MASTER OF HEALTH ADMINISTRATION HANDBOOK

AY 2025-2026

(August 1 – July 31)

Department of Public Health
College of Health and Human Services
Western Kentucky University
https://www.wku.edu/publichealth/

Welcome to the Master of Health Administration (MHA) program at Western Kentucky University. You are joining a healthcare administration program that is rich in history and boasts a long line of distinguished alumni, located throughout the country and the world.

Over two years ago, we began the process of updating our MHA program. We continue to review and revise course offerings which are based on current and emerging industry standards and practices. Some of our program's highlights include the opportunity for students to experience global health through coursework, faculty expertise, and service learning.

The opportunity to learn about the importance of sustainability in health care. The opportunity for our students to select one of the four culminating experience options that best aligns with your personal and professional needs and goals.

Our goal is to produce well-rounded graduates that are prepared for leadership roles specific to your interests in healthcare!

Congratulations on choosing WKU to be your home as you complete your Master of Health Administration. I hope you enjoy your time on the Hill!

Respectfully,

Gregory Ellis-Griffith, PhD, MPH
Associate Professor, Graduate Program Coordinator, HCA

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INTRODUCTION

The Master of Health Administration (MHA) degree program prepares graduates for administrative and managerial positions in different types of healthcare facilities and agencies including acute care, long-term care, group medical practices, managed care organizations, public health agencies, clinics, and health-related organizations such as pharmaceutical companies, medical equipment providers and health care consulting firms.

WELCOME MESSAGE

DEAN, COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Welcome to the Master of Health Administration program at Western Kentucky University, a graduate program housed within the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS).

At CHHS, we prepare health and human services professionals who will work to improve the quality of life in their communities and beyond. Through innovative, student-centered, and interdisciplinary learning and research opportunities, we aim to equip you with the skills and knowledge needed to make a meaningful impact. Our college is home to seven academic departments—Applied Human Sciences, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Kinesiology, Recreation and Sport, Nursing and Allied Health, Physical Therapy, Public Health, and Social Work.

Congratulations on taking this important step to pursue your advanced degree with WKU! As a student in CHHS, you will be part of a supportive academic community that is committed to your success—both during your time at WKU and as you transition into our alumni community.

I look forward to welcoming you to our beautiful campus and seeing all that you will accomplish.

Best wishes,
Tania B. Basta, Ph.D., MPH
Dean, College of Health and Human Services

MISSION STATEMENTS

WKU MISSION STATEMENT: Western Kentucky University (WKU) prepares students of all backgrounds to be productive, engaged, and socially responsible citizen-leaders of a global society. The University provides research, service and lifelong learning opportunities for its students, faculty, and other constituents. WKU enriches the quality of life for those within its reach.

CHHS MISSION STATEMENT: We prepare health and human services professionals who will work to improve the quality of life in their communities and beyond.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH MISSION STATEMENT: Our mission is to prepare highly competent public health practitioners through instruction, research, and service, and to enhance the health status and quality of life of diverse populations in local, state, national, and global communities.

MHA MISSION STATEMENT: To prepare well-rounded students for leadership roles in healthcare management, as well as in the overall public health and healthcare delivery models within the local, state, and regional communities.

MHA PROGRAM: VISION AND VALUES

VISION: TO be recognized as a leading choice in the preparation of dynamic and dedicated leaders in healthcare management for service and innovation in local, state, regional and global communities.

VALUES: EXCEED

The MHA program at WKU adopts both institutional core values and values upheld in the field of healthcare management.

(1) The WKU MHA Program, faculty and staff, strive to create a welcoming and respectful academic environment where all individuals regardless of their race, religion, gender, age, nationality, sexual orientation, abilities, or any other status they might have are treated fairly, and without discrimination or harassment.

(2) **Excellence in Leadership:** Based on the provisions of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), the MHA program at WKU prepares the students with the professional qualities that are desired leadership roles in health administration and management.

(3) **Professionalism:** The MHA program at WKU strives to promote a culture of professionalism in all stages and settings of learning. Enhancements are continually made in the student field experiences and engagements in professional activities to develop professionalism.

(4) **Commitment to Serve:** Consistent with the Western Kentucky University mission, the MHA program at WKU value all types and levels of variation among all its constituencies-- students graduating from the program are prepared to be ready to serve individuals from various backgrounds for their need for healh care in the U.S. and in global communities.

(5) **Integration:** The MHA program at WKU prepares students to be successful in the healthcare industry by incorporating in its program the understanding that collaborations among important stakeholders in health care and integration with other industries is an important aspect of finding effective interventions and strategies for improving the healthcare services.

(6) **Life-Long Learning:** Building a student body that acknowledges the changing environment of healthcare and values and appreciates the need for staying abreast of all the changes and innovations occurring during their careers.

