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Boston University

Days Decisions were Sent Out (2018): 12/21, 1/30, 2/5,

- BU has “functional certificates” (= major) and context certificates (= minors) for a fairly customizable experience.
- The reason that I chose to apply to Boston University is that it seems like a very pre-professional school. I’ve heard nothing but good things about its Career Services. Plus its location in Boston means that there are TONS of hospitals and biotech companies in the vicinity both for internships and jobs, post-graduation.
- I chose not to apply to BU because it has a large student body. I know students who have had a hard time finding opportunities and making connections with professors because of this.
 - On the other hand I know many people that loved BU, made meaningful relationships with their peers and professors, and got access to plenty of opportunities. I suppose it depends how proactive you are in taking the initiative to get what you want out of your experience.
- BU is extremely proud of its career services. Two students were extremely enthusiastic about how career services has helped them land current positions and how they're helping prepare them for post-graduation. The support extends to post-grad years as well; they talked about people coming back to ask for help negotiating a promotion, for example. BU also has a mandatory, no-credit career preparation class for skills like writing resumes, salary negotiations, and promoting oneself on LinkedIn.
- Everyone I talked to said that faculty make themselves extremely accessible to students and that faculty-student relationships are a big plus. Verbatim quote: “The best thing [about BU] is the professors, for sure.”
- Many full-time students also are able work part-time for additional income (which helps considering how expensive Boston can be).
- Negatives listed by some current students: less support (although not *no* support) for part-time students, high cost of living, low participation in BU extracurriculars, class availability good but not *a/ways* guaranteed
- As of 2018, 25% of students come straight from undergrad. ~1,100 students in program, ~400 new students per year.
- Switching between part-time and full-time is possible and easy.
- Victoria Durst is amazing and her help definitely painted BU in a positive light for me. BU will accept addendums if you need to explain deficiencies in your application. And pro tip for those planning to apply, I know there are a lot of certificates but they are non-binding. If you are accepted and want to switch to something else, I’ve been told it’s easy to do because BU reviews your application as a whole across different depts.
- You can appeal for more scholarships, usually they can increase it to 5% more than their original offer.

Brown University

Days Decisions were Sent Out (2018): 2/16

- I did not apply to Brown, but as someone who has worked in RI, Providence is an underrated city. It's not huge, but it does have several healthcare institutions of varying and interesting diversity (I worked in a clinic that was essentially 50% minority). The proximity to Boston provides further opportunities in healthcare - commuting daily would likely be a pain, but a few times a week is certainly doable. The two cities are connected by a rail line.
- I attend Brown. The biggest strength of the MPH program is how rigorous it is. We are required to do an internship *and* a thesis and everyone takes a full year of biostatistics. While practice-minded people have plenty of opportunities here, the school and curriculum is geared towards research skills.
- Small faculty:student ratio meaning you have a better chance to get more attention and get published!

CUNY School of Public Health

Days decisions were sent out (20221): 3/30

Colorado School of Public Health

- One of the few highly regarded schools that specifically includes rural health and indigenous health in its curriculum
- I currently attend CSPH. The school, along with the Colorado Public Health Association, provide a vast amount of networking opportunities and outreach activities into the community. These opportunities are what stand out to me here.

Columbia University (Mailman SPH)

Days decisions were sent out (2018): 1/22, 1/26, 1/29, 2/16, 3/5

- I spent a summer doing research at Columbia and felt that it's a fantastic school that really "gets" public health
- Students graduate with a concentration (~ major) and a certificate (~minor).
 - Unlike some other schools, I *think* that the certificate is required.
 - The certificate is indeed required for every student!
 - Unless you're in an accelerated program or MHA

