Schulich
MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

Schulich Interfaculty Program in Public Health



MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Academic Handbook

Class of 2027

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Part I – Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the MPH Program; we are excited to support you as you take this next step in your professional learning journey. This Handbook is designed to outline program policies and procedures clearly, so that expectations are transparent and a positive learning environment is fostered. The policies described here align with those of the Senate and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, which can also be consulted for additional detail.

Active & Engaged Learning

The MPH Program emphasizes case-based and team-based learning—an active, learner-centered approach that differs from traditional lecture-based teaching. Success in this environment requires preparation, participation, and collaboration: you will get out of the program what you put into it.

What this looks like in practice:

- Prepare for class: Complete readings and reflect on them
- Actively participate in class: Listen attentively, contribute your perspective, and engage respectfully with others' ideas. Attendance in class is essential to your success in this program.
- Note-taking: Detailed notetaking during class is not the most effective approach and can distract both you and others. Capture key points selectively. Discuss ideas with your Learning Team (LT) to deepen understanding.
- Readings: Graduate study demands efficient, critical reading. You will be assigned more material than can realistically be read word-for-word. Part of your professional development is learning to identify which readings are core, which can be skimmed, and how to extract the most relevant insights. Ask your professors for guidance and use your LT to share strategies.

By engaging in this way, you will strengthen skills in reasoning, collaboration, contextual learning, and leadership—core competencies for effective public health practice.

Professional Expectations

The MPH Program is a professional graduate program. As such, students are expected to conduct themselves in ways that are consistent with a professional practice environment and with the Western University Student Code of Conduct. The Program is committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization, and expects all members of the community to contribute to an environment that reflects these values. Ground rules include:

- Attend all classes and Learning Team meetings. If you must miss a team meeting for a legitimate reason, notify your peers in advance.
- Use laptops and mobile devices in class only for learning purposes. Emailing the MPH Office or faculty members during class is not permitted. Professional email etiquette and timely responses are expected in all communications with faculty, staff, and peers.

- Be respectful of others' time and contributions.
- Approach your role as both a learner and a teacher, contributing actively to the learning environment.
- Respect, reflect on, and consider perspectives that differ from your own.
- Strengthen your emotional intelligence skills when interacting with classmates and colleagues.
- Refrain from using profanity or disrespectful language in the program building or on campus.
- Never threaten, harass, or insult any member of the program community.

Addressing Your Professors

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

Preparing for Class

In this professional, graduate-level program, you are expected to come to class prepared to fully engage. **To prepare for each class:**

- Check Brightspace for the session plan. Classes may be lectures, case-based discussions, or other formats.
- Complete assigned readings. Class time is not intended to teach the readings to you; in graduate courses it is assumed you have completed and reflected on the readings in advance. Lectures and class activities will build on this foundation to deepen your understanding and apply concepts in practice.
- Prepare for case discussions. Cases are complex and benefit from advance reading and reflection. Careful preparation will enrich your own learning and strengthen the quality of in-class discussion.

Part II – Student Participation

Participation is a core part of your learning in the MPH program, and of your classmates' learning as well. For that reason, 30% of your final grade in each course is based on participation as shown in the table below.

We recognize that participation can feel challenging at times. Still, developing the ability to engage thoughtfully in difficult discussions is a key skill for future leaders in public health. The MPH classroom is designed as a safe space to practice and strengthen those skills. It is also important to remember that contribution goes beyond simply raising your hand. Participation means adding value to the conversation, advancing collective understanding, and contributing to classroom learning.

Component	Weight	How It Is Assessed
Attendance	5%	Log your attendance at start of class via the Dialogix app: 0 = absent or late, 1 = present and arrived before class start time. Two late/missed classes per course excused if MPH Office given notice before class starts.
Class Participation	10%	Evaluated by your peers in the Dialogix app. Strong contributions = meaningful, unique, connected to discussion.
LT Participation	15%	End-of-term peer assessment on 3 questions. Each teammate scored 1–5 on preparation, contribution, collaboration. Your grade = average LT score out of 15 in each course.

Note: Some MPH courses use the iClicker app to assess class participation.

Class Attendance Policy

1. Regular and engaged participation in class and LT work is required for satisfactory progress towards the completion of the MPH Program (see "Participation" above).