CHHS AND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OVERVIEW

THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Our vision is to be an innovative leader in the student-centered, interprofessional preparation of health and human services professionals by providing students with an inclusive, community-engaged, and interdisciplinary academic experience. Our college offers degrees at the associate, baccalaureate and master degree levels. Doctoral degrees are offered in Nursing Practice and Physical Therapy.

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The public health programs at Western Kentucky University prepare students to face the challenges of existing and emerging health concerns, locally and globally, and enable students to apply critical thinking skills to address and resolve these complex health issues. Public health is a field that offers a wide array of job opportunities to suit a variety of interests and skills. Whether you are interested in managing data and crunching numbers, conducting research or working with people, there is a place for you in this field. Public health is ideal for individuals who gain satisfaction knowing that they are working to improve the lives of others.

At WKU, students learn from expert faculty. All public health faculty hold top academic credentials and professional qualifications in public health and related disciplines. We

also recognize there is much we can learn from those who are health practitioners. By combining industry knowledge with academic credentials, students learn firsthand from practicing public health experts, attorneys, environmental health specialists, emergency managers, and healthcare administrators with many years of experience in public health, environmental health, and the healthcare industry.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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College of Health and Human Services
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SECTION I

SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION
https://www.wku.edu/

Exceptional academic programs, applied learning opportunities, and world-renowned faculty are only part of what makes the WKU experience unparalleled. Your hopes, dreams and ideas are important to us. We strive to provide you with an environment where creativity is nurtured and intellect grows. WKU is a student centered, applied research university. That means we are dedicated to making sure you achieve your goals and graduate with skills for success. You will not only graduate with a diploma, you will enter the real world with experience that makes you stand out above the rest.

WKU STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:
WKU is engaged in internationally acclaimed, student-and-learning-centered academic programs. The WKU experience occurs on several unique campus environments and through an overarching spirit which attracts an intellectually exciting and diverse family of the nation's best students. WKU provides students of all backgrounds with rigorous academic programs in education, the liberal arts and sciences, the health sciences, and business, with emphasis at the baccalaureate and masters levels, complemented by relevant associate and doctoral level programs. The University places a premium on student learning; it is committed to ensuring value in a holistic learning experience through high standards for student achievement and conduct, a strong faculty, technological innovation, personalized attention, broad access, and public accountability for actions and outcomes. Out-of-the-classroom and study abroad experiences enhance learning and contribute to the success of students.

The University encourages engaged research and public service in support of economic development, quality of life, and improvement of education at all levels. WKU faculty contribute to the identification and solution of key social, economic, scientific, health, and environmental problems. An inspiring and talented faculty promotes a high level of creative activity, diverse scholarship and an entrepreneurial attitude designed to expand knowledge, improve instruction, increase learning, and provide applied solutions toward high-quality service to the state and nation. The University directly supports its constituents in its designated service areas of Kentucky with professional and technical expertise, cultural enrichment, and educational assistance.

Maintaining a campus of distinctive history and character, WKU sustains a student population of increasing quality. It fulfills its responsibility for access through its main and regional campuses, and through extensive distance learning opportunities. WKU recognizes that its mission continues to evolve in response to regional, national, and global changes, and the need for lifelong learning.

WKU CORE VALUES:
Shared purposes and beliefs drive the decisions and actions of any organization or institution. The core values that undergird the foundations of WKU are reflected in the University's vision, mission, and purpose statements, and in the goals of the strategic plan.

The rich heritage that is WKU's has been built upon a foundation of shared values that have withstood the test of time and the challenges of many changes. These values are deeply embedded in the words of WKU's first President, Dr. Henry Hardin Cherry, as he set forth a vision for this University:

- to be a live school and to impart to its students a burning zeal to do and be something...
- to be progressive, to use modern methods and equipment, but reject all worthless educational fads...
- to let the reputation of the school be sustained by real merit...
- to "ring the rising bell in the human soul" by inspiring all students who come in touch with the work of the institution...

This vision is further reflected in Dr. Cherry's oft-quoted reminder that "It's what's above the rim that counts" and in the two University ideals expressed in the University seal: "Life More Life" and the University motto: "The Spirit Makes the Master."

Building upon these long lasting values, the following core values represent a reaffirmation of the shared purposes and beliefs upon which this strategic plan is built:

- Emphasis on cooperation, teamwork, and mutual respect for individual differences.
- Expectation for all conduct to be characterized by integrity, honesty, and commitment to high moral and ethical values and principles.
- Commitment to assuring quality of programs, competence of graduates, and opportunities for lifelong learning.
- A view of scholarly endeavors that includes teaching, research, and creative activities as mutually supportive.
- Encouragement of meaningful and active partnerships among students, faculty, staff, and constituents to strengthen the learning environment.

