



CHARLOTTE

College of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health Sciences

9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001
t/704.687.8742 f/704.687.1644 <http://publichealth.uncc.edu/>

To: Dr. Joan Lorden
Provost, University of North Carolina Charlotte

From: Dr. Jan Warren-Findlow,
Chair, Department of Public Health Sciences
Dr. Catrine Tudor-Locke,
Dean, College of Health and Human Services

Date: July 27, 2022

Re: CIP Code change for the PhD in Health Services Research program

The Department of Public Health Sciences has two requests for your consideration: 1) we request to change the CIP code of the PhD in Health Services Research (CIP Code: 51.2201) to a STEM-designated CIP Code (26.1311), effective Fall 2023; and 2) we request to rename the PhD in HSR to a PhD in Epidemiology. Both of these proposed changes were approved by PHS Department faculty.

Rationale for CIP code change:

The PhD program in Health Services Research (HSR) is 61 credit hours post masters interdisciplinary program established in 2003. The HSR program curriculum emphasized developing strong quantitative reasoning and methodological skills. The program, now housed in the Department of Public Health Sciences, is classified under CIP code: 51.2201 Public Health, General (see full description in Table 1). With the rollout of CIP 2020, the new STEM-designated CIP code: 26.1311 Epidemiology and Biostatistics was introduced. The new CIP code: 26.131, which did not exist in 2003, more accurately reflects the curriculum and the quantitative and methodological skills acquired throughout the PhD program and is a better fit for the program. There are many similarities in the description of the current non-STEM CIP code: 51.2201 Public Health, General and the proposed new STEM-designated CIP code: 26.1311, as both codes include instruction in biostatistics, epidemiology, and health services research.

Currently, the Department of Public Health Sciences also offers a PhD in Public Health Sciences (PHS) under non-STEM CIP code: 51.2201 Public Health, General. The change in the CIP code of the Health Services Research PhD will attract domestic and international students, better describe the quantitative emphasis of the degree, and would complement our PHS PhD with a STEM-based alternative.

The CIP code change will likely significantly increase our applications from international students studying in the US on an F-1 student visa. The STEM-designated CIP code: 26.1311 Epidemiology and Biostatistics will allow eligible international students to work for an additional year than students in non-designated fields using the STEM OPT employment authorization (<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/stemList2022.pdf>).

Table 1. Current and Proposed CIP code Descriptions
<p>Current CIP code: 51.2201 Public Health, General</p> <p><i>A program that generally prepares individuals to plan, manage, and evaluate public health care services; to function as public health professionals in public agencies, the private sector, and other settings; and to provide leadership in the field of public health. Includes instruction in <u>epidemiology</u>, <u>biostatistics</u>, <u>public health principles</u>, <u>preventive medicine</u>, <u>health policy and regulations</u>, <u>health care services</u> and related administrative functions, <u>public health law enforcement</u>, <u>health economics and budgeting</u>, <u>public communications</u>, and <u>professional standards and ethics</u>.</i></p> <p>Source: https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/cipdetail.aspx?y=56&cip=51.2201</p>
<p>Proposed new STEM-designated CIP code: 26.1311 Epidemiology and Biostatistics:</p> <p><i>A program with a general synthesis of epidemiology and biostatistics or a specialization which draws from epidemiology and biostatistics. Includes instruction in <u>biostatistics</u>, <u>disease and injury determinants</u>, <u>epidemiology</u>, <u>health services research</u>, <u>pathology</u>, <u>spatial analysis</u>, and <u>statistics</u>.</i></p> <p>Source: https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/cipdetail.aspx?y=56&cip=26.1311</p>

Rationale for the degree name change

We also request to rename the PhD program in HSR to PhD in Epidemiology. The focus of the PhD program remains on developing methodological and quantitative skills. A PhD in Epidemiology will be attractive to both potential students and employers since individuals trained in Epidemiology are well-positioned to succeed in various roles, including health data scientist, epidemiologist, health services researcher, medical scientist, and clinical researcher. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 30% increase in the number of employment opportunities for epidemiologists from 2020-2030 (Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/epidemiologists.htm>). Similarly, the Bureau predicts a 17% increase

in employment opportunities for medical scientists during the same time period. A PhD in Epidemiology also aligns the program with our faculty expertise and the expectations of our local partners and alumni.

Program Need and Demand. One positive of the COVID pandemic is that the importance of public health, and in particular epidemiology, has become apparent to the general public. According to the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH), applications for graduate programs in public health increased by 23% from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020. In March 2021, ASPPH reported that applications to graduate programs in public health were 40% higher than they were one year earlier. Epidemiology was the most popular graduate-level area of study for all applications to public health degree programs. The trend has continued in this admissions cycle. Similar trends have been seen with UNC Charlotte's Master of Public Health (MPH) program. Of the 95 students currently enrolled in the MPH program, 48.4% (n=46) have declared the epidemiology concentration. Approximately 41% of second-year MPH students are in the epidemiology concentration compared to 50% of first-year MPH students. Given these numbers, we anticipate that a PhD focused on Epidemiology would be of great interest.

Similar Programs in the UNC System and Regional Institutions

Currently, only the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health offers a CEPH-accredited PhD program in Epidemiology in North Carolina. Regionally, only two institutions in South Carolina (University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health and Medical University of South Carolina) and two in Georgia (Emory University and University of Georgia) currently offer PhD programs in Epidemiology (see Table 1 below).

Adding a PhD program in Epidemiology to one of the fastest-growing University campuses in the UNC system and the largest urban area of North Carolina will make UNC Charlotte competitive to both local and international applicants.

Faculty and Resources.

There are a number of faculty in the Department of Public Health Sciences who would contribute to an epidemiology-focused PhD. Drs. Ahmed Arif, Shi Chen, Laura Gunn, Lorenzo Hopper, and Rajib Paul have training relevant to a PhD in Epidemiology. We anticipate adding another epidemiologist due to a recent retirement.

In terms of fiscal resources, we would continue to need a TA budget from the Graduate School (as we do now for HSR). If the mix of full-time to part-time students shifted more in favor of full-time students, an increase in that budget would be desirable. Epidemiology PhD students would be in high demand by faculty throughout CHHS to work as research assistants on grants.

Table 2. List of universities in North Carolina and from adjoining states currently offering PhD programs in epidemiology

Institution	State	CIP code	Graduate Degree	Website
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Public Health	North Carolina	26.1309*	PhD in Epidemiology	https://sph.unc.edu/programs/?ppk=epid-phd-r
Medical University of South Carolina-Charleston	South Carolina	26.1309	PhD in Epidemiology	https://medicine.musc.edu/departments/phs/academics/ms-and-phd/epidemiology
University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health	South Carolina	26.1309	PhD in Epidemiology	https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/public_health/study/areas_of_study/epidemiology_biostatistics/degree_programs/phd_epidemiology/index.php
University of Georgia, College of Public health	Georgia	26.1102 (Biostatistics)	PhD in Epidemiology & Biostatistics	https://publichealth.uga.edu/degree/ms-phd-in-epidemiology-biostatistics/
Emory University Rollins School of Public Health	Georgia	26.1309	PhD in Epidemiology	https://www.sph.emory.edu/departments/epi/degree-programs/phd/index.html

*CIP code: 26.1309 is STEM-Designated for Epidemiology