2. Students are expected to attend all classes in every course. However, if a student does miss a class, the following policy applies:

    a) Attendance is marked as 0 = absent/late and 1 = present. A student may miss or arrive late for up to two classes per course without penalty, provided the student has notified the MPH Office in advance by emailing publichealth@schulich.uwo.ca before class begins.

    b) Students who miss class will receive a mark of 0 on participation for that class. A student may miss up to two classes per course without penalty to their class participation grade, provided the student has notified the MPH Office in advance by emailing publichealth@schulich.uwo.ca before class begins.

Frequent absences may result in a student not being permitted to sit 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 may be prevented from completing deliverables in the course.

Any student who is absent too frequently from one or more courses (as determined by individual faculty members, in consultation with the Program Office and the Graduate Chair) may be deemed to have failed to make satisfactory progress towards the degree and may be required to withdraw from the program.

Notification of Absence Policy

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 8:15 a.m. the day of class. Data will be tracked and reviewed at the bi-weekly faculty meetings.

Late Arrivals & Early Departures Policy

1. Students are expected to arrive on time and not leave before a session ends.
2. Attendance will be logged at the start of each class.
3. If you arrive late, you will receive a score of 0 for class attendance. If you arrive late or leave early, you may receive a score of 0 for class participation (based on the discretion of the instructor).

Class Attendance - Grading

Each MPH course will use Dialogix to record attendance at the start of class. Attendance is marked as 0 = absent/late and 1 = present. You may miss or arrive late for up to two classes **per course without penalty,** provided you notify the MPH Office in advance by emailing publichealth@schulich.uwo.ca before class begins (see Notification of Absence Policy).

Attendance is recorded through the Dialogix web-based app – app.dialogix.ca

It is your responsibility to ensure your attendance is logged properly. Attendance is an expectation of the MPH Program. If absences are frequent or important content is missed, additional assignments may be required to demonstrate mastery.

Class Participation - Grading

In most MPH classes, your participation grade is based on the Class Participation Scoring Rubric below.

Class Participation Scoring Rubric	
3	Made meaningful and unique verbal contributions in class that demonstrated strong knowledge of course concepts and materials. Linked their comment(s) to others' contributions, strengthened the discussion, and brought energy and enthusiasm to class discussions.
2	Made unique verbal contributions that demonstrated basic knowledge of course concepts and materials. Usually linked their comments to others' contributions.
1	Present and attentive but silent.
0	Absent from class, or if present, displayed disruptive behavior or inattention (on phone, left class for long periods of time, etc.).

To receive a strong class participation score, come to class prepared and make regular contributions that advance discussion and help your classmates learn. Simply repeating what others have already said will not earn a strong mark. Not everyone will speak in every class, but over the semester you should build a consistent record of solid contributions. This includes but is not limited to clarifying facts, building on others' points, or linking to course material.

Peer reviewer instructions

When you are selected as a peer reviewer you will:

- Login to app.dialogix.ca when the professor chooses you as a peer evaluator. Let the professor know if you are having issues logging in or selecting the correct class.
- Ask your instructor to clarify anything you are unsure of. Students who do not take peer evaluation seriously may have their grades affected.

Your evaluator role is important for both your skill development and for fair peer assessment. If you are uncertain about how to apply the rubric, or uncomfortable with the process, talk to your professor early. Peer evaluations are confidential; the professor reviews them alongside their own observations to determine final scores. Note: final grades for class participation rest with the course instructor, who considers peer feedback alongside other evidence of engagement.

LT Participation - Grading

A portion of your grade in each MPH course will be based on work completed with your Learning Team (LT). To ensure fairness, all students are expected to contribute meaningfully to their team's work. Concerns about unequal participation should first be addressed within the team; if they persist, they

must be reported to the Faculty Advisor following the LT Conflict Resolution process outlined in this Handbook.

At the end of each course, students are assessed on their contributions to their LT through a peer assessment that accounts for **15% of the final course grade**. Each student will evaluate their LT members (but not themselves) by answering three questions, scored from 1 (Never) to 5 (Almost Always):

1. The LT member was prepared for LT discussions and assignments (e.g., had studied assigned materials enough to engage in activities).
2. The LT member contributed meaningfully to the LT's work (e.g., participating in discussions and contributing to planning, writing, and/or presenting).
3. The LT member was collaborative, kind, and respectful to others on the team.