- Nurturing of innovative and creative activities of faculty, staff, and students that advance University mission and goals.
- Dedication to the importance of achieving excellence in all programs and for adding value to the degrees and credentials of our students.
- Commitment to providing a collegiate experience that prepares students to be informed, engaged, and dedicated citizens.
- Commitment to contributing to improved quality of life and economic well-being of Kentuckians, especially those in our primary service area, as well as other constituents and stakeholders.
- Commitment to developing empowered, informed, and responsible learners who recognize both the personal and shared responsibility to actively participate in university life by upholding the principles of the University Creed.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR
https://www.wku.edu/registrar/academic_calendars/

ACADEMIC FREEDOM
The University subscribes to the following principles: (1) faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their disciplines and in selecting teaching aids and library materials; (2) faculty members are entitled in their areas of specialization to freedom in research and investigation and in the publication of results; and (3) faculty members are entitled to freedom in participating as responsible citizens in community affairs. For more information, visit https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/first_amendment_and_academic_freedom.php

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/process-for-academic-dishonesty.php
The University expects students to operate with the highest standard of integrity in all facets of the collegiate experience. Broadly defined, academic misconduct is any unethical self-serving action in the performance of an academic activity, deliberate or unintentional, that affords a student an unfair, unearned, or undeserved advantage. *(Excerpt from the WKU Student Handbook, 2016)*

The maintenance of academic integrity is of fundamental importance to the University. Thus it should be clearly understood that acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated and that anyone committing such acts will be held accountable for violation of the student code of conduct.

All cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic Misconduct includes (but is not necessarily limited to) using ideas, words, images, or content in any other media that you did not create and presenting that content as if you were the creator.

Copying content that other people created–either directly or in a modified form–without properly acknowledging the creator qualifies as academic misconduct, as does utilizing unauthorized digital tools such as artificial intelligence to create content.

Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in a course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Student Conduct.

ADVISING
https://www.wku.edu/graduate/faculty_staff/advising.php

Advising of MHA students is completed by the MHA Graduate Program Coordinator or designee. Below are general guidelines for advising, degree completion and program dismissal.
Graduate Certificate, Advising (G9): admitted to a graduate certificate; initial hold lifted by advisors.
Conditional Admission, Advising (GL): conditions of admission have not been met; advisor should assess if conditions have been met and notify the Graduate School; advisors lift this hold.
Academic Probation, Advising (GZ): below 3.0 cumulative GPA at end of term; advisors must lift the probation hold for their advisees.
Degree Complete (GB): final degree audit is complete and approved; reapplication required.
Academic Dismissal (GO): below 3.0 after probation and subsequent 9 hours; see the Graduate Catalog to review the Academic Standing Policy or contact the Graduate School for assistance.
Dismissal, Conditional (GM): failed conditions of admission.

WKU BOOKSTORE
https://wku.bncollege.com/

WKU CAREER READINESS GUIDE
https://www.wku.edu/career/documents/wku-career-guide.pdf

CHHS AMBASSADORS
https://www.wku.edu/chhs/ambassadors.php

Ambassadors are exemplary students chosen to represent the College of Health and Human Services at University and College sponsored events to assist with recruitment and retention. They serve as an essential point of contact for prospective students through email, phone calls and various outreach events.

When you become an ambassador, you help to shape the next year's class of Hilltoppers. The role is an important and unique responsibility but can also be a way to meet new friends, make an impact on the lives of others and can add leadership experience to your resume. CHHS Student Ambassadors are selected by a committee comprised of current ambassadors, faculty and staff.

How to Apply? (see website link above)

1. Meet the requirements for becoming an Ambassador.

2. Be sure to have a faculty or current CHHS Ambassador reference.

3. Complete the Ambassador Application before the annual deadline.

CAMPUS MAP
https://www.wku.edu/campusmap.php

CAMPUS SAFETY
https://www.wku.edu/emergency/

YOUR SAFETY IS IMPORTANT TO US.

At WKU, the safety and security of our students, faculty and staff is extremely important to us. We have created this website as a place where students, faculty, staff and the community can visit to find resources related to campus safety, security, emergency preparedness and more.

WKU employs a variety of methods to communicate with our internal and external community during an emergency, weather-related event or any time events may cause disruptions in the normal campus routine. These include:

- Emergency text alerts - sign up to receive text alerts
- After you sign up to receive text alerts, you may also wish to download our WKU Emergency Alert contact card on your mobile device. The contact card allows you to quickly add the multiple SMS short codes used by our emergency alerting system, combining them under a single contact so that you can better recognize who they are from, and know that they are from a legitimate source.
- Outdoor warning system (voice alerts and sirens)
- Building warning systems (voice alerts and sirens)
- Mass emails to students, faculty and staff
- WKU News
- Messages posted to the WKU website
- Messages posted to WKU Facebook and on Twitter @wkunews and @wku.
- Local news media
- WKU Police Department

- The Western Kentucky University Police Department is a professional full service agency protecting the WKU Community 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Our KLEC - POPS certified Officers have full police powers, including arrest powers, under Kentucky Revised Statute 164.955. The agency employ 23 sworn police officers, 9 communications officers, and 1 office coordinator/records staff. The department provides services to the WKU Main Campus and additional properties owned by Western Kentucky University; which includes South Campus, The Center, Lost River Cave and The WKU AG Center.