- The certificate curriculum is also robust enough that you cannot pursue two certificates.
- Great MPH core curriculum with certificate options
- One of the largest MPH class sizes
 - Please visit if you can. I definitely felt overwhelmed by the size even within my department (HPM).
 - Class size for 2021 was far larger than previous years
 - Some departments are larger than others (ex: SMS)
- In order to be reviewed for merit aid/scholarships you must have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.75 and have scored above the 80 percentile on all sections of your standardized exam. Normally merit based awards are noted in your acceptance letter or given at maximum a week after your acceptance.
 - I got merit scholarship even though my GPA was a 3.6, but my GRE scores were all a bit above the 80th percentile, so use the hard numbers as a guideline. Was notified of award one month after acceptance.
 - There's hope if you do not have all the numbers! I had an undergrad GPA of 3.63 (at top 10 school), 67th percentile Quant and 97th percentile Verbal and received a 50% merit tuition scholarship. I also had very significant public health experience (4 years full-time + internships). Was notified about 3 weeks after acceptance.
 - I also got a 50% merit tuition with a 3.6 GPA at a mid-tier school (with an
 - accredited undergraduate public health program), 73rd percentile Quant, and 93rd Percentile Verbal. Had about 5 years of full time experience including a CDC fellowship prior. Was notified within a few weeks of acceptance.
 - In the COVID era, scholarships are few and far between
- Asks you to provide parental information on the FAFSA unless you are older than 26 years of age, are married, or have held full-time employment for 2 years. You do not need to include parental information if you have been eligible for government grants as an undergrad or have taken out student loans in the past (they can see your history on the FAFSA apparently). If you do not provide parental information and if you do not have a prior history of financial aid, you will not be eligible for need based grants. Columbia's financial aid packages are generally only loans. Attending Columbia will be a financial burden for many with its high tuition prices and high cost of living.
 - Make sure you are aware of all of the costs of living! Metrocards for getting to campus are \$127 for a monthly unlimited and Columbia does not assist with this is anyway (unless you count the unreliable shuttle system)
 - If you work for the school, your position may also not be part of the union unless you meet certain criteria, putting you at risk
- They will toy with your emotions by sending you emails with subject lines like "Financing Your Columbia Education" and "Welcome to New York City" before you are accepted.
 - Lol, agree.
 - Third

- Columbia has a large and successful alumni base, and has many connections within New York and New England as a whole. For certain programs and degrees, I get the impression that Columbia has a more applied or pre-professional emphasis (as opposed to theoretical or academic).
- If you apply for their global health track, they give you opportunities to perform research/your final thesis abroad (a big reason why I applied) with a stipend.
 - This has 3 or 6 month options, but you may be restricted from going to certain countries as this program is part of Columbia's White Savior complex
- Will have to create portal login information to see your admissions results - if you get in, a video of someone saying "Congratulations!" will be the first thing you see.
 - Groggily checked my acceptance from my bed at 6am, the video scared me.
- Despite hearing about how professors were not easy to contact, I emailed a professor in the Sociomedical Sciences department who got back to me within a few weeks and gave me more information on her research partnerships. She offered me an unpaid spot to work with her on the research and to help find me a practicum. (I wasn't even admitted at the time.)
- A second-year student in my department contacted me to see if I had any questions, which really helped see the program in a current student's perspective.
- If you're from out-of-state, dorms might be your best bet since you will be a preferred student for student housing.
 - Note that the priority is first on international students and then works east with students on the west coast having advantage over those closer to NYC
- The Department of Population and Family Health specifically seems to operate like a family--current students claimed that it is very lovey dovey and that students feel incredibly supported by the faculty
- Practicum is required between 1st and 2nd year and can be conducted anywhere, including abroad
 - Global Health certificate students are required to do practicum abroad and the practicum extends from the beginning of the summer to the end of the fall semester
- Definitely focused on all disciplines of public health, shown in their "Core," which you take in your first semester.
 - Regarding the core: everyone in the 2 year MPH takes it their first semester.
 - Columbia has designed a set of integrated courses that do not belong to any specific concentration but that draw aspects from all of them.
 - So you're not taking "epidemiology", "biostatistics", "foundations of health policy" per se, but all of those skills will be utilized in your Core courses.
- Located in Washington Heights and integrated into the community
 - 72% of Wash Heights identifies as Latinx and 25% live under the poverty line
 - Didn't seem as "ivory tower"-ish as other schools in disadvantaged areas seem (i.e. Hopkins)--really seemed to partner with population of Wash Heights

- Depends strongly on who you ask and the opposite was (and in my opinion, is) still extremely true, especially in considering Columbia's gentrification and continued expansion northward
- This is a likely complication of the pandemic, but I personally didn't feel a connection to Columbia during this whole process. Emails and financial aid were delayed, and there was conflicting information given out to different applicants about when to expect financial aid packages and/or decisions. Also, who can forget the applicant portal hiccup where applicants thought they were accepted?! Although I was eventually accepted, that and the poorly-written semi-apologetic email that followed to sorta own up to the mistake really tarnished Columbia for me.
- Attended a PopFam webinar where I fell in love with the faculty... someone wrote above that it seems to operate like a close-knit family and I can see that. The vibe I got from them was that of genuine passion for their work while still being very chill and approachable.
- Columbia has an addendum option to explain deficiencies in your application
- If you're considering going here, I suggest looking into how Mailman's administration has responded to the strike and see how that aligns with what you want in a school. There are even departmental differences based on how chairs reacted to retaliation threats by admin, so ask around if you're curious about your department
- 50 Haven is the dormitory where a lot of students live and it is not great. It consists of single rooms, so the bathrooms and showers are shared. The building itself is quite old, so the facilities are not the best. There is not even a water fountain. However, it is a great way to make friends!
- Program is what you make of it. With courses, practicum, and thesis work, applying for jobs during the last semester may take quite a bit of work and it is mainly a solo process. Faculty members and the Career Services Office are there for support, but individuals have to put in a lot of work on their own. So, try your very best to network, especially if there are people around you who work in fields that you want.
 - The career fairs are hosted every semester, but they may not be as helpful if you are looking for a specific position/role. Also, keep in mind that most of these jobs will be in NYC/East Coast
- There is some favoritism that occurs between the faculty and students, which can affect who receives awards/scholarships

