

University of Minnesota, School of Public Health Coordinated Masters Program (CMP) in Public Health Nutrition

Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your interest! We hope this document answers the many questions you may have about the CMP. If you have additional questions, please contact the Program Director, at phncmp@umn.edu.

Admissions

How many students are admitted each year?

The program is accredited to admit 11 students each year.

How competitive is it to get into the CMP?

The admissions committee reviews approximately 30 applications each year of students who want to be considered for the CMP program. Students that get a spot in the CMP are typically the top students who apply.

What is the admissions process for the CMP?

The admissions process is comprehensive and the committee reviews all areas of the application, including academic achievement, work or volunteer experience, strong recommendations and a clear goal to work in nutrition/dietetics within public health/community nutrition.

Admission into the CMP is a 2-step process:

- First Step: students apply via SOPHAS, to be considered for admission into the Public Health Nutrition MPH program.
- Second step: if admitted, students who selected the CMP track in the SOPHAS application are contacted by the CMP director to request additional documentation and to schedule a phone interview.
- Once all the documentation has been reviewed, and all phone interviews conducted, students are ranked for admission to the CMP program.
- The top 11 students are offered a spot, which they need to accept or decline within a short period. Acceptance includes paying a deposit to the School of Public Health to reserve their spot.
- Notices are typically sent to selected students around mid-to-late February.
- After this time, remaining students are informed of their place within the CMP waiting list.

Do you only admit students who have completed an undergraduate degree in nutrition/dietetics?

No, admitted students may or may not have an undergraduate degree in nutrition or dietetics, however, they do need to have completed all the prerequisite courses prior to the fall semester for which they are seeking admission.



Do Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) graduates need to complete any prerequisite courses to be considered for the CMP?

No, students with a verification statement from an accredited DPD have already completed all prerequisite courses.

NOTE: Additional information for students without a nutrition/dietetics undergraduate degree can be found at the end of this FAQ.

If I don't get into the CMP, but am admitted to the Standard Public Health Nutrition track, can I transfer over to the CMP after the first year of enrollment?

No, admission to the CMP occurs only once a year for a newly admitted class of students. Students may not accept admission to the standard MPH program and then transfer to the CMP later.

What are you looking for in applicants?

In addition to excellence in academics and competitive GRE scores, we look for students with strong letters of reference and work or volunteer experience relevant to the field. We want to make sure that the CMP is the best match for the applicant and this should be evident through the personal statement.

The ideal candidate has a goal of working in public health/community nutrition. For instance, someone with an interest in doing population-level work. Public health focuses on upstream causes of disease with an emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion. This is the opposite of traditional health care which has focused on treating and curing diseases.

In addition, the CMP's area of concentration is working with rural and disadvantaged populations. The best match will be a student who has a career goal of working with these populations. This may include working with immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, people who are under- or uninsured, individuals who are disabled and/or have special health care needs, low income populations, and those who lack adequate access to health care, to name a few.

What would you consider relevant work or volunteer experience?

Experience that shows a strong desire and ability to work with people from disadvantaged populations is helpful. The CMP requires that students have a high degree of self-direction, critical thinking skills, assertiveness and resourcefulness at field sites. Work or volunteer experiences that promote a level of autonomy, serving diverse populations, and "thinking on their feet" are helpful to prepare students to the demands of their field rotations. It is not necessary that the experience be in food or nutrition, as long as it encompasses the above qualities and challenges.

About the Program

What is the mission of the CMP?

The mission of the Coordinated Masters Program in Public Health Nutrition is to prepare competent, entry-level Registered Dietitians who have the knowledge and skills to simultaneously enact the 10 essential public health services and the standards of professional performance for Registered Dietitians while addressing the current and emerging needs of *rural and disadvantaged groups* at the individual, community and population levels.