CONTACT INFORMATION, WKU POLICE:
- Emergency: Dial 9-1-1
- Non-Emergency: 270-745-2677
- Safety Escort: 270-745-3333
- Fax Number: 270-745-5275
- Email: wkupolice@wku.edu

FACULTY HANDBOOK
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/resources/faculty_handbook.php

GRADUATE SCHOOL AND ADMISSION POLICY
https://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/admission/

Students seeking a graduate degree, graduate certificate, or enrollment as a non-degree student must apply for admission by completing the online graduate application and paying a non-refundable application fee. Graduate program application requirements and deadlines vary by program. Admission to or completion of a graduate certificate does not guarantee admission to a graduate degree program. Admission to Graduate Studies is based on a recommendation from the graduate program to the Executive Director of Graduate Studies. Final admission decisions are made by Graduate Studies. Applicants who meet minimum Graduate Studies admissions standards are not guaranteed admission. Offers of admission are not official until approved by the Executive Director of Graduate Studies. Official graduate admissions decisions are communicated to applicants by Graduate Studies.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS
1. Baccalaureate degree or higher, or equivalent international degree, from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.

2. Minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 or greater on baccalaureate degree or equivalent international degree or minimum GPA of 3.0 on a degree higher than a baccalaureate or equivalent international degree.
3. Evidence of English proficiency (international students only)

*Individual graduate programs may have more stringent and/or additional requirements.

Applicants should consult individual graduate program pages in this catalog for specific admission requirements. Contact the program coordinator for applicable deadline information.

ADMISSION DECISION

Graduate Studies will notify applicants of the admission decision which will include one of four types:

- Good standing - admitted
- Conditional - admitted with conditions
- Denied - not admitted
- Program full - not admitted due to program capacity

Alternate Admission - Applicants who do not meet admission requirements may request alternate admission whereby background and experience are considered by the academic program and Graduate Studies. Academic departments may have more specific guidelines on alternate admission requirements.

FULL-TIME STATUS

To be considered a full-time graduate student, a minimum of 9 hours and a maximum of 15 hours shall be taken spring and fall semesters. There is not a minimum for summer and/or winter term.

MHA ADMISSION POLICY

https://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/health-human-services/public-health/mha/

Applicants to the Master of Health Administration (MHA) residential MHA program option may receive full admission if the following are met:

- A baccalaureate degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution of of higher education.
- A minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on the baccalaureate degree.
- A statement of intent (minimum of 1 page, and no more than 2 pages) sent to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Applicants with two or more years of work experience may receive full admission with a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 or higher on their baccalaureate degree.

MHA CONDITIONAL ADMISSION: If a student does not meet all university and program admission requirements but requirements, and if the academic program's review of the student's record indicates the likelihood of success, the student may be granted conditional admission by the Associate Provost for Research and Graduate Education upon the recommendation of the program's Admission Review Committee.

GRADUATE CATALOG

https://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/

The Graduate Catalog in its entirety represents University Policy (Policy 1.0004) which must be followed and met before a credential is awarded. The Executive Director for Graduate Studies is charged with the administration of Graduate Studies policies and certifies that candidates have fulfilled their requirements for advanced degrees and certificates. The Executive Director for Graduate Studies is advised by the Graduate Council, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate.

The University reserves the right to make changes as necessary in course offerings, curricula, academic policies, rules and regulations. The student is responsible for knowing and fulfilling all degree and certificate related requirements. Appeals of Graduate Policies are considered first by the Executive Director for Graduate Studies. Further appeals of those decisions may be submitted to the Office of the Registrar for consideration by the Committee on Graduate Credits and Graduation. Detailed information regarding the submission of an appeal is available from the Office of the Registrar and on the Office of the Registrar website at https://www.wku.edu/registrar/.