LT Participation Scoring Rubric	
5	**Almost Always**: The LT member consistently demonstrated this behavior throughout the term in this course.
4	**Often**: The LT member usually demonstrated this behavior when working with the team.
3	**Sometimes**: The LT member demonstrated this behavior inconsistently in this course.
2	**Seldom**: The LT member showed this behavior occasionally, but it was rare in this course.
1	**Never**: The LT member did not demonstrate this behavior at any point during this course.

Your average score out of 15 will form your LT Participation grade for a course. Please rate each student in your LT honestly. The scores that each student assigns to their peers are confidential and not shared with team members. **Important Note**: LT participation is assessed separately for every course**.** Students who contribute inconsistently or minimally to their LT for a course, who are not prepared for labs or work sessions with their LT for a course, or who are not collaborative, kind or respectful of others in their LT should expect this to be reflected in their grade for that course. If you are finding it difficult to keep up with LT work for a specific course, you are strongly encouraged to speak with your course instructor early in the term for advice. If you are finding it difficult to keep up with LT work overall in the program, you are strongly encouraged to speak to your Faculty Advisor early in the term for advice.

Part III – Practicum & Capstone

Beyond coursework, the MPH Program requires two major applied learning experiences: the Practicum and the Capstone. Together, they provide students with opportunities to integrate classroom learning with real-world public health practice.

Practicum

The Practicum is a core requirement of the MPH Program, providing an intensive, hands-on opportunity to apply learning in a public health setting. Conducted full time from May to August of the graduating year, it involves ~420 hours of supervised work on a real public health issue.

Each student develops a Learning Contract with their Faculty Advisor and organizational Supervisor, outlining objectives, competencies, and deliverables. Students must demonstrate at least five competencies (including three core competencies). Typical deliverables include two products for the host organization, a self-reflection, and a poster presentation at the MPH Practicum Showcase.

The Practicum is graded pass/fail, based on the Learning Contract, deliverables, supervisor evaluations, and program requirements. Many placements are competitive; host organizations may interview and select candidates based on demonstrated skills, professionalism, and fit. A detailed course outline will be provided in the Winter term. Practicum deliverables cannot be counted toward the Capstone.

Capstone

The Capstone is the culminating academic experience of the MPH Program, taken in the Winter and Summer terms of the graduating year (1.5 credits). It requires students to independently integrate and apply program knowledge to a real-world public health problem.

In the Winter term, students participate in weekly classes and assignments to develop a Rapid Review Protocol and build skills in research, analysis, and communication. In the Summer, students complete their independent rapid review project using Covidence and Zotero software. Capstone deliverables cannot be counted toward the Practicum. The Capstone is required for graduation. A capstone syllabus and grading rubrics will be distributed in the Winter term.

Part IV – Professional Development Milestone

The Professional Development Milestone in the MPH Program is a required, non-credit component that supports your growth as a public health professional. At Western, milestones are recorded on your academic transcript as “Completed” once fulfilled, reflecting important degree requirements that sit outside of traditional, graded courses.

To achieve this milestone, MPH students must complete three program-specific elements: **CliftonStrengths Workshops, Integrative Workshops**, and **MPH Skills Labs**. Together, these activities are designed to help you integrate knowledge, build professional skills, and engage with public health experts and peers beyond the classroom.

CliftonStrengths Workshops

The CliftonStrengths Assessment is designed to help you better understand your natural talents, how you contribute to teams, and the unique strengths you bring as a professional. Throughout the program, we will encourage you to use these insights as you explore career options, develop leadership skills, and build your professional brand.

We will explore and debrief your results during dedicated Skills Lab sessions in September, including discussions about strengths-based teamwork and your Learning Team experience.

Three Integrative Workshops

Once in the first semester and twice in the second semester, a full day, mandatory, Integrative Workshop for all students and associated faculty will be scheduled. The main objective of these workshops is to pause to reflect on the learning to date, to integrate and synthesize interdisciplinary knowledge and practices learned in the various courses, and to apply them to a particular issue in public health. Topics will be chosen to complement rather than duplicate the materials being used in the courses and will reflect the expanded expertise on campus beyond the course faculty members as well as practice experts and community members.