Drexel University (Dornsife SPH)

- Definitely a growing program. IMO, seems to be putting a lot of effort into becoming more established.
- Offers a variety of "minors" which are similar to certificates at BU/Columbia.
- Very connected to the surrounding communities in Philadelphia and does lots of community based participatory research.
- Strong scholarships.

- Admissions are not very competitive but may become more so as the school grows in prestige.
- Focus on domestic and urban health, less focus on global health (though opportunities do exist)
- Very dedicated to social justice and health as a human right

Duke University

- Small cohort
- Global field placement
- Students largely funded up to 75% tuition
- Unclear whether previous comments were referring to the MS in Global Health or the MS in Population Health Sciences, but I wanted to note the distinction. The former is under the Global Health Institute and a lot of DGHI's work is concentrated in a handful of countries (Kenya, China, India come to mind). The research methods course for the MSGH is the exact same course that global health undergrads take, just a different course number. You spend your summer and second year doing your thesis. The MS in PHS is under the School of Medicine and is a fairly new program. Both programs work together so whichever one you choose depends on what you're most interested in.

Emory University (Rollins SPH)

Days Decisions were Sent Out

2018: 1/29, 1/31

2022: 1/10

- Truly a beautiful place. Lots of trees and nicely matching buildings. Nice weather.
- You really cannot beat their connections to CDC. The CDC headquarters are across the street, and there are definitely opportunities for internships and practicum experience with CDC.
- Besides the CDC, Emory has partnerships with tons of other public health organizations throughout Atlanta. Lots of great work opportunities, especially if you have REAL, Rollins Earn and Learn
- TONS of research opportunities. Like endless. Between the school, CDC, Emory hospital, etc there's literally research to be done in any public health topic you could think of.
- REAL jobs pay \$15 per hour, with the maximum of 20 hours per week.
- In the epi program, you learn both SAS and R. Many schools teach just one, but Emory teaches both.

- They do require an applied practical experience, like an internship of some sort, anytime after the 1st semester
- They offer many certificates. It's a bit like getting a minor. For example, I will likely study epidemiology with a certificate in public mental health.
- You could even get 2 certificates if you're proactive about planning your classes out over 2 years, and if there's some overlap between requirements
- Unfortunately, there don't appear to be many housing options within walking distance of the university. There is a public transit system, though, and Emory offers shuttles to some apartment complexes.
- Cost of living seems relatively cheap
- Overall, I feel like Emory is the type of school with something for everybody. They offer many different MPH programs and lots of certificates to customize it how you want. It has a good balance of academic program rigor and career development. So you'll be well prepared for a PhD or going to work.

George Washington University (Milken Institute SPH)

- I applied here for epidemiology. They have a good methodological foundation, but make sure to check the specific areas of research available, as they are somewhat limited compared to programs such as Columbia's or Emory's.
- They are making a big push to offer more financial aid. At least three people on the forums were offered full tuition this year.
- I've been living in DC for almost 4 years and know many people who go to GW. If you need work experience then this is place for you but if you are looking for a place to study seriously I don't feel like this is it. Half of the students are online so you basically only interact with half of the student population. All classes start after 4pm to allow you to work. Professors are interesting. I just feel like everything is oriented towards work experience and not studying.
- Their admissions are rolling and they send out scholarship information in early February.
- I've had really great communication with people at GW (e.g. active recruitment) that made me feel more confident in their ability to help me in my job search after graduation. They do not have readily available job placement statistics on their website, which I still see as somewhat of a red flag; however, the connections in DC and opportunities for paid internships are extremely attractive.
- The Epi chair is very easy to talk to if you want more info about their program
- GWU will accept more than 5 LORs, so long as you coordinate with them and your "extra" letter writers.

