faculty classes will NOT be recorded.

Intellectual Property

The MPH program provides you with access to the learning materials (cases, course notes, recorded lectures, etc.) needed to meet program learning objectives, which is their sole allowable use. Under Canadian law, copyright over intellectual property is automatically held by the author(s) and includes notes and other material written by MPH faculty and staff. Recordings by students of any classroom sessions is strictly forbidden. Please respect the intellectual property rights of the copyright holders by not sharing, distributing, copying or altering any of the aforementioned learning materials

(<https://copyright.uwo.ca/index.html>).

Progression

The MPH Program may require students to withdraw if they fail to meet the following standards:

- Students must maintain a cumulative average of at least 70% calculated each term over all courses taken for credit, with no grade less than 60%. In the case of failing grades given for Scholastic Offences, only the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) can withdraw a student; see <https://grad.uwo.ca/resources/regulations/3.html>.
- Students must make satisfactory progress towards the degree according to milestones set by the program.
- Grading Scale - https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/grades_grad.pdf

Academic Support

Your professors are all committed to each student succeeding in the MPH Program. If you have any concerns or are struggling with *anything* regarding your academic program, we are available to listen, support, and advise you. We believe in “learning promotion” and preventing barriers to learning. Early intervention is best; do not struggle on your own.

If you have concerns about a particular course, please address your concerns first with the course professor. If the concerns extend across multiple courses or involve your team learning, you may wish to discuss these concerns with your Faculty Advisor. We encourage students to connect with the individual professor closest to the situation allowing her/him an opportunity to help resolve your concern or issue prior to discussing with another professor.

Academic Accommodations

If you have a disability and require any accommodation, please visit Accessible Education as early as possible: http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/academic_accomodation.html. You are encouraged to do this as soon as possible to avoid any last minute requests for accommodations. Faculty will not grant accommodations unless the student has registered with Accessible Education.

Late Assignments

Late assignments are not acceptable and will result in a “zero” for the assignment. All accommodations (illness, death in the family) need to be approved by the course instructor (with appropriate documentation).

Attendance Policy

1. Engaged participation is considered a milestone for satisfactory progress towards the completion of the MPH Program (see “Participation” below). If a learning team member does not meet the Learning Team obligations, team members are encouraged to contact their Faculty Advisor.
2. Students are expected to attend all sessions in every course.
 - a. Students not in attendance will receive a mark of 0 for participation for the missed class.
 - b. As per the University Secretariat policy, frequent absences may result in a student not being permitted to write the final exam or receive academic credit for course deliverables. Any

student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class, will be reported to the MPH Graduate Chair. On the recommendation of the Graduate Chair, the student will be prevented from completing deliverables in the course. (See http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf).

- c. Any student who is absent too frequently from one or more courses may be deemed to have failed to make satisfactory progress towards the degree, and may be required to withdraw from the program. (See SGPS Graduate Studies Regulations, Section 3: Program Regulations, http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/3.html).

Late Arrivals & Early Departures

1. Students are expected to arrive on time and not leave before a session ends.
 - a. A student will be marked as being late if they arrive after a session has begun, or as having left early if they depart before the conclusion of a session.
 - b. Late arrivals and early departures will be recorded each class and will be monitored by the MPH Program Office.
 - c. If a student is both late and leaves early for the same class, they will be marked as if absent, receiving a participation mark of 0.
2. Late arrivals and early departures may have an impact on a student's participation mark.
 - a. If more than five late arrivals or early departures, a student's final participation mark in the course may automatically be reduced by a minimum of 5%.
 - b. If more than ten late arrivals or early departures, a student's final participation mark in the course may automatically be reduced by a minimum of 20%.
3. Students who consistently arrive late for classes or depart early may be at risk of failing to make satisfactory progress towards the completion of the course and/or MPH Program as outlined in section 3.
 - a. The MPH Program Office will notify the MPH Graduate Chair of any student who has been late 5 times in one class or 10 times total in a semester.

Notification of Absences

1. Any student not attending class must inform the MPH Program Office in advance at publichealth@schulich.uwo.ca. The MPH Program Office will ensure that the appropriate professors are notified. Students should notify the MPH Program Office before 8:00 a.m. the day of class. Students who fail to notify the Program of their absence will receive -1 for class participation for the missed class(es).

2. Students experiencing COVID-like symptoms can request a Zoom link to avoid missed learning.

The following applies:

- a. The Program Office requires 24 business hours' notice of your absence before Zoom links are provided (please note the mailbox is not monitored evenings and weekends).
- b. Students will be marked as absent and will not earn participation marks.