WKU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

TECHNOLOGY AND LIBRARIES

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES*:* Information Technology is here to help you. We support a wide selection of applications and offer services to help you succeed as a Hilltopper. Use myWKU to access multiple applications and resources or view our full list of services. https://www.wku.edu/its/

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICE DESK: https://www.wku.edu/its/service-desk/

WKU LIBRARY SPACES: Western Kentucky University Libraries offers a wide variety of group study spaces over two locations; Raymond Cravens Library and The Commons at Helm Library. We offer individual study locations throughout both libraries that is first-come, first-serve basis. The Libraries also offers classrooms that can be reserved by faculty. If you are needing a venue

for group study and/or classroom access, please use the reservation system to complete your request.
https://www.wku.edu/library/

TUITION AND FEES 2025/2026
https://www.wku.edu/billing/tuition_fees_2526.php

GRADUATE	Per Credit Hour
Resident	$607
Military Veteran/Dependent Resident	$607
Distance Learning	$707
Non-Resident (Domestic)	$917
Non-Resident (International)	$953

Note: Graduate tuition and fees are assessed per credit hour based upon the course (i.e., on-campus or distance learning). There is no full-time graduate rate.

 Tuition charges for the semester reflect the Fall/Spring tuition rates. Additionally, there may be a difference in tuition charges for students taking distance-learning courses, enrolled in certain programs/classes, or are members of specific cohorts.

WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSE AND/OR PROGRAM
https://www.wku.edu/registrar/withdrawal.php

For various reasons it is occasionally necessary for a student to withdraw from the University. Prior to the midpoint of the semester, students may use TopNet to withdraw. After the midpoint of the semester, the student should report to the Office of the Registrar to initiate withdrawal procedures.

Students leaving the institution without an official withdrawal will receive failing grades in all courses in which they are enrolled and endanger their future status at the institution. Students withdrawing after the midpoint of the semester, a bi-term or comparable period during a summer session must consult with their instructors as to the withdrawal grade. The official date of the withdrawal is the date the withdrawal is processed on TopNet or the written notice is received in the Office of the Registrar.

Students wishing to return to WKU at a later date must submit an application for readmission prior to the deadline for submitting applications.

Topnet may be used to withdraw from individual courses according to the dates published in the Academic Calendar. The official date of the withdrawal is the date the withdrawal is processed

on Topnet. A $50 Schedule Change Fee will be assessed for each course withdrawal after the drop/add period. Students who stop attending class(es) without an official withdrawal will receive failing grades.

In addition to the links provided on the Office of Registrar page, below are additional withdrawal resources specific to individual courses and graduate studies.

WITHDRAWING FROM A COURSE:
- Login into Topnet: http://topnet.wku.edu (Click Registration, click Register/Add/Drop and select the appropriate term)
- Locate the class(es) from which you need to withdraw (Click the drop/down box, and select the withdraw button. Note: Be sure to click Submit Changes at the bottom of the page.)
- Verify the transaction was processed properly by checking the status of the course. (Verify that Credit Hours now reflect "0.0 hours for each class dropped. Your academic transcript will reflect a grade of "W" for each withdrawn course.

WITHDRAWING FROM GRADUATE STUDIES: Prospective students who have applied for admission and wish to withdraw an admission application can request to do so via this form. https://www.wku.edu/graduate/admission/withdraw.php
If you have any questions, please call 270-745-2446 or email graduate.school@wku.edu.

WKU STUDENT HANDBOOK
https://www.wku.edu/handbook/

Student Academic and Grade Complaint Procedure: WKU will make every attempt to resolve student complaints within its academic and administrative departments at the program level. We recommend that students **first contact the professor** for the course. The official student complaint procedure for resolving a complaint can be found at the following link:
https://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/documents/student_complaint_procedure.pdf

SECTION II

STUDENT SURVEY

You are our customer and your voice matters. Each year, our program will circulate a survey to graduating MHA students. Our program uses this tool to collect anonymous feedback that will be shared with program stakeholders to include Governance Committee and Advisory Board. We welcome your insight and encourage you to participate in a meaningful way that provides both opportunities for improvement and sharing of program strengths. The perspective you provide helps facilitate learning and future programming as we strive to continuously improve the MHA program.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We believe that leadership skills, self-confidence and lifelong learning opportunities are enhanced with involvement in activities beyond the classroom. While the MHA program collaborates with many organizations and provides engagement opportunities as part of programming, students are also encouraged to seek involvement with local communities in which they live. Consider taking leadership roles in your chosen community and/or professional organization not only while undertaking courses in the MHA program but also after program completion!

COMP EXAM

STUDENTS WILL COMPLETE A COMPREHENSIVE EXAM COVERING CORE CONCEPTS AND KNOWLEDGE REVIEW FOR REQUIRED MHA COURSES, DETERMINED BY COMMITTEE VOTE OF PASS/FAIL. THE GOAL IS FOR ALL STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE A SCORE OF 80% OR HIGHER. STUDENTS MUST HAVE NO MORE THAN NINE (9) HOURS REMAINING FOR DEGREE COMPLETION AND BE REGISTERED FOR A MINIMUM OF ONE (1) HOUR DURING TERM EXAM IS TAKEN. A MAXIMUM OF TWO (2) ATTEMPTS IS ALLOWED.

CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

The MHA program at WKU does not believe that all students have the same dreams and aspirations upon completion of a graduate degree. We strive to prepare you with expected industry competencies while also supporting an individualized student experience. In addition to encouraging independent involvement in community engagement, research and professional activities, our program offers flexibility on choosing the best culminating experience to meet your individual needs and interests. These options include a structured internship of 240 hours

for inexperienced students, an independent investigation for working professionals, a thesis option and a global health service-learning practicum.

Thesis option students enroll in a minimum of six (6) hours of PH 599. Three (3) hours will be applied to culminating experience and three (3) hours applied to elective requirements.

GLOBAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, GRADUATE CERTIFICATE
https://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/health-human-services/public-health/global-health-administration-certificate/

This program is designed to prepare students with a broad understanding of global health engagement in health administration, health policy, health systems, and service delivery and includes a service-learning practicum that can be completed abroad or locally. Non-degree students and degree-seeking students must apply for admission and pay a non-refundable application fee. More information about admission to graduate studies can be found at: https://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/admission/

GRADUATE ASSITANTSHIP
https://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/ga/

To be eligible for a graduate assistantship (GA), graduate students must be enrolled in at least 6 credits per semester in a graduate degree program, maintain satisfactory academic progress in that program, and remain in good standing. Any semester in which a student is enrolled less than 6 credits will be treated as the last semester for the purpose of graduate assistantship appointments. Students in their last semester may enroll part-time and receive full benefits as a GA. Academic programs or hiring units may also impose their own eligibility requirements. Graduate Assistants work during the winter term is governed by this policy: Winter Term and Graduate Assistants. Note: graduate assistantship scholarships cannot be awarded during the Winter term.

Please contact the Department of Public Health or any full-time HCA faculty to learn more about GA opportunities with our department/program.

MHA OVERVIEW
https://www.wku.edu/hca/mha_degrees.php

COMPETENCIES
https://www.wku.edu/hca/documents/2025_mha_competencies.pdf

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
https://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/health-human-services/public-health/mha/

COURSE SEQUENCING
https://www.wku.edu/hca/mha_degrees.php

CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
https://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/health-human-services/public-health/mha/#programrequirementstext

ENROLLMENT DATES
https://www.wku.edu/hca/mha_degrees.php

PROGRAM OUTCOMES
https://programs.cahme.org/?wkyuniv
The MHA program at WKU is in candidacy for accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME). As a candidate for accreditation, the program reports graduate outcomes to CAHME. A link to the program outcomes is available on the program's website (www.wku.edu/mha).

MHA PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
https://www.wku.edu/hca/mha_degrees.php

The MHA Program's focus on continuous quality improvement, program sustainability and student outcomes assure the provision of curriculum that covers essential healthcare sector and management competencies. Measurable program goals and objectives focused on education, research and service have been developed to support the MHA program's mission, vision and values. Performance outcomes are utilized for both ongoing evaluation and improvement of the program's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

GENERAL PROGRAM GOALS
PROGRAM GOAL I: Produce well-rounded MHA Alumni.
PROGRAM GOAL II: Recognized as a leading choice for MHA degree completion**.**
PROGRAM GOAL III: Continuously self-evaluate and improve to achieve short and long-term strategic goals.

EDUCATION GOALS

EDUCATIONAL GOAL I: Produce outstanding executives for the healthcare industry.

EDUCATIONAL GOAL II: Provide students with expertise and practices critical to healthcare management.

EDUCATIONAL GOAL III: Provide students relevant experience that support career goals.

RESEARCH GOALS

RESEARCH GOAL I: Provide students with tools and experience to develop research skills in health administration.

RESEARCH GOAL II: Support faculty and student participation in preparation and dissemination of scholarly work.

SERVICE GOALS

SERVICE GOAL I: Develop engagement and leadership skills to actively address community needs.

STUDENT/ALUMNI SURVEYS AND POST-GRADUATION DATA

The MHA program collects data to facilitate both continuous improvement activities and strategic planning. Students complete self-assessments both pre and post MHA program completion. In addition, students are asked to complete an exit survey that includes required and recommended data for accrediting bodies and program goal measurement. Surveys will be shared with students in their first semester and post-graduation by department staff.

STUDENT HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATION

The Student Healthcare Association (SHA) is a student organization supporting future healthcare professionals in accomplishing their goals by expanding their horizons, facilitating networking opportunities, and imparting knowledge and information that would help them to understand the potential in the healthcare sector. It is composed of staff advisors, student officers, and a student body. SHA helps create connections between students and healthcare organizations through meetings and conferences. Its mission is to enable these connections and strengthen them to create Global leaders.