Harvard University (T.H. Chan SPH)

- It's Harvard. They have the prestige, professors, connections, and funding to ensure the success of its students.
- Located right next to Harvard Medical School in the Longwood Medical Area, which is one of the most thriving and productive medical communities in the country. Boston is also a biotech hub with a very strong life-science sector.
- I've heard it's great mainly for people who want to focus on health economics (this was just from one person so who knows)
 - While health economics may be *a* strength, it is not the only strength of the program.
- I've surprisingly talked to a lot of people who turned down Harvard due to weaknesses in their specific area of interest.
- My impression of this program is that historically, it was designed to suit MDs/DOs who were looking to add on an MPH as an additional degree. This resulted in a more research-focused MPH curriculum as well as a student base that contained a lot more doctors than some other programs. I am not sure if this is still the case.
 - Historically I would agree that there was a large research focus, which is not surprising for a large academic research institution. There is the 45-credit MPH for people with graduate degrees or current medical students (or 5+ years work experience) and the 65-credit MPH for people with 2 years work experience, so I wouldn't say this the case anymore. After leaving Harvard, people have definitely gone on to become leaders in various departments of health, humanitarian or nonprofit organizations, corporations, etc.
 - The 65 credit MPH is also only 2 years old so that's probably why it feels that way too.
 - I didn't decide to go to Harvard, but from my experience, they only highlighted their MDs during MPH-45 events and alumni panels.
- Less than a third of admitted students are offered any funding, very few full scholarships available
- Extreme curricular flexibility for their SM2 programs. For example, in Epidemiology there are only 25/80 credits are mandatory classes, the other 55 credits are based on your interests. You can take up to 40 credits outside of epidemiology and biostatistics.
- I have heard from a friend that her friend (not the best source) that people from harvard come from all over the world and then go back to their countries to work so it may not be the best place for creating connections.
- May give out scholarships/funding AFTER you commit. Weirdos!

Johns Hopkins University (Bloomberg SPH)

Days Decisions were Sent Out (2018): 2/15, 2/19 (MSPH)

- The general MPH requires 2 years of “public health work experience” before you can apply.
 - However, people applying straight out of undergrad *can* apply to the [MSPH](#) program or the [MHS/ScM](#) programs.
 - MSPHs seem to have lower salaries in career outcome reports. It may have to do with the pre-enrollment background: MPHs are mostly in the middle of their careers whereas MSPHs are beginners.
- Can apply to more than one program at a time (ie. general MPH and MSPH), but need to write different SOPs.
- I work in DC at a health and human services consulting firm. Students in the MSPH program have to do a year long internship so a few of my friends were in the program doing their internship at the same level I was at without a degree. This made me not want to apply to JHU because it doesn't seem like a step up from where I'm at now. But obviously if you're right out of school or changing careers this might be good for you.
- 75% off second year for MSPH sounds like a deal until you realize the first year's tuition is inflated. In the end, it's about as much as other private schools.
- (Impression from virtual session): the shorter MPH timing is great for those who know exactly what they want to study/train in within the field and don't want to stay out of the job market for too long; many students are farther along in their careers; and RA positions seem plentiful
- 2021 app cycle MPH perspective: Admissions was very receptive and understanding and never let emails linger for > 3 days which I felt was lacking for other schools I was considering (Columbia). My interests do intersect with healthcare and medicine, so that and seeing how JHU presented itself during this pandemic made my decision easy. JHU offers many resources for international students and does give preference to these students for scholarship awards which makes sense because of the cost to move, visas, etc.
- Curriculum is highly customizable compared to other programs.
- In terms of aid, Paul Whong is awesome. No matter the situation, he will go to great lengths to help you out and genuinely cares about applicants affording the program. For example, if you are applying to external scholarships, he can write you a letter of support to help with your application. If you are successful with securing external scholarships, JHU will likely offer you some sort of funding.
- Full-time MPH class ~200 students a year. 50% are physicians or med students, and I believe 40% are international students?
- MPH is only 1 year, while MSPH programs are 2yrs with the second year mostly doing field placement/internship. Is one year enough for networking? Most MSPH students

may be straight out of undergrad so if you are an adult applicant you could end up being the oldest in class.

- MSPH concentrations usually have much smaller cohorts.
- Highly regarded professors - of course. Some leading professors from other schools told me their own mentors were teaching at JHU.