MPH Behaviour and Safety Policy

The MPH Program places high importance on the fundamental skill of learning to work together with people who have different viewpoints, backgrounds, etc. Disagreements and spirited arguments are a part of life, and there is no expectation that people will or should all agree with each other. However, there are acceptable and unacceptable ways of expressing opinions and managing disagreements. Professional conduct involves showing respect for others, letting others finish expressing their opinions, explaining one's viewpoints without using defamatory, insulting, aggressive, loud, mocking, or vulgar language, and helping create an environment in which everyone feels safe.

Class Conduct

1. If one or more students object to comments or behaviour in class, the student(s) should bring it to the attention of the instructor, or if the instructor is the concern, to the MPH Program Director.

Learning Team Conduct

1. If one or more members of a learning team objects to another learning team member's conduct, they should first attempt to resolve the issue informally by communicating their specific concerns clearly and professionally. This is an opportunity for LT members to demonstrate leadership skills of mediation and conflict resolution.
2. If informal mediation is not effective and the conduct is repeated, the learning team should consult their faculty advisor who will meet with the team, clarify the issues, and propose a strategy, which could include a description of specific objectionable behaviours that must be avoided and a complaint process to be followed if the behaviours are repeated.

Consequences

1. Repeated complaints will be treated first as an academic matter, specifically 'Intentionally interfering in any way with any person's scholastic work' under the Scholastic Discipline policy:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

- a. The MPH Program has the right to remove a student from a learning team. If this occurs, the student:
 1. will be supervised by the Graduate Chair and Director.
 2. will receive a grade of zero for the 15% LT Peer grade in all courses.
 3. will be required to complete all LT deliverables by themselves, will be observers rather than LT participants during Integrated Workshops, and will have to complete program requirements independently.
 4. will be denied letters of recommendations and awards.
 - b. Students have the right to appeal this as a Program Decision under the above policy.
2. In cases of more serious conduct, the MPH Program may pursue complaints under the Code of Student Conduct policy. <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

Learning Teams – Conflict Resolution

The MPH Program uses Learning Teams to enhance and enrich student learning and to mimic the group settings within which virtually all public health practice occurs. Eventually, every group experiences conflicts between team members. Conflicts arise for a variety of reasons and vary in their seriousness and potential to disrupt group functioning. Recognizing the conflicts that require prompt attention and addressing them in a timely and appropriate manner are essential leadership skills on which our program places a high priority. As well, these skills generalize well beyond the Program to teams encountered in your professional practice. This conflict resolution resource forms part of a larger package of learning team tools.

Many conflicts are minor and transitory. A central tenet of conflict resolution is that the first step is informal. Thus, teams are encouraged to deal initially with conflicts on their own, in a professional manner. Key strategies for dealing with conflict are identified below. If a team is unable to come to a resolution, then they are to comply with the Program's Conflict Resolution Policy.

In the event of a conflict, a Learning Team is encouraged to try to resolve the conflict internally. Before taking a conflict to the Faculty Advisor, the Learning Team should make three attempts to resolve the disagreement ("**Three Before Me**"). The "**Three Before Me**" strategy is simple: learning teams should be able to prove that at least three avenues have been tried to resolve a conflict.

Learning Teams can notify their Faculty Advisor of any team meetings concerning conflict. Learning Teams are advised to briefly note discussion and decision points of any conflict resolution meeting (i.e.:

what were the three strategies, and what was the outcome). When the Learning Team is able to resolve a conflict, they are encouraged to report any resolution/plan identified to their Faculty Advisor.

Key strategies for dealing with conflict:

- Meet and discuss as a group, allowing each member to share their point of view, if they so desires.
- Listen carefully, without interrupting.
- Focus on behaviour and events, not personalities.
- Identify points of agreement and disagreement.
- Explore and discuss potential solutions and alternatives.
- Agree on a plan that considers the needs of all team members.
- Follow through on your plan.
- Celebrate successes.

If a Learning Team is unable to resolve a conflict internally, they should immediately notify their Faculty Advisor and the following conflict resolution policy will guide the process.

There are times when a conflict should be referred directly to the Faculty Advisor or the MPH Program Office. Specifically, scholastic offences

(https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf) and

violations of Western University's student code of conduct

(<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>). We request that all students read Western

University's policies to familiarize themselves with expectations of all students on campus.

