

Maxwell School Center for CAREER DEVELOPMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO PUBLIC HEALTH

OVERVIEW

The world faces both old and new public health challenges--the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the threat of bioterrorism, epidemics ranging from heart disease to cancer, the health of our increasingly elderly populations, the safety of our water and our food, and high-risk lifestyles, like smoking and substance abuse that endanger our health.

The need to understand the essential links between the social, physical, and economic environments and the health of individual patients and their families is vital. The areas of study represent diverse areas of interest including family practice, epidemiology and biometry, environmental and occupational health, nutrition, public health policy, and the social and economic aspects of the health care system. They direct research efforts at issues affecting the communities at large and their individuals.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Public health is inherently multi-disciplinary and so, too, are the interests and expertise of faculty and students, which extend across the biological, quantitative, and social sciences. With roots in biology, they are able to confront the most pressing diseases of our time-AIDS, cancer, and heart disease--by adding to the knowledge of their underlying structure and function. Core quantitative disciplines like epidemiology and biostatistics are fundamental to analyzing the broad impact of health problems, allowing them to look beyond individuals to entire populations. And, because preventing disease is at the heart of public health, one must look towards the social sciences to better understand health-related behaviors and their societal influences--critical elements in educating and empowering people to make healthier lifestyle choices.

With the broad nature of a field like this, the career paths are varied. Food security specialists, health educators, and program managers are just the beginning of the need that is out there. Many of these paths will lead to jobs around the world with varied needs and demands. Organizations like Family Health International, Save the Children and the World Health Organization all have many programs throughout the world to implement basic necessities in countries where resources are scarce.

TYPES OF JOBS

- Community health specialist
- Disease intervention specialist
- Emergency preparedness
- Epidemiologist
- Local public health educator
- Public health advisor

QUALIFICATIONS + SKILLS

- Research skills
- Strong written communication skills
- Quantitative and analytical thinking
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Expertise in related interest (i.e. nutrition, maternal health, etc.)
- Foreign language fluency helpful

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SAMPLE EMPLOYERS

- Africare
- American Friends Service Committee
- American Red Cross
- Bread for the World
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Child Health Foundation
- ChildFund
- CONCERN Worldwide US Inc.
- CARE
- Doctors of the World, Inc.
- Doctors Without Borders
- Global Health Council
- The Hunger Project
- International Women's Health Coalition
- Management Science for Health
- Mercy Corps
- Operation USA
- Partners in Health
- Partners of the Americas
- Physicians for Human Rights
- Plan International USA
- Project Hope
- Save the Children
- UNAIDS
- World Concern
- World Health Organization

SAMPLE MAXWELL CLASSES

- Social Welfare Policy
- Child and Family Policy
- Changing American Health Care System
- Health Services Management
- Health and Development
- Health Economics & Policy
- Demography, Aging and Public Policy
- U.S. Federal Budget, Health Care and Social Security Reform

RESOURCES

- PublicHealthJobs.net
- PublicHealthOnline.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

RELATED CAREER GUIDES

- Humanitarian Aid and Relief
- International Development
- Non-Profit Management
- United Nations

PRO TIP: It is difficult to obtain ideal jobs in high-impact areas without at least five years' experience or more. When going international, it is best and usually required to have a working knowledge and experience outside of the field. Internships and jobs right out of school are good ways to achieve this experience.