New York University

- Fairly small program (approx 200/yr) with mostly evening classes
- Students seem to really like it
- The school as a whole ranks pretty high globally
- Getting a new building specifically for Public Health students. Seem to be progressing rapidly and trying to make a name for themselves in Public Health
- Cross Continental program is not yet well established and has been poorly discussed on several internet forums. Synopsis: it's a money-making scheme that does not offer a rigorous education similar to other MPHs, including the on-campus program at NYU.
 - The cohort size for this program is extremely small (~20 students).
- I went to NYU for undergrad (2021 grad) in the global public health program. It is very disorganized & I have heard the same from all of my friends in the masters program. If you went to undergrad for public health, you won't learn much that is new.
- Plus sides: NYC, which is amazing especially for networking, research opportunities, & study abroad (once it is okay again post-COVID)

Northwestern University

- No supplemental application fee
- Classes are on the Chicago campus

Ohio State University

-

Oregon Health Sciences University/Portland State University

- Very affordable
- Can be seen as having limited resources due to small alumni pool, not large campus life, etc.

Oregon State University

-

San Diego State University

- Very affordable for out of state students
- Do not have an admitted students day
- Supplemental Cal State application/fee
- Will likely get acceptance via snail mail before the portal is updated
- All faculty I have interacted with are very personable, knowledgeable, welcoming and willing to help

Tulane University

- Very reputable program internationally

Tufts University

- Great for nutrition and related public health interests (obesity, chronic disease, etc.)
- Small program, especially compared to the others in Boston (Harvard, BU)

University of California Berkeley

- Notified of block grant, TBD on funding amount (5-12k/yr). This was due to >3.5 GPA in Junior/Senior years in undergrad.
- Very small cohort and strong advisor/mentor - student connection.
- Lots of opportunities for teaching/research assistance
- Lots of opportunities for practicum and internships
- Has graduate student housing
- Location:
 - Pro: It's Berkeley!! It's beautiful and it has everything. One of the most truly diverse places you can find in the U.S.
 - Con: COL is insane

University of California Davis

- Small cohort, ~40 students each year

- Does not have their own school of public health
- I did undergraduate here and took their public health courses. Although I loved what I was learning, there were some MPH students who felt kinda meh about the program. I think the program is what you make of it. Pros are that they do have a close connection to the School of Medicine and is near the CA Dept of Public Health. Many practicum opportunities available through the med school's student-run clinics. Have met some very awesome faculty there too.
- If you are waitlisted, follow-up with them because there is a chance they may have missed a required prerequisite on your transcript in their initial review.

University of California Irvine

- Tiny Program
- Offered 4k for summer between 2018 and 2019 housing expenses

University of California Los Angeles

Days Decisions were Sent Out (2018): 2/9

- Expensive application
- Notification: Acceptance email sent out before portal update
- Opportunity to TA/RA for tuition remission
- Go to a UC school if you plan on working in California

University of Georgia

- Supplemental application fee
- Very very personable after you apply and even more so once you are accepted
- Relatively expensive tuition

University of Illinois at Chicago

Days Decisions were Sent Out (2018): 2/16

- Has a supplemental application with a \$70 fee.
- Notification: Got an email with an acceptance letter back in February, another email and portal update in March

- Note for the location not the program: not in an ideal location for young professionals, though not the worst part of Chicago

University of Maryland

- Has a supplemental application that is **not** cheap (\$75) plus they ask for GRE scores to be sent directly on top of what you already sent to SOPHAS (+ another \$27). So the supplement in total is another \$102.
- Despite the name, its campus is closer in proximity to Washington DC than to Baltimore, although neither is far.
- As someone who lives in Maryland, not the most reputable program at UMD or for public health, but it very cheap (due to in state tuition) for those who live in MD. Going here may open doors for working/interning at major government agencies simply due to the vicinity of DC - but note that competition is fierce.

University of Michigan

Days Decisions were Sent Out:

2018: 2/2

2021 (for 2022 start): 12/22

- Michigan is a highly respected public health school, and they collaborate with Emory and Columbia on some things.
- The application fee is super expensive. So expensive that in hindsight I wish I had not applied there.
- Very expensive for out of state students (w/o scholarships or financial aid, total cost of attendance for 1 year incl housing estimates and whatnot ~\$68k from website)
 - I go here for undergrad, and housing within walking distance from the SPH is stupidly priced, you can find cheaper options but a lot of student housing is older
 - Sharing housing is always your best option, but Ann Arbor housing is a nightmare
 - There is a UofM bus system, and a city bus. The city bus should be free with your ID card
 - Car is nice but there is very little parking by the SPH - most of it is metered street parking
 - Went here for undergrad and can confirm that you need a car and parking is The Worst, but you may be able to scrape by with the new Target on State
- Very strong emphasis on research-- would suggest this program if you're planning to do a Ph.D. or go into academia/hospital work, but maybe not so much if you want to work long-term with your masters in government
 - UMich is the #1 public research institution in the country and does have a TON of opportunities if that's what you want to do

