

Public Health Nutrition (PHN) Coordinated Program(CP) track

Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your interest! We hope this document answers your many questions about the UMN CP. The CP is a track within our PHN program. If you have additional questions, please contact the Program Director, Amy Pleimling, at pleim005@umn.edu

Admissions Q & A	Admissions - Public Health Nutrition
<i>How many students are enrolled each year?</i>	The program is accredited to enroll 11 students each year.
<i>How do I apply for the program?</i>	The UMN CP is an MPH program and an accredited supervised practice program in nutrition and dietetics. All MPH applicants must apply through SOPHAS . The CP is accredited by ACEND (the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics). ACEND requires that all graduate dietetic programs use DICAS to apply. CP applicants must complete both SOPHAS and DICAS applications.
<i>Do I have to pay both SOPHAS and DICAS application fees?</i>	Yes. SOPHAS charges \$150 for the first program you apply to and \$60 for each additional program. DICAS charges \$50 for the first program you apply to and \$25 for each additional program. DICAS Help Center Please check out the SOPHAS Fee Waiver Program
<i>What is the admissions process for the CP?</i>	It is typical to receive about 50 applications for the CP each year. The admissions process is comprehensive, and the committee reviews all areas of the application, including academic achievement, work or volunteer experience, strong recommendations, a personal statement, and a clear goal of working in public health/community nutrition and attaining the RDN credential. Admission into the CP is a 3-step process: 1. Apply using SOPHAS. a. When you do a University of Minnesota MPH program search in SOPHAS, you will see both PHN tracks as options. CP applicants should choose the Coordinated Program track. See the bottom of this document for a screenshot. 2. Apply using DICAS. a. The PHN application committee reviews the SOPHAS application. PHN admits are communicated to the CP Director. b. The CP Director reviews the DICAS application. 3. A 45-minute online interview. a. The CP Director will contact applicants who have met DICAS application expectations to schedule an interview.

<i>Do you only admit students who have completed an undergraduate degree in nutrition/dietetics?</i>	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 <u>prior to</u> the fall semester for which they are seeking admission. In rare cases of a late admission the CP director is willing to work with the incoming student individually to create a reasonable plan.
<i>Do Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) graduates need to complete any prerequisite courses to be considered for the CP?</i>	No. Students with a verification statement from an accredited DPD have already completed all prerequisite courses. NOTE: The end of this FAQ provides additional information for students without a nutrition/dietetics undergraduate degree.
<i>If I don't get into the CP, but am admitted to the Traditional Public Health Nutrition track, can I transfer over to the CP after the first year of enrollment?</i>	No, admission to the CP occurs only once a year for a newly admitted class of students. The only exceptions to this might be last-minute CP openings. In these cases, the CP Director still interviews the inquiring student and considers their application holistically and equitably
<i>What are you looking for in applicants?</i>	In addition to academic excellence, 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 CP 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. Besides the dietetics path, our program focuses on public health. Public health focuses on upstream causes of disease with an emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion. Additionally, public health interventions are generally focused on improving equity and access for those in disadvantaged populations. Ideal candidates would explain how they are interested or passionate about the combination of nutrition/dietetics and public health.
<i>What would you consider relevant work or volunteer experience?</i>	Experience that shows a strong desire and ability to work with people from disadvantaged populations is helpful. Additionally, the CP 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 for 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.

Funding Q & A

<i>Are there scholarships or extra funding available?</i>	Public Health Nutrition is proud to be one of the most well-funded programs in our division. Scholarships and funding are available and are considered with every application that is submitted on or before the application deadline of December 1. Priority considerations for financing are generally high application scores, but also holistic admissions, including lived experience, statement of purpose, and passion for the field. Initial scholarship offers are usually announced in mid-February.
<i>What is a traineeship and a graduate assistantship?</i>	Many CP students are interested in an MCH traineeship or a graduate assistantship. To understand more about the MCH traineeship, click the last link below. To understand more about assistantships and employment, click this link: Employment Opportunities - Tuition & Finances - School of Public Health - University of Minnesota From there, click on the graduate assistantship link or start here: Graduate Assistant Employment Office of Human Resources There is a nice PDF about graduate assistantships you can download, and the job board link on this page. The nice thing about both the MCH traineeship and graduate assistantships is that students receive both an hourly rate of pay and tuition reimbursement. Besides using the formal channels, some of this is decided more informally. The MCH traineeship is based on the expression of interest in either your application or interview, but it might also be decided once the semester begins. The same is true of an assistantship. If you are interested in working in a certain area or with a specific faculty member, start networking.
<i>Other helpful funding links:</i>	Scholarships & Funding - Tuition & Finances - School of Public Health - University of Minnesota Financial Aid, Loans & Grants - Tuition & Finances - School of Public Health - University of Minnesota Cost - Public Health Nutrition
<i>What extra steps do international applicants have to take to complete the admissions process?</i>	Besides the general application process, international students must apply through the World Education Services. The following link will guide the way: International Applicants - Application Process - School of Public Health - University of Minnesota For a review of prerequisites to admissions, see the last section of this document.

Program Q & A:	Public Health Nutrition
<i>What is the difference between the CP and the Traditional track in Public Health Nutrition at the UMN School of Public Health?</i>	The CP 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 traditional PHN track is an MPH degree without meeting the qualifications to take the RD exam and the ACEND credential.
<i>Where do students complete supervised practice hours?</i>	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 interested can 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.
<i>How do students complete the required 1,000 hours of supervised practice?</i>	During each fall and spring semester, students are at their supervised practice site for about 6-8 hours per day, adding up to 70-80 hours of supervised practice each semester. Each summer, students aim for 320 - 350 hours over 8-10 weeks. Supervised practice rotations are generally as follows: Food or community assistance, food service, WIC and Long-term care. Summer 1 is called the Community Practicum and summer 2 is the clinical practicum.
<i>Does the CP have its own Academic calendar?</i>	No, the CP follows the University of Minnesota's academic calendar, which can be found at: Dates and deadlines One Stop Student Services - Twin Cities
<i>Are students allowed to work during the CP?</i>	Most CP 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 CP 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 CP program if this problem is not resolved. CP students are discouraged from working more than 10 hours a week. During summer, students are required to complete 10-week full-time practicums.

[Employment Opportunities - Tuition & Finances - School of Public Health - University of Minnesota](#)

Do students need to have a car during the CP 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 has a reliable public transit system, students may have short periods of time to travel from school to field sites, and back to school. Public transit doesn't always allow sufficient time to meet these tight scheduling demands. In addition, many students spend the summer months in other areas of Minnesota or even out of state

Additional information for Non-Nutrition/Dietetics Undergraduate Majors

Do you conduct transcript evaluations to determine if a student needs to take additional prerequisite courses?

Only at the time of reviewing applications. The admissions committee reviews transcripts to be sure applicants have met the prerequisite requirements. However, we do not conduct official transcript evaluations for students to see if a particular course fulfills the requirement. Each student should do this review on their own. The list of prerequisites and resources is here to assist you with that. Please do not contact the program director or student services until you thoroughly review this document and the resources provided.

Screenshot of choosing the CP in a UMN MPH program search in SOPHAS:

+	MPH	Public Health Nutrition	Traditional Program	Fall
✓	MPH	Public Health Nutrition	Coordinated Progra...	Fall