Conflict Resolution Process

1. **Step One – Learning Team & Faculty Advisor:** If a Learning Team is unable to resolve a conflict internally, they are required to meet with their Faculty Advisor.
 - a. The Learning Team will find a suitable time to meet with the Faculty Advisor to discuss the issue.
 - b. The role of the Faculty Advisor is to act as a mediator only, to help facilitate a resolution; the Faculty Advisor should not issue any directives.
 - i. The Faculty Advisor will notify the MPH Program Office of any conflict resolution meetings with their team and will communicate with the MPH Program Office

- identifying the outcome of the meeting and, if reached, any resolution/plan identified by the Learning Team.
- ii. If a Learning Team is unable to resolve a conflict with the assistance of the Faculty Advisor, the Faculty Advisor will immediately notify the MPH Program Director.
2. **Step Two – Learning Team & MPH Graduate Chair/Director:** If a Learning Team is unable to resolve a conflict with the assistance of the Faculty Advisor, they are required to meet with the MPH Graduate Chair/Director.
- a. The MPH Graduate Chair/Director may arrange to meet with members of the team individually, with the team as a group, and with the Faculty Advisor.
 - b. The MPH Graduate Chair/Director will facilitate a meeting with the Learning Team.
 - i. The initial role of the MPH Graduate Chair/Director is to act in the role of a mediator.
 - c. If a Learning Team is unable to resolve a conflict with the assistance of the MPH Graduate Chair/Director, the Learning Team may be directed to a third party to assist with conflict resolution or can, at their discretion, impose a solution (see 4).
3. **Step Three – Learning Team and Third-Party Resolution:** If a Learning Team is unable to resolve a conflict with the assistance of the MPH Graduate Chair/Director, the Learning Team will be directed to a third party to help with conflict mediation and resolution.
- i. If a Learning Team, with assistance of a third party, is able to identify a resolution/plan, the Learning Team is to report this to the Faculty Advisor and the MPH Program Office.
 - ii. If a Learning Team, with the assistance of a third party, is unable to resolve a conflict, the Learning Team should notify the Faculty Advisor and the MPH Program Office immediately, and direct the matter to the MPH Graduate Chair/Director.
4. **Step Four – Resolution of Conflicts:** A Learning Team must arrive at a resolution to their conflict either by agreement or by declaration from the MPH Graduate Chair/Director.
- a. At all times, the MPH Graduate Chair/Director has the discretion to impose a resolution to a Learning Team conflict.
 - i. The MPH Graduate Chair/Director will file a report on any imposed resolution with the MPH Program Office.
 - b. A decision by the MPH Graduate Chair/Director under Step Four is definitive, subject only to the allowable grounds of appeal permitted by the University Secretariat.

Plagiarism

You are reminded that plagiarism (representing another person's ideas, writings, etc., as one's own) is a serious academic offence; the penalty can be as severe as expulsion from the MPH Program.

Students must write their reflections, essays, and assignments (this includes case exams and reports) in their own words. Similarly, all written work completed by the Learning Team must be in the words of one or more team members. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author (or non-team member), they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required written assignments/papers (this includes case exams and reports) may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

MPH Academic Appeals – Procedures

This document outlines internal appeal procedures in the MPH Program. Our procedures are consistent with those outlined by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, with which students should familiarize themselves: <https://grad.uwo.ca/administration/regulations/14.html>

Steps:

1. If, after informally consulting the course instructor(s), the student is still dissatisfied, they have the right to appeal to the Graduate Chair.
2. In reaching a decision, the Graduate Chair may consult with others, including the course instructor(s), as deemed appropriate.
3. The Graduate Chair will either grant or deny the appeal, normally within 3 weeks of receiving it.
4. A student has the right to appeal the decision of the Graduate Chair to SGPS.

Required Documentation

The student submits a signed, dated appeal in writing to the Graduate Chair clearly indicating the following:

1. The subject matter of the appeal:

- a mark (on examinations, assignments, courses)
- a ruling (of an instructor, program or administrator in an academic matter)

2. Grounds of Appeal. An appeal must be based on one or more of the following grounds:

- Medical or compassionate circumstances
- Extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control
- Bias
- Inaccuracy
- Unfairness

Note: A student's mere dissatisfaction with a mark does not constitute a ground of appeal.

Similarly, a claim that the grade does not reflect the effort expended on the assignment or course is not a valid ground for appeal.

3. A clear and detailed explanation of the facts supporting the grounds of appeal.**4. A statement of the desired outcome or remedy.**