- Not quite as diversified of a program as other schools in that they have fewer departments and limited certificates
 - You may not learn as much here if you come into it with a public health background already
- Career services for each department
- Really robust alumni network, faculty are very supportive
 - Plugging HBHE as having hands down the nicest human beings ever
- A lot of funding available for global health internships
- Can easily find part-time work while at the school- constantly get email blasts with job opportunities on campus
- Can take elective courses at any of their other graduate schools ~ Business, Public Policy, Social Work, etc - email profs if worried about finding spots in these courses
- Notification: Wolverine Access gets updated with an “Application Decision/Recommendation” which tells you whether or not you have been recommended by your department/program for acceptance- a couple days~1 week later, the official email arrives
 - Update 12/23/21: acceptance email was sent first; Wolverine updated a few days later

University of Minnesota

- They are very highly ranked and offer lots of support to students for internship experience with Mayo Clinic being an hour and a half away and with many health policy organizations in the Twin Cities
- Have about 10,000 alumni and a mentorship program with alums and local healthcare professionals
- Affordable for out of state students
 - Frequently offers in-state tuition as a scholarship for out of state students
- Most faculty have other jobs in healthcare sector
- Can take many classes online without an extra charge so it is easy to work multiple jobs and be a full-time student
- Have significant ties with Minnesota Department of Health
- Their career services department is incredible and all the students rave about the professional and career help given before you even start classes
- You can do your field experience abroad and usually have students go to WHO in Switzerland
- Alumni are really involved and will facilitate trips abroad (Thailand, India, etc) with current students to learn in an international setting
- Minneapolis/St Paul are very accessible by bus and light rail
- Check out [CTC](#) and CMCC for graduate student/ student family housing! Super affordable and decent environment. With shuttle buses going around connecting the campuses.
- Very friendly community. Faculty really wants you to succeed.
- Carlson SOM is highly ranked as well. Although SPH doesn't have an official program working w Carlson, I'm sure you can take a class or two there.
- COLD. Get good boots.
- They also want you to finish your PhD fast. They provide lots of help in achieving that. So if you are considering applying to PhD while doing your MPH, UMN can be helpful

University of North Carolina (Gillings SPH)

Days Decisions were Sent Out (2018): 1/29, 2/22, 3/5

- Gillings no longer offers a simple MPH in epidemiology for applicants without a prior doctorate (RIP)
 - Applied Epi MPH is now available as of 2020!
- Went to Chapel Hill for MSPH HPM interview day and pretty much fell in love with the school. A lot of the professors don't do research; they are solely teachers which I

personally love. For HPM there's a dedicated staff member who helps you find internships and jobs and works with you one-on-one.

- The ESE department seems very research focused. I did not get a sense for the overall SPH when I visited (ESE seems somewhat isolated from the broader PH community).
- I went to UNC for undergrad. Here is my general overview of life in Chapel Hill:
 - Living in Chapel Hill is very affordable (if you are fine with housemates, your rent can be \$550 and below per month). I personally paid no more than \$425/month in undergrad, and I had 2 other housemates.
 - **FREE** city bus system that can get you almost anywhere you need to go. Having a car will make life easier for sure, but you can get by without one. The bus system will save you so much money on transportation.
 - Parking on campus during the day is expensive (like most universities) so I would not recommend that unless absolutely necessary, but t 99% of parking on campus opens up after 5 PM and weekends for free (making long nights studying easier).
 - Carrboro is a small town that is directly adjacent to Chapel Hill, and most you don't even feel like you've crossed city limit boundaries. Most grad students live in Carrboro (walking/busing distance from Gillings) or the area just south and west of UNC Hospitals/Gillings area (also accessible by the J bus route and walking). Here's a link to Chapel Hill transit, which operates the fare-free buses for UNC, Chapel Hill and Carrboro:
<http://www.townofchapelhill.org/town-hall/departments-services/transit/routes-schedules>
 - Hint: Use the "TransLoc" app to watch the buses in real time.
 - There are no "bad" areas of Chapel Hill/Carrboro to avoid that I am aware of (I've lived in the area for 6 years). Of course when walking at night, I'd still advise taking normal safety precautions, but crime is not a big issue here.
 - While the storefronts and bars on Franklin Street (main street of Chapel Hill) cater more to the undergrad population, Carrboro restaurants, bars, and hangouts are more suited for grad students and working professionals (mid-20s and 30s). This doesn't mean that places on Franklin are no-gos for grad students, but just something to be aware of! I personally think He's Not Here, an outdoor beer garden on Franklin, is a perfect place to grab a (very large) drink in the afternoon after exams.
 - The Gillings facilities are top notch (a lot of Rosenau Hall has been renovated in the past year). The school is located directly across the street from Dental, Medical, and Nursing schools as well as UNC Hospitals. And the campus in general is very beautiful with lots of trees and flowers. Springtime in Chapel Hill is gorgeous. The Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro are fairly compact/dense compared to the typical small town/city, but the area has a "rural buffer" towards the end of the town limits which maintains the small town feel (and provides easy access to nature and hiking trails!).