SHA's purpose is to connect students with each other and with professionals in order to participate in and create meaningful healthcare incentives within the university, throughout the community, and throughout the nation.

SHA's mission is to facilitate substantial connections among students and professionals and to develop global leaders in all healthcare sectors. SHA goals are listed below:

- Create connections among WKU students throughout all healthcare degree programs.
- Create connections between WKU healthcare students and healthcare professionals.
- Collaborate with other student organizations and organizations within the community to make a positive impact on healthcare.
- Provide SHA students with meaningful and significant experiences that will further their education and careers.

Any WKU student who is interested in getting involved with and building a network within the local and national healthcare industry is welcome to join! For more information, contact your program advisor, SHA President and/or the SHA Faculty Advisor found at the following link: https://www.wku.edu/publichealth/student_associations.php

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The MHA program encourages all students and alumni to be involved in professional associations that support and develop professional goals and lifelong learning. These organizations also provide valuable resources for advocacy, networking, mentoring and general and/or specific expertise on healthcare. A list of some, but not all organizations, for students to consider is provided below.

*indicates organizations closely affiliated with WKU program and/or faculty and staff.

*American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) – national and state chapters; Professional association focusing on advancing leaders and the field of healthcare leadership excellence through lifelong learning, networking and career development. Members can earn the prestigious, gold standard FACHE® credential, signaling board certification in healthcare management and attend the annual Congress on Healthcare Leadership. https://www.ache.org/

*American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA) - Founded in 1962, ACHCA is a non-profit professional membership association that identifies, recognizes and supports leaders in post-acute and aging services through educational programming, networking, and career development opportunities. ACHCA Fellowship, FACHCA, is a recognition achieved by members with distinguished contributions to the field of long-term care administration. https://achca.memberclicks.net/

*American Hospital Association (AHA) - national and state chapters; The AHA is a national organization that represents and serves all types of hospitals, health care networks, and their patients and communities. Nearly 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks, other providers of care and 43,000 individual members come together to form the AHA. https://www.aha.org/

*LeadingAge - A community of over 5,400 nonprofit aging services providers and other mission-driven organizations serving older adults in states across the country. **https://leadingage.org/**

*National Association of Long-Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB) - Nation's leading authority on regulating administrators of organizations along the continuum of long-term care, to include accrediting master and baccalaureate programs. https://www.nabweb.org/home

American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management (AAHAM) - Professional association that hosts an annual conference and administers certification exams in the areas of executive leadership, revenue management, and compliance.

American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) - The largest association in the United States representing long term and post-acute care providers, with a robust membership of more than 15,000 facilities. https://www.ahcancal.org/Pages/default.aspx

American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) - AHIMA focuses on health information management professionals, providing education and advocacy.

Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) - HFMA provides resources and support for professionals in healthcare finance, including training and career advancement.

Nashville Health Care Council - The Nashville Health Care Council strengthens and elevates Nashville as *The* Healthcare City. As a premier membership association since 1995, the Council convenes the industry's top minds and has provided a foundation for collaboration in healthcare for more than 25 years. The Council's diverse membership encompasses leaders in hospital management, outpatient services, population health, behavioral health, senior living, pharmaceutical services, academic medicine, health information technology, and more. https://healthcarecouncil.com/

National Association of Healthcare Access Management (NAHAM) - NAHAM is the association for patient access professionals, with a job board, a quarterly journal, education with certification options, and webinars that keep members current on technology and news in the field.

National Center for Healthcare Leadership – Association dedicated to advancing healthcare leadership and organizational excellence by building diverse, inclusive, and collaborative relationships in the US and abroad. https://www.nchl.org/

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
https://www.wku.edu/hca/mha_degrees.php

The external MHA Advisory Committee shall be composed of core MHA faculty, part-time MHA faculty, community representation from a minimum of eight (8) healthcare professionals and MHA alumni and minimum of one (1) MHA student. Subcommittees may be established as needs are identified.

The MHA Advisory Committee assists the Graduate Program Coordinator, MHA faculty and staff with strategic planning, development and implementation of short and long-term goals, community outreach and services and the establishment of standards for education, research and other program goals.

MHA program affiliations include but are not limited to: American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA), Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA), Nashville Health Care Council, National Council on Administrative Fellowships (NCAF) – National Center for Healthcare Leadership, Student Healthcare Association (SHA) and multiple local, state and national healthcare organizations. A sample list of affiliated healthcare organizations can be found on the program website.

