



# University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

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TO: Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Vivek Goel

CONTACT INFO: [provost@utoronto.ca](mailto:provost@utoronto.ca)

DATE: February 19, 2004 for meeting on March 3, 2004

AGENDA ITEM: 5(a)

## **ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Changes to the M.H.Sc./M.Sc./Ph.D. programs in Public Health Sciences, as specified in the attachment.

## **JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The Committee has general responsibility for policy on, and for monitoring, the quality of education and the research activities of the University.

## **PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

The Department of Public Health Sciences proposes to merge all Master's level education into a single degree program with a number of PH fields and sufficient flexibility to provide both research and professional training for public health professionals. The changes would be implemented in a two staged approach over the next two years.

## **FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no new/additional financial resources required to implement the program change.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

For Information.

January 30, 2004

Professor Vivek Goel  
Deputy Provost and Vice Provost, Faculty  
Room 225, Simcoe Hall  
27 King's College Circle  
University of Toronto

Dear Professor Goel:

At its meeting of January 27, 2004, the Council of the School of Graduate Studies approved the following motion:

**THAT** SGS Council approve the changes to the M.H.Sc./M.Sc./Ph.D. programs in Public Health Sciences, as specified in the attachment.

The motion sheet and supporting documentation are attached. Division IV Executive Committee approved the proposed change at its meeting on January 13, 2004.

On behalf of the Council of the School of Graduate Studies, I am presenting this item to Governing Council committees, for approval.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Alderdice  
Secretary to SGS Council  
and Coordinator of Policy, Program and Liaison

Encl.  
/smr

c.c.     A. Drummond (with attachments)  
          U. de Boni  
          T. Chan  
          C. Johnston  
          J. Lalonde  
          A. Sass-Kortsak  
          L. Yee  
          S. Zaky (with attachments)



December 17, 2003

Umberto deBoni  
Associate Dean, Division IV  
School of Graduate Studies

Dear Umberto:

The Department of Public Health Sciences has recognized the need for revision to Master's level education in Public Health. Over the past decade it has been apparent that public health professionals (traditionally graduates of the MHSc) increasingly need research skills. As a consequence the research component of the MHSc has evolved to the point where the skill sets of the MHSc and MSc graduates have become quite similar. The current MHSc is designed as a structured, intense, 1.5 to 2.0 year program; whereas, the MSc time to completion has become unacceptably long, largely related to thesis requirements. The result of a two year departmental curriculum renewal process is the decision to merge all Master's level education into a single degree program with a number of PH fields and sufficient flexibility to provide both research and professional training.

This will be accomplished in a staged approach. The first phase, which will take effect September 2004, consists of

- relatively minor changes to the existing MHSc
- no admissions to the MSc program, except for Biostatistics, for the next 2 years
- for PhD admission, removing the requirement for a thesis-based Master's degree and increasing the minimum standing to A-.

The second phase will occur as part of our upcoming Periodic OCGS appraisal, scheduled for 2005. These changes will take effect September 2006 and will likely include:

- formally discontinuing the MSc in PHS
- establishing an appropriate course-only Biostatistics Master's degree field
- final revisions to the Master's degree, fully integrating the professional and research components in each field
- the possibility for a degree name change and modifications to the field nomenclature, and
- complimentary curriculum changes to the PhD program.

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*Educational Program, Ph: 416.978.2058*

**GREAT MINDS FOR  
A GREAT FUTURE**

I am writing to request that the Executive Committee (Division IV) consider and approve the first phase of our curriculum change, which are summarized on Table 1. There will be no change to the total number of courses (10 FCE) required for the MHSc, although there will be a small increase in the common Public Health required courses for all Master=s students. In order to provide more explicit research training, the nature of some of the practicum experience will change and research skills will be emphasized in existing and proposed new courses. Given this increased research emphasis, the graduates will be prepared for doctoral training and therefore the PhD admission requirement for a thesis-based Master=s degree is removed. We will be bringing forward to the next Executive Committee several new courses for approval.