- Research funding at Gillings is very high and up there with Harvard and Johns Hopkins.
- From my interactions with students services staff and informal visits with faculty, they really do care about their students and want them to do well. Faculty are the top in the field and have great connections.
- In-person interview required for MSPH in health policy and management. This, on top of their ~\$80 application fee, made the UNC application process the most expensive for me. I do recommend the program to future applicants. Remarkable curriculum and the cohort is small and students interacted very well with faculty. They make you feel “at home”.

University of Pennsylvania

Days decisions were sent out: 2/14 (heavily based on when you applied, minimum of 4 weeks to review application), 2/28

- Interdisciplinary program where you are able to take classes from all 8 graduate programs in UPenn including their schools of Medicine, Law, Nursing.
- No established SCHOOL of Public Health (rather they have a public health PROGRAM) and less resources allocated to public health students but wide access to all graduate programs - this is why Upenn is Unranked, but is still an accredited MPH program
- Founded in 2009 so a fairly new program
- Award winning faculty members and various access to professors all over the medical world
- Pride themselves of providing TA and RA positions that are normally hard to come by - due to the small size of the Public Health program
- Small cohort size (~35 to 50 students)
- Will be accepted in the “generalist track” when you apply, where you can create your own curriculum (hence the interdisciplinary name) - is better for people who want a wide range of experience but bad for people who want an established curriculum.
- No portal access when you receive admissions decision - they will directly email you!
- Will offer some MPH applicants video interviews, which is informal.
- It is a point of pride to UPenn that they don't have a school of public health to promote interdisciplinary training; thought that was interesting.
- If you don't get a scholarship offer in your acceptance letter, you didn't get any merit funding. Was also told that they don't offer financial aid packages per se because they are a small program.

University of Pittsburgh

- Their MPH program is 3 semesters, not 4. That makes it cheaper, but it also means that you have less time and will have to do 3 semesters with 15 credits of graduate coursework.

- Gives very few scholarships
- Per one student there:
 - Strong topic areas are neuroepidemiology for diseases like Alzheimers, HIV, Cardiovascular disease/risk factors, and opioid addiction.
 - Strong research emphasis, which is good for skill building but occasionally leads to an overemphasis on training for academic positions (continued education, research positions). Obviously you can still move into industry, but it's a bit harder, especially if you want to leave Pittsburgh post-graduation.
 - Professors seem to really enjoy teaching, as opposed to some other schools where professors' real passion is research.
 - The cost of living is relatively low compared to other schools, but Pittsburgh's location can make it feel a bit isolated.
 - Nearly all students work part time.
 - It's pretty small as schools go (I don't have exact numbers) - the community is tight and the faculty-student relationships are very good, as well as the access to opportunity that that brings.

University of Southern California

- Not a school of public health
- Health policy students tend to compete with public policy students for research
 - ^True that. Coming from a former USC MPH policy student
- Funding for the MPH program is housed under the Keck School of Medicine, meaning that medical students get all the funding and everyone else does not get anything

University of Texas Health Science Center (UTHealth)

- VERY affordable program, even for out-of-state.
- Multiple campuses throughout Texas, as well as an online option, but Houston is the main campus. Houston is very very diverse.
- Hybrid format is good for people who work
- Low-ish cost of living
- TA/RA opportunities come with tuition discounts
- A few great dual degree/certificate options, you can get 2 degrees for less than the cost of one at a top private public health school
- Cons:
 - Multiple campuses means many classes may be online/recording format if its not taught on the campus you are at.
 - Houston does not seem to have a ton of public health presence as most research or work opportunities are at the UTHealth Medical Center, which is good if you

- want a more medical or research type career, but perhaps government or other types of jobs would be better to prepare for elsewhere
 - Not a lot of info I could find on post-grad job outcomes, but I'd imagine its a great school if you want to do public health work in Texas.
- Overall, an extremely underrated school. It's ranked #24 currently but I can definitely see it in the top 20 in the near future.

University of Virginia

- Not a school of public health
- Impressions as an undergrad in the department: It's pretty small, and it seems like a lot of the grad students are close. Nonetheless, my impression for many of the grad students is that it is just a stepping stone to an MD, PhD, or what have you. Many of the students are doing the 4+1 undergrad/grad program. The department is located in a confusing conglomerate of old buildings that is pretty outdated, with all of the nice buildings being in the hospital/med school. Class size is generally small.