The Ten Essential Public Health Services are:

1. **Monitor** health status to identify and solve community health problems.
2. **Diagnose and investigate** health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. **Inform, educate, and empower** people about health issues.
4. **Mobilize** community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.
5. **Develop policies and plans** that support individual and community health efforts.
6. **Enforce** laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. **Link** people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. **Assure** competent public and personal health care workforce.
9. **Evaluate** effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. **Research** for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

More information can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nphsp/essentialservices.html>

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Standards of Professional Performance (2012) are:

Standard 1: Quality in Practice

Standard 2: Competence and Accountability

Standard 3: Provision of Services

Standard 4: Application of Research

Standard 5: Communication and Application of Knowledge

Standard 6: Utilization and Management of Resources

More information can be found at: <http://www.eatrightpro.org/resources/practice/quality-management/standards-of-practice>

What is the difference between the CMP and the Standard track in Public Health Nutrition?

The CMP provides both a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree in Public Health Nutrition (PHN) and the didactic coursework and supervised practice hours to be eligible to sit for the Registered Dietitian exam.

The standard MPH in PHN provides coursework in public health with an emphasis in nutrition. It does not provide the required number of supervised practice hours and specialized training to become a Registered Dietitian.

What does the Registered Dietitian Credential add to a Masters in Public Health?

Registered Dietitians/Nutritionists (RDNs) are credentialed to practice in a variety of settings and are providers of food and nutrition information to clients and communities. Because they

obtain both didactic and experiential training in a variety of specialized subjects (Medical Nutrition Therapy, Food Science, Food Service Management, Behavior Change and Counseling skills, etc.) RDNs can work individually and in group settings with people who have acute and chronic illnesses, those with disabilities and special health-care needs.

Some of the skills RDNs possess are:

- Designing nutrition therapy protocols for individuals with a variety of acute or chronic conditions.
- Designing dietary modifications for individuals and organizations, for instance, allergy menu modifications for individual, schools or businesses.
- Conducting one-on-one counseling with individuals needing to make food, nutrition and lifestyle modifications, including those suffering from chronic illnesses.

Professionals with an MPH in Public Health Nutrition, but without the RDN credential, can work in a variety of areas focusing on health promotion and disease prevention, not with populations who are ill or need medical nutrition therapy or dietary modifications.

If I become a Registered Dietitian, do I also need to be licensed?

Rules on licensure vary by state. In Minnesota, licensure is a requirement for practice as a dietitian. If you complete all the requirements and become a Registered Dietitian you are also eligible to become a Licensed Dietitian in Minnesota if this is desired and/or required by you or your employer. Additional information on licensure in Minnesota is available here:

<http://mn.gov/boards/dietetics-and-nutrition/>

Additional information about State Licensure can be found at the Commission on Dietetics Registration website at: <https://www.cdrnet.org/state-licensure>

What is the CMP's area of concentration?

Public Health Nutrition with an emphasis on working with rural and disadvantaged populations.

What are the CMP's measures of program effectiveness?

The Coordinated Masters Program in Public Health Nutrition has identified four broad program goals, and related outcome measures, that reflect the program's mission and are accomplished through activities conducted by the faculty, preceptors, and graduates.

Program outcome data can be obtained by contacting the CMP Director.

Goal 1: *To prepare competent entry level dietetics practitioners who possess all of the skills and knowledge required to practice as a Registered Dietitian.*

Outcome measures:

1. Over a five-year period, the pass rate for program graduates taking the registration examination for the first time will be at least 80%.
2. Over a five-year period, 70% or more of program graduates who sought employment in dietetics will be employed within three months of program completion.

Goal 2: *To train public health dietitians who are committed to improving the nutritional health and well-being of diverse, rural and disadvantaged groups at the individual, community, and population levels.*

Outcome measures:



1. Within one-year post-graduation, 70% of program graduates will be employed in health care organizations that provide services to disadvantaged groups within the community.
2. 80% of employers surveyed will rate program graduates as competent entry-level public health dietitians.
3. 80% of graduates surveyed will rate their preparation for entry-level practice in the area of public health as adequate.

Goal 3: *To train public health dietitians to be strong and effective leaders who are committed to life-long learning and service to the profession.*

Outcome measures:

1. Over a five-year period, 80% of program graduates will be involved in leadership positions within the profession
2. Within one-year post-graduation, 100% of program graduates who have become registered dietitians will have completed at least one professional development activity in accordance with their CDR Professional Development Portfolio.