In Table 2 we have provided the existing SGS Calendar entry for our department, together with the proposed changes. The proposed text reflect the changes described above, together with some additional details which we feel articulate the nature of the revised MHSc more clearly. You will note that we are retaining the calendar entry regarding the MSc, although we will only be admitting students to the MSc who wish to pursue the Biostatistics field. Students interested in the other fields are being specifically directed to the revised MHSc.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Sass-Kortsak, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Associate Chair

**TABLE 1: MHSc: Summary of Phase 1 Changes**

PROGRAM ELEMENTS	EXISTING MHSc	PROPOSED MHSc
Total Required Credits	10.0 FCE	10.0 FCE
Required Common PHS courses	0.5 FCE	increased to 1.0 or 1.5 FCE
Practica	required min 1.0 FCE - max 3.5 FCE	required min 1.0 FCE - max 4.0 FCE
Practica type	largely practice oriented	practice and/or research oriented
Research emphasis	variable	increased and explicit
Eligibility for PhD	rare	yes, with evidence of research capability
New courses requiring SGS approval		PHS Research Skills Health Trends and Surveillance Seminars in Applied Epidemiology Research Practica

**TABLE 2: SGS CALENDAR ENTRY – PHS (2004-2005)**  
**17 Dec 2003**

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>Candidates are admitted to the multidisciplinary field of community health under the general regulations of the School of Graduate Studies. Applicants are strongly advised to have some background in statistics and quantitative methods, as well as in a social science discipline. In addition, field and employment experience are taken into consideration, especially for the M.H.Sc. program. More specific program details, requirements, course descriptions, and a supplementary application are available from the Graduate Department of Public Health Sciences. A complete description of all programs, degree requirements, courses, faculty research interests, and policies is available on the departmental Web site <a href="http://www.phs.utoronto.ca">www.phs.utoronto.ca</a> .</p> <p>Applications should be submitted by February 1.</p>	<p>Candidates are admitted to the multidisciplinary field of <b>public</b> health under the general regulations of the School of Graduate Studies. Applicants are strongly advised to have some background in statistics and quantitative methods, as well as in a social science discipline. In addition, field and employment experience are taken into consideration, especially for the M.H.Sc. program. More specific program details, requirements, course descriptions, and a supplementary application are available from the Graduate Department of Public Health Sciences. A complete description of all programs, degree requirements, courses, faculty research interests, and policies is available on the departmental Web site <a href="http://www.phs.utoronto.ca">www.phs.utoronto.ca</a> .</p> <p>Applications should be submitted by February 1.</p>
<p><b>Degree of Master of Health Science</b></p> <p>In the Master of Health Science program students may specialize in one of five areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Health and Epidemiology</li> <li>Community Nutrition</li> <li>Family Medicine</li> <li>Health Promotion</li> <li>Occupational and Environmental Health</li> </ul> <p>All students in the M.H.Sc. program will learn the basic theoretical and methodological approaches used in community health, will share a common understanding of the field, will be able to pursue areas of specific personal interest, and will acquire some field experience (practicum) in their chosen area. Course sequences have been planned to include a set of common core courses, to introduce basic theory and methods early, to allow as much elective time as possible, and to permit the application of theory to practice in a field setting. A thesis is not required, but students may be required to undertake major papers and independent projects.</p>	<p><b>Degree of Master of Health Science</b></p> <p>The MHSc degree program in Public Health is undertaken by students interested in professional and/or research careers in the community, academic, public or private sectors. Students may specialize in one of five areas or fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Health and Epidemiology</li> <li>Community Nutrition</li> <li>Family Medicine</li> <li>Health Promotion</li> <li>Occupational and Environmental Health</li> </ul> <p>All students in the M.H.Sc. program will learn the basic theoretical and methodological approaches used in community health, will share a common understanding of the field, will be able to pursue areas of specific personal interest, and will acquire some field <b>and research</b> experience (practicum) in their chosen area. Course sequences have been planned to include a set of common core courses, to introduce basic theory and methods early, to allow as much elective time as possible, and to permit the application of theory to practice in a field <b>or research</b> setting. A thesis is not required, but students may be required to undertake major papers and independent projects.</p>