University of Washington

Days Decisions were Sent Out (2018): 1/30, 1/31

- As of 2021, not a part of the SOPHAS application system.
- Does not have a track for social-behavioral sciences, health behavior, community health, health education (or any of the other ways schools phrase that) → is a concentration in the Health Services program (Social and Behavioral Sciences Concentration) & the MPH in Community-Oriented Public Health Practice
- Haven't received any information from UW since getting accepted in January which is slightly alarming!
- RA/TA 50% FTE provide tuition remission
- Require students to do a practicum *and* a thesis
- Terrible funding.
- Admitted multiple PhD students with NO funding.
- \$85 application fee

Vanderbilt University

- Not ranked due to being program of public health vs school of public health, but still a respected institution and a fine program.
- One advantage is that it has much smaller class sizes, so you get lots of individual attention as a student there. It sounds like current students really love it there.

- Brand new program. Health policy department opened in 2014 so it's very new. Not as well known. Also probably really small. Vanderbilt Medical Center has a lot of opportunities and Nashville is a healthcare hub for sure.
- Talked with students from there and they all seemed to find internships easily. One of the very small cohort had internship at WHO.

1. . Washington University in St. Louis

2. Newer program with about 80 students in the MPH program. MPH program is run in conjunction with the School of Social Work (which is highly regarded in its field), so it creates a unique dynamic in which everyone is heavily focused on social justice and health equity.
3. Very invested in working with the St. Louis community. Lots of opportunities for students to practice public health during enrollment.
4. *Very* generous with merit aid (trying to attract top talent to increase their reputation). Most people awarded got \$25k. A select few received full tuition. Personally, I was awarded \$50k.
5. Research assistantships are plentiful, however, they only pay around \$10/hr. I applied for, and received, a Masters Research Fellowship (\$12/hr). But St. Louis is also a very affordable place to live, so you can get by okay.
6. Professors are incredibly engaged with their students. When hiring faculty, WashU puts an emphasis on the candidate's ability to teach. So you can expect the vast majority of professors to be wonderful mentors. From my visit, they were generally wonderful people.
7. Epidemiology/biostatistics program isn't the strongest around (was told this by many current students). However, they've had some MPH graduates continue into top medical, law, and public health doctoral programs (Yale, Michigan, UNC-CH).

Career services really cares about its students. However, most of their network comes from the School of Social Work. Most students seem to get jobs in the Midwest.

8. If a PhD is your destination, it might be worth going to school that eases your debt burden.

Yale University

Days decisions were sent out (2018): 1/26, 1/8, 3/9

- One of the more expensive Public Health programs (exceed tuition prices of schools like Columbia by \$10,000), but gives scholarships extremely generously. Ranging from 5k to 65k. Don't get discouraged by the book tuition. Many people received at least 20k, and 60k is not rare.

- The earlier you apply, the earlier you hear back - don't wait to apply for the deadline or else you will be waiting until Late Feb/Mid-March for results, whereas people who applied in November/December heard back in January.
 - Ranked low (#14) for an Ivy due to smaller class size, but should not discount the reputation of the school, especially if you want to focus on quantitative research over qualitative research (quant. Is their strong point)
 - Social sciences is a strong aspect at Yale, too.
 - Very small cohort size
 - You are encouraged to take classes outside SPH. You can take most of the classes Yale has to offer anywhere on campus, from Yale College to Yale Law. Making it highly interdisciplinary and building a real community across campuses.
 - Strong Alumni network. They LOVE helping a new Yale out.
 - RA/TA spots are reserved for the PhD/Doctorate students first (like many of the other MPH programs)
 - However, MANY MPH students have RA/TA positions, to the point that I am surprised by this fact
 - And they are paid decently. Supposedly higher than many of their colleague schools
 - People have a lot of negative opinions about New Haven
 - Downtown New Haven is quite nice. The outskirts of the city is not great.
 - Many graduate students live in East Rock. Areas like Hamden, Charles are also nice.
 - After getting accepted, I've already had a faculty member and 2 students reach out and introduce themselves. Definitely speaks to the small cohort size and accessibility to faculty members.
 - Echo on that. They are responsive and extremely welcoming.
 - Admissions is generally receptive, but I also recommend emailing Director of Admissions, Mary Keefe for questions about your application.
 - People are very friendly and honest. No sugarcoating anything nor do they try to avoid hard questions. If you have a question, just ask.
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Optional follow-up posts

As classmates respond to your group post, feel free to respond to their comments and questions.