Goal 4: *The program will provide graduate students with a seamless innovative educational experience to meet the requirements for RD credentialing eligibility as well as for obtaining a MPH degree in public health nutrition.*

Outcome measures:

1. 80% of graduate students who begin the program are expected to complete the program/degree requirements with 36 months for students admitted with an undergraduate degree in nutrition, or within 54 months for students admitted without an undergraduate degree in nutrition.
2. 100% of graduate students will achieve a satisfactory evaluation for all supervised practice competencies/learning outcomes while enrolled in the program.
3. 80% of graduate students will rate their overall experience in the Coordinated Masters Program in Public Health Nutrition as good to very good in providing them with a wide variety of learning opportunities.
4. 90% of students will report a better understanding of the unique nutrition needs of disadvantaged populations, including but not limited to racial/ethnic minorities, low income communities experiencing health disparities, recent immigrants and rural residents.

Where do students complete supervised practice hours?

Students complete supervised practice hours in a variety of facilities and agencies, including public schools, WIC clinics, community nutrition programs, public health agencies, non-profit agencies, long-term-care facilities and hospitals. Most facilities serve disadvantaged populations. During summer, students complete a practicum outside of the Twin Cities and gain experience working with rural populations. Sites may be at local, county or state public health clinics or agencies, or at federal agencies throughout the US.

How do students complete the required 1,200 hours of supervised practice?

Over a two-year period, during fall and spring semesters, students complete 60 hours of assigned field experiences, for a total of 240 hours. Every year, students also complete an additional 28 hours of community engagement in an area that interests them, for a total of 56 hours. Each summer, students complete a 10-week practicum, for a total of 840 hours (students are off on July 4th). Finally, each student completes a research project under the supervision of a faculty advisor, which accounts for the remaining 120 hours.

Does the CMP have its own Academic calendar?

No, the CMP follows the University of Minnesota's academic calendar, which can be found at: <http://onestop.umn.edu/calendars/>

Are students allowed to work during the CMP?

Most CMP students seek employment during the program. Students must prioritize their time as follows: First, they must attend classes and participate in class projects. The next priority is their supervised practice experience, as well as time to attend CMP meetings. Students need to set aside approximately 8 hours a week to go to field experiences (including transit time) and attend meetings.

After these schedules are determined, students can decide upon hours in which they can pursue employment. If a student is unable to devote sufficient time to assigned field experiences, disciplinary action will take place. A student can be dismissed from the CMP program if this problem is not resolved.

If employment is pursued, CMP students are asked to not work more than 10 hours a week. During summer, students are required to complete 10-week full-time practicums, and cannot work during these weeks.

Program Costs

Students incur a \$120 fee for the Schools of Public Health Application System (SOPHAS) application when applying to the program. If admitted, students need to submit a \$250 deposit to the School of Public Health to secure their spot. This amount is deducted from tuition when enrolled, but is non-refundable if the student later decides to decline the offer.

The following is a list of anticipated CMP costs per academic year.

	Fall + Spring Semesters	Summer Term
Tuition & Fees (resident status)	\$22,125 *	\$8,820
Tuition & Fees (non-resident)	\$27,958	\$8,820
Rent	\$5,370	\$3,000**
Food	\$2,400	\$800
Gas/Transportation	\$900	\$300
Books/Supplies	\$400	\$150
Personal/ Miscellaneous***	\$900	\$300
Total	\$32,095 (resident) \$37,928 (non-resident)	\$13,199 (resident) \$13,199 (non-resident)

*Based on School of Public Health 2018-2019 tuition of \$980/credit for residents and \$1,287/credit for non-residents fall & spring semesters. Summer tuition for 2019 is not available yet, it is anticipated to be approximately \$980/credit for residents and non-residents. Tuition/Fees include the cost per semester of the Academic Health Center's student Health

Benefit Plan (~\$1050). The amounts listed for fall and spring semesters are for an average of 9.5 credits per semester. Students without an undergraduate degree in nutrition/dietetics may need to take more than 9-10 credits during some semesters.

**Rent during summer months factor in extra costs that may be incurred if a student pays double rent for living in a different city for the practicum. Most students, however, sublet their apartment in the Twin Cities during the summer months.

***Personal/Miscellaneous includes costs such as parking, immunizations, background checks, or any other incidental costs that could be incurred.