This will be a team exercise, where you will be applying the materials and insights from your courses in addition to the presentations by experts at the workshop to answer the question(s) posed to you. More information will be provided prior to the first Integrative Workshop. Deliverables will vary with the Integrative Workshop and range, for example, from short reports to presentations to a panel of experts, from letters to the editor to policy briefs, etc.

Team Assignment: After each IW, each team will write a short reflection on the working of their interprofessional team. In this reflection, the team will (1) comment on the unique contributions of each person on the team, (2) what worked well, (3) what did not work well, and (4) how to improve team functioning in the future.

MPH Skills Lab

As part of the MPH Program, you will participate in a series of mandatory **MPH Skills Labs** held approximately either bi-weekly or monthly on Mondays at 1:30 pm in the MPH Classroom (PHFM 4006), unless otherwise noted. Sessions run 1–2 hours and may include interactive components with your LT. These workshops are designed to connect you with the Program Director, strengthen your professional skills, and equip you to stand out in the public health job market.

Fall Schedule

Date	Time	Topic	Led by
Sept.14	1:30 – 3:30pm	Intro to CliftonStrengths	Meg Kelly, Coordinator, Strengths Programs
Sept. 28	1:30 – 3:30pm	CliftonStrengths Team Grid	Meg Kelly, Coordinator, Strengths Programs
Oct. 5	1:30 – 3:00pm	Director Chat	Dr. Currie
Oct. 13	1:30 – 4:30pm	Ivey VR Session	Ivey School of Business, 1255 Western Road
Oct. 19	1:30 – 3:30pm	Project Management	Abbas Alimorad, Leadership Advisor
Nov. 2	1:30 – 2:30pm	Resumes/Cover Letters	Diana Milanovic
Nov. 16	1:30 – 2:30pm	Grad Chair Chat	Dr. McKinley
Nov. 30	1:30 – 2:30pm	Practicum Overview	Diana Milanovic
Dec. 7	1:30 – 2:30pm	Capstone Prep	Dr. Currie, Dr. Goodwin

A Winter Schedule will be released in December.

Part V – Academic Policies

Western Graduate Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Numerical Scale
A+	90–100%
A	85–89%
A-	80–84%
B+	77–79%
B	73–76%
B-	70–72%
C+	67–69%
C	63–66%
C-	60–62%
F	00–59%

For full details, see Western's Graduate Grading Policy.

Progression

The MPH Program is committed to supporting student success. However, students may be required to withdraw if they do not meet the following standards:

Minimum average: Students must maintain a cumulative average of at least 70%, calculated each term across all courses taken for credit, with no grade lower than 60%. In cases of failing grades assigned for Scholastic Offences, only the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) may withdraw a student. See Graduate Progression Requirements.

Satisfactory progress: Students must demonstrate timely progress toward the degree by meeting program-defined milestones.

Late Assignments and Exams

Assignments must be submitted by the stated deadlines. Late submissions without prior approval may receive a grade of zero. Exceptions will be considered in cases of documented medical, compassionate, or accessibility accommodations, in accordance with Western University policies.

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 LT must be in the words of the 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. As professional masters' students, you are expected to understand these rules, if you have concerns or doubts, be sure to access resources available to you through Western Libraries and elsewhere. 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).

Requests for Relief from Academic Decisions

This document outlines internal relief from academic decisions 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://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/grad-disciplinary-matters.html.

Steps

1. If, after informally consulting the course instructor(s), the student is still dissatisfied, they have the right to request relief from the academic decision in writing 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 request, normally within 3 weeks of receiving it.
4. A student has the right to submit the request for relief from the program decision to SGPS.

Required Documentation

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

1. The subject matter of the request.

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

2. **Grounds for Request.** A request for relief 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

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

Note: A student's mere dissatisfaction with a mark does not constitute a ground for relief. Similarly, a claim that the grade does not reflect the effort expended on the assignment or course is not a valid ground for relief.

Recordings

1. Recording the voices or images of students, faculty, or guests carries serious implications under privacy legislation. Recording of any individual without their explicit permission is strictly prohibited.
2. The wearing of recording enabled devices, including eyewear, is prohibited in the classroom.
3. We expect each student to be present and actively participating engaging in every lecture. We do not record faculty lectures.