RESEARCH
https://www.wku.edu/chhsresearch/
Students of the MHA program are encouraged to participate in research activities independent of required coursework. Examples of independent research opportunities include research poster presentations, collaboration with faculty manuscript submissions and invitation for conference presentation. If you have interest in research activities with the program or college, please contact your academic advisor or any MHA faculty for more information. You can also find out more information about CHHS Scholars Quick-Turnaround Grant (S-QTAG) and Graduate Student Research and Travel Grants at the following links:
https://www.wku.edu/chhsresearch/student_research.php
https://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/research_grant.php

STAYING INVOLVED: POST-GRADUATION OPPORTUNITIES

The MHA Program is always looking for ways to stay connected with our students post-graduation. A few ways to stay involved and connected are listed below:

Sign up to receive program newsletters

Participate in MHA Alumni Surveys

Join MHA/HCA page and alumni group on LinkedIN

Join the WKU Alumni Association

https://alumni.wku.edu

Serve on the MHA HCA Advisory Committee

Volunteer as a Preceptor or Mentor to MHA students

Inform the MHA program faculty/staff and/or students about job, internship and
    fellowship opportunities with your organization

Host and/or connect with students at professional association meetings

Provide a meeting site for program, student organization, professional development, etc.

Sponsor or donate to general or specific MHA program activities/scholarships

Provide tours (virtual or in person) of your organization

Serve as a Guest Lecturer or Speaker

Provide case study material or class projects/proposals that solve real world problems

If you have other ideas on ways to stay involved and connected with our program after completion of your MHA degree, please let us know! We love an opportunity to stay in touch and work with our past students!

OTHER POLICIES AND COMMITTEES

COURSE STAFFING POLICY:

Courses will be prioritized for staffing purposes. Qualified full-time instructors and faculty assigned to the MHA program will first be staffed in required MHA core courses, then required HCA core courses, then by Connections courses, and then by MHA and HCA electives.

When possible, faculty preference will be honored when staffing. Rationale: Core courses align with accreditation requirements; teaching FTE is calculated from required courses/those primarily serving program. Connections have assessment requirement for Evidence and Argument.

COURSE WAIVERS:
The MHA program does not currently allow any course waivers of core content requirements, to include culminating experience.

ENROLLMENT CAPACITY POLICY:
The MHA program follows WKU policy for course enrollment. MHA courses have restricted student capacity due to assessment requirements that entail higher-learning activities and application-based projects.

MHA ADVISING POLICY: (modeled from PH policy, needs review)
HCA Program faculty, to include Program Coordinators, will advise students in their respective program. All faculty engage in career advising and mentoring of students regardless of assigned advisor.

JOINT UNDERGRADUATE MASTER'S PROGRAM (JUMP):
To qualify students must have the following:
- Be an undergraduate student in one of the following majors: Health Sciences (564), Health Care Administration (559)
- Minimum GPA of 3.25 for individuals earning their first baccalaureate degree
- Minimum GPA of 3.00 for individuals earning their second baccalaureate degree
- Students must maintain minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 in graduate courses.
- Minimum of 60 undergraduate hours earned and 15 or more credit hours remaining to complete their undergraduate degree
- Minimum of 24 undergraduate hours earned at WKU

MHA ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE:
All full-time MHA faculty will serve as standing members to conduct admission reviews for the MHA program. Admission criteria are established by the WKU Graduate School policies and procedures and MHA program admission criteria. Students that do not meet minimum criteria will be conditionally admitted for one semester and applications reviewed by the MHA Admissions Committee during fall or spring semester. As needed, the MHA Admissions Committee will also review and provide advising for students placed on academic probation and/or requiring academic appeal.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:
https://www.wku.edu/hca/mha_degrees.php

MHA CURRICULUM COMMITTEE:
MHA Program faculty will comprise the MHA Curriculum Committee. The committee will annually review and make recommended changes to program curriculum, course descriptions, program competencies and program goals and objectives.

CLOSING MESSAGE, INTERIM DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Welcome to Western Kentucky University (WKU), the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Master of Health Administration (MHA) program. We are honored to have you enrolled at WKU. You had several universities and programs to enroll; however, you chose to enroll at WKU. Congratulations on making this life-enriching decision. You're coming in with skills, expertise and experience from diverse backgrounds and settings; we look forward to opportunities that will be mutually beneficial. I would love to chat and mingle with your group sometime in the semester – in-person or virtual.

We strive to make our programs stronger and competitive. I challenge you to communicate with us from time-to-time on ways to make us better, whether through programming, innovative ideas, or professional engagement. Together, we will make our MHA programs one of the best in the nation.

I wish you a successful semester and stay in the MHA program. I am a phone call/email away if you need to reach me. Go TOPS!!

Grace Lartey, PhD
Interim Department Chair, Social Work and Public Health

Revision History

Date	Section	Description
06/2025	II	Updated link to competencies, program goals and curriculum
06/2025	II	Revised governance committee policy/procedures
06/2025	Intro	Added welcome messages, updated faculty information
06/2025	general	Updated links and information r/t wku policies/procedures
07/2025	Closing	Added closing message
07/2025	Approval	Changes/updates approved Program Committee