EXISTING	PROPOSED
	<p>The Master's training in Public Health Sciences aims to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. provide students with access to appropriate knowledge and skills from which to form the basis of ethical competence in public health generally and in their discipline;</li> <li>2. promote students' use of the conceptual and practical tools/methods needed to understand developments in public health and in their discipline;</li> <li>3. provide a framework of evaluative skills that can be used to apply independent scientific judgement;</li> <li>4. provide a foundation for a career in Public Health research or practice; and,</li> <li>5. provide entry preparation for doctoral studies in PHS</li> </ol>
<p><b>Program Requirements</b></p> <p><b>1</b> An approved program of study includes the equivalent of 10 full courses, of which 0.5 course equivalent is a core subject and at least 1.0 course equivalent is a field practicum.</p> <p><b>2</b> If registered on a full-time basis in the program and, with the exception of the session in which a practicum is undertaken, a student should take two to three full-course equivalents in any one session.</p> <p><b>3</b> Depending on the area of specialization, full-time students require between 16 and 22 months to complete an M.H.Sc. program, including time spent in appropriate field settings.</p> <p><b>4</b> Specific program requirements and course sequences and options vary by area of specialization and are fully explained in the <a href="#">Web site</a>.</p> <p><b>5</b> A part-time study option is available which allows six years for completion of the program. Contact the Graduate Department of Public Health Sciences for further information.</p>	<p><b>UNCHANGED</b></p>
<p><b>Degree of Master of Science</b></p> <p>The M.Sc. degree program is undertaken by students interested in research and academic careers in public health sciences. The specializations offered include:</p> <p>Biostatistics Epidemiology Health and Behavioral Sciences Occupational and Environmental Health</p>	<p><b>Degree of Master of Science</b></p> <p>The M.Sc. degree program is undertaken by students interested in research and academic careers in public health sciences. Students may specialize in one of the following areas or fields:</p> <p>Biostatistics Epidemiology* Health and Behavioral Sciences* Occupational and Environmental Health*</p>

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>Social Science and Health (formerly Behavioural Science)</p> <p>Each specialization has specific course requirements and may have other requirements in addition to the common features listed below.</p>	<p>Social Science and Health (formerly Behavioural Science)*</p> <p><b>* CURRICULUM UNDER REVISION, NO NEW ADMISSION FOR 2004-5. STUDENTS INTERESTED IN THESE AREAS SHOULD APPLY TO THE COMPARABLE MHSc WHICH HAS BEEN MODIFIED TO INCREASE THE RESEARCH EMPHASIS</b></p> <p><del>Each specialization has specific course requirements and may have other requirements in addition to the common features listed below.</del></p>
<p><b>Program Requirements</b></p> <p><b>1</b> Completion of all degree requirements within five years.  <b>2</b> The writing of a thesis under the supervision of a thesis committee (supervisor and at least one additional faculty member) and its defence before an examination committee appointed by the Graduate Department of Public Health Sciences.  A course-only option is available in Biostatistics.  <b>3</b> The course load varies by specialization and the student's knowledge of the field of specialization and is fully explained on the <a href="#">Web site</a>.  <b>4</b> A part-time M.Sc. program is available. Submission of an approved program plan, with annual updates, is required.</p>	<p><b>UNCHANGED</b></p>
<p><b>Degree of Doctor of Philosophy</b></p> <p>The Ph.D. degree program is undertaken by students interested in research and academic careers in community health. The specializations offered include:  Biostatistics  Epidemiology  Social Science and Health (formerly Behavioural Science)</p> <p>Applicants to the Ph.D. program normally will be expected to have completed a M.A. or M.Sc. (with a thesis) in a related field and to provide satisfactory references pertaining to their academic and research abilities.  Upon the recommendation of the appropriate Public Health Sciences committees, outstanding students with a non-thesis master's degree</p>	<p><b>UNCHANGED</b></p> <p><b>Admission Requirements</b></p> <p>Candidates are admitted under the general regulations of the School of Graduate Studies, including evidence of facility in the English language. Applicants to the Ph.D. program normally are expected to have a Master's degree in Public Health Sciences, or a related field from a recognized University, with a minimum A- standing. Candidates must demonstrate educational and/or professional experience that indicates a</p>



EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>may be admitted to the Ph.D. program if they have appropriate background preparation and research experience or publications which can be considered equivalent to a master's thesis.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, applicants would qualify for direct entry into the doctoral program with a bachelor's or equivalent degree and subject to the review and approval by the appropriate Public Health Sciences committees.</p> <p>Students transferring from the M.Sc. to the Ph.D. program are normally required to complete the sum of the normal master's course requirements unless otherwise specified by the program.</p>	<p><b>capacity to undertake research-oriented doctoral studies.</b> They must provide satisfactory references pertaining to their academic and research abilities. <b>In addition, applicants are expected to have the appropriate background preparation specific to the area or field of interest. (Consult the website for details.)</b></p> <p><del>Upon the recommendation of the appropriate Public Health Sciences committees, outstanding students with a non-thesis master's degree may be admitted to the Ph.D. program if they have appropriate background preparation and research experience or publications which can be considered equivalent to a master's thesis.</del></p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, applicants would qualify for direct entry into the doctoral program with a bachelor's or equivalent degree and subject to the review and approval by the appropriate Public Health Sciences committees.</p> <p><del>Students transferring from the M.Sc. to the Ph.D. program are normally required to complete the sum of the normal master's course requirements unless otherwise specified by the program.</del></p>
<p><b>Program Requirements for Full-Time Ph.D.</b></p> <p>Each specialization has specific requirements in addition to the common features listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Full-time registration (winter and summer sessions) for the first four years of the doctoral program.</li> <li>2 Completion of all degree requirements within six years from first registration in the program. Thereafter, candidates may apply for a maximum of two extensions.</li> <li>3 The writing of a comprehensive examination in the major area of specialization.</li> <li>4 The designation of a minor area of specialization, depending on sub-specialization.</li> <li>5 The successful completion of formal examinations and other assessments at specified points within the program to ensure continuation in the program.</li> <li>6 Satisfactory evidence of proficiency in statistics or research methods or the inclusion of at least one such course in the program.</li> <li>7 The writing of a Ph.D. thesis under the supervision of an approved thesis committee (supervisor plus two additional faculty members).</li> <li>8 The oral defence of the thesis before an examination committee</li> </ol>	<p><b>UNCHANGED – but points reordered</b></p> <p><b>Program Requirements for Full-Time Ph.D.</b></p> <p>Each specialization has specific requirements in addition to the common features listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Full-time registration (winter and summer sessions) for the first four years of the doctoral program.</li> <li>2 Completion of all degree requirements within six years from first registration in the program. Thereafter, candidates may apply for a maximum of two extensions.</li> <li>3 The course requirements vary by specialization and are related to the student's knowledge of the field. Consult the <a href="#">Web site</a>.</li> <li>4 The writing of a comprehensive examination in the major area of specialization.</li> <li>5 The designation of a minor area of specialization, depending on sub-specialization.</li> <li>6 The successful completion of formal examinations and other assessments at specified points within the program to ensure continuation in the program.</li> <li>7 Satisfactory evidence of proficiency in statistics or research methods or</li> </ol>

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>appointed by the School of Graduate Studies.</p> <p><b>9</b> The course requirements vary by specialization and are related to the student's knowledge of the field.</p> <p>Consult the <a href="#">Web site</a>.</p> <p><b><i>Program Requirements for Flexible-Time Ph.D.</i></b></p> <p>With the approval of the graduate chair, some applicants may be admitted to a flexible-time Ph.D. program. This program will benefit mature students with career and/or familial obligations. The degree requirements for the flexible-time program are identical to those listed above for the full-time Ph.D. program; however, students have up to eight years to complete the program. They are required to register full-time for the first four years of their program. Thereafter, they may register part-time. A plan of study and research activities will be negotiated at initial registration, to be reviewed and updated annually.</p>	<p>the inclusion of at least one such course in the program.</p> <p><b>8</b> The writing of a Ph.D. thesis under the supervision of an approved thesis committee (supervisor plus two additional faculty members).</p> <p><b>9</b> The oral defence of the thesis before an examination committee appointed by the School of Graduate Studies.</p> <p><b>UNCHANGED</b></p> <p><b>UNCHANGED</b></p>
<p><b>Collaborative Programs</b></p> <p>Students in the M.H.Sc., M.Sc., and Ph.D. programs in the Graduate Department of Public Health Sciences may also participate in a range of collaborative programs. For more details see the separate listings in this calendar:</p> <p><a href="#">Addiction Studies</a></p>	<p><b>UNCHANGED</b></p> <p><b>UNCHANGED</b></p>

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<a href="#">Aging and the Life Course</a> <a href="#">Bioethics</a> <a href="#">Cardiovascular Sciences</a> <a href="#">Environment and Health</a> (see Environmental Studies) <a href="#">Women's Studies</a>	<b>Add:</b> <b>HEALTH, TECHNOLOGY AND PLACE</b>