Intellectual Property

The MPH Program provides you with access to learning materials (cases, course notes, recorded content, and related resources) solely for the purpose of meeting program learning objectives. Under Canadian copyright law, all intellectual property—including course materials, notes, and other content created by MPH faculty and staff—is automatically owned by the author(s). Recording of classroom sessions by students is strictly prohibited. Respect the intellectual property rights of copyright holders by not sharing, distributing, copying, or altering any program materials. For further guidance, consult Western's copyright policies.

Part VI – Support & Conduct

Professional public health practice requires a commitment to respect, collaboration, and accountability. The MPH Program expects all members of its community—students, faculty, and staff—to uphold these standards so that classrooms and learning teams remain safe, inclusive, and productive environments. This section outlines the program's expectations for professional conduct, the processes for addressing concerns, and the consequences of behaviours that interfere with learning or community well-being.

Academic Support

MPH faculty, staff, and Western University are committed to supporting each student's success in the program. If you have concerns or are struggling with any aspect of your academic program, we are here to listen, support, and advise. We believe in promoting learning and removing barriers whenever possible. Early intervention is best. Please do not struggle on your own. Supports are available, but you must reach out in order for us to help you.

If your concern relates to a particular course, begin by speaking directly with the course instructor. If your concerns extend across multiple courses or involve LT dynamics, please consult your Faculty Advisor. We encourage students to raise issues with the individual most directly involved first, allowing them the opportunity to address the matter, before escalating to a faculty member.

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 cannot grant accommodations unless a student has registered with Accessible Education.

Behaviour & Safety

The MPH Program is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. Professionalism, teamwork, and leadership are fundamental to public health practice and are core expectations of all members of the program community. Disagreements may occur, but they must be managed respectfully and constructively.

Professional conduct requires:

- treating others with respect;
- allowing others to complete their thoughts without interruption;
- presenting viewpoints in a clear and professional manner; and
- refraining from defamatory, insulting, aggressive, mocking, or vulgar language.

All students, staff, and faculty share responsibility for upholding these standards.

Class Conduct Policy

1. If concerns arise regarding comments or behaviour in class that cannot be resolved, students must bring them to the attention of the **course instructor** as soon as possible.
2. If the concern involves the instructor, students must bring the matter to the **Program Director**.
3. The MPH Program is responsible for ensuring that concerns are addressed promptly and fairly. Faculty and staff will provide support and take appropriate action as necessary.

LT Conduct Policy

1. If concerns arise within an LT, members are expected to first address them promptly and professionally within the team.
2. If the issue is not resolved internally, the team should bring the matter to the **course instructor** if the issue is scholastic in nature (e.g., a student is plagiarising their components of the LT work, or not contributing to LT course work). If the issue is interpersonal, the team should speak to **their Faculty Advisor** for advice and support.
3. If the conflict persists, the instructor or Faculty Advisor may refer the matter to the Graduate Chair.
4. The Program Director may become involved if issues continue.
5. The Program has the authority to impose resolutions, including reassigning team members or removing a student from a LT and requiring them to complete assignments alone. Decisions at the program level are subject to Western University's appeal policies.

Consequences Policy

1. If there are repeated or unresolved scholastic or conduct issues:
    - In such cases, the MPH Program may remove a student from an LT.
    - If this occurs the student may be required to complete team deliverables independently under the supervision of the Graduate Chair and Director.
2. Scholastic issues may be addressed under the Procedure for Graduate Scholastic Offences.
3. Serious conduct concerns, including those affecting safety or community standards, may be addressed under the Code of Student Conduct.
4. Decisions made at the program level may be appealed to SGPS.

LT Conflict Resolution Guidance

Conflict is a normal part of teamwork and can provide opportunities to develop leadership and mediation skills. The MPH Program encourages teams to address issues early, directly, and professionally. These skills are directly transferable to the practice of public health.

Strategies for resolving conflict include:
– meeting as a group to share perspectives;
– listening carefully without interruption;

– focusing on behaviours and events, not personalities;
– identifying points of agreement and disagreement;
– exploring potential solutions and alternatives;
– agreeing on a plan that considers the needs of all members; and
– following through on the plan.

Teams are encouraged to keep a brief written record of conflict resolution efforts and may share this with their Faculty Advisor.