

Master of Science in Community Health Education

Akamai University

Dr. Douglass Capogrossi

06 June 2017



The community health field gives health care practitioners the opportunity to work within their own communities to develop and teach health and wellness programs for all age groups. Akamai graduates in Community Health Education have the opportunity to augment their current health care profession with skills and tools to provide community health education programs, as well as to explore other educational opportunities in their communities. The

healthcare professions give practitioners a good education in their field concerning caring for those with illnesses. However, what is needed in this modern age, with people living longer, is the added focus on preventing illness and disease. The word "community" has traditionally meant a group of people living within specific geographical boundaries; we will expand that definition to include groups of people who have common characteristics, such as race, sex, occupation, ethnicity, location, particular problems in common, or any other type of bond that people have.

Kind regards,
Douglass Capogrossi, PhD
Interim Program Director

PROGRAM AUDIENCE

This is a degree completion program for certified and registered healthcare professionals. Graduates would work within their local community. Activities with which graduates might be involved include:

- Teaching health and wellness programs at organizations within the community.
- Developing and working with wellness programs in local companies.
- Developing and teaching health and wellness programs at community centers or through local school districts for both students and adults.
- Developing and teaching sexuality programs in the schools or community organizations.
- Developing wellness workshops at senior centers.
- Establish patient and staff education at hospitals and healthcare organizations.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

As prerequisites for admittance to the Bachelor of Science in Community Health Education, applicants should have completed a minimum of two full years of college level study, a minimum of 60 semester credits, or an Associate's level credential. Effective applicants are healthcare professionals certified or registered in their field. Candidates should be graduates of a recognized 1-3 year training program offered through a technical institute, hospital, or community college. Some of the appropriate fields of preparation would include: nursing, respiratory therapy, medical laboratory, radiology, mental health,

Master of Science in Community Health Education

nutrition, medical information, and related fields of health. Applicants should have at least 5 years professional experience.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Students in the Master of Science in Community Health Education Program will complete a program of 40 credits above the baccalaureate level including coursework, comprehensive examinations, and the thesis project. Coursework requirements include the core elements of the academic major and a set of course modules comprising a major concentration and research preparation. Master's students complete a comprehensive examination at the conclusion of their academic studies, prepare a formal thesis proposal, complete the thesis project, and prepare the manuscript for faculty review. Students also complete an oral review of thesis at the conclusion of the faculty's review of the manuscript and then finalize their manuscripts for formal binding.

Master of Science in Community Health Education (40 credits minimum)

- Core Academic Studies (18 credits)
- Major Concentration (9 credits)
- Research Preparation (Required: 3 credits minimum)
- Comprehensive Examination (Required: 2 credits)
- Thesis Proposal (Required: 2 credits)
- Thesis (Required: 4 credits)
- Oral Review of Thesis (Required: 2 credits)

CORE ACADEMIC MAJOR

A minimum of 18 semester credits in Community Health Education is required for the academic major. These core academic