Some additional costs that a CMP student may incur are:

- Student membership to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (\$50/year)
- Lab coat if required by clinical rotation (\$25 - \$40, one-time cost)
- Background check (\$30 - \$100, depending on site-specific requirements)
- Travel to practicum site over the summer (\$200/year)
- Parking fees at supervised practice locations (approx. \$100/year)

Do students need to have a car during the CMP program?

Yes, having a car is required. Students must sign a statement indicating that they will have a car during the 2-year program in order to be offered a spot. Even though the Twin Cities have a reliable public transit system, students have short periods of time to travel from school to field sites, and back to school. Public transit doesn't typically allow sufficient time to meet these tight scheduling demands. In addition, many students spend summer months in rural areas which do not have public transportation, and thus having a car is a necessity.

Additional information for Non-Nutrition/Dietetics Undergraduate Majors

Do you conduct transcript evaluations to determine if a student needs to take additional pre-requisite courses?

No, we do not conduct transcript evaluations. Each student should review his/her transcripts and assure that he/she has taken, or is enrolled in, the prerequisite courses listed below.

What are the prerequisite courses for the CMP?

Students who do not hold a verification statement from an accredited DPD program must complete all the following courses prior to the fall semester for which they seek admission:

- One General Biology course (with a lab preferred)
- Two General Chemistry courses (with a lab preferred)
- One Organic Chemistry course (with a lab preferred)
- One Biochemistry course
- One Microbiology course
- One Human Physiology course
- One Introduction to Nutrition course
- One Social Sciences course (Sociology or Psychology)
- One Food Science course
- One Food Service Operations Management course

Can I complete prerequisite courses during the CMP at the University of Minnesota?

No, all prerequisite courses MUST be completed before the fall of the semester that the student is applying for. A student must prove that he/she is registered to take all these courses by fall semester to be considered for the CMP program. Proof includes unofficial transcripts where upcoming courses are listed or a letter/email to the program director from the registrar's office or the course instructor(s).

If I am lacking most, or all the prerequisite courses, how long will it take me to complete them?

Typically, it takes at least two years to complete all prerequisite courses. One course builds on the next. For instance, General Chemistry needs to be taken before Organic Chemistry. These two chemistry courses are prerequisites for Biochemistry, etc.

Can I take combined courses to meet prerequisite requirements?

Some schools will offer a combined General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry course, or a combined Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry course. We do not accept these as prerequisite courses. Nutrition is a science-based discipline. Students must have a strong understanding of biological and chemical sciences to succeed in the program and in the profession.

Where can I take these prerequisite courses?

Most students choose to take these courses at colleges or universities near their residence. Many community colleges offer a variety of biological and chemical sciences. Community colleges that offer a Dietetic Technician program will offer the sciences as well as the Food Courses. Universities that have a Didactic Program in Dietetics will offer all the prerequisite courses.

In the Twin Cities:

- There are several Didactic Programs in Dietetics (University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Food Science and Nutrition Department; St. Catherine's University; St. Ben's University; Concordia College in Moorhead).
- There is one Dietetic Technician program (Normandale Community College).
- Each school has specific criteria for allowing non-matriculated students to take their courses, thus students need to inquire at each school about their policies.

Can I take any of these prerequisite courses online?

Yes, there are many online options for these courses and each student can research the options that fit his/her needs. Most courses are not too difficult to find online, however the food courses tend to be hard to find.

The following is a limited list of potential Food online courses. Given that we have no control over what other colleges and universities do with their courses, please contact them directly if any of the information below is no longer up to date.

The University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa)

- Food Science (NHM 253)
- Food Service Management (NHM 372)

Kansas State University



- Food Science (FDSI 501: Food Chemistry) – Note, they also offer an Introduction to Food Science course, but this is NOT the course that meets your needs. You need to take “Food Chemistry.”
- Food Service Management: (HMD 341: Principles of Food Production Management).

This is not an all-inclusive list. If you find an online course and wish to make sure that it will cover the content needed for dietetics practice, please send the syllabus to the program director at phncmp@umn.edu. Please note that a course description is not always sufficient to make this determination. Including the syllabus as well as the link to the site will expedite the process.

Good luck, and let us know if we can answer additional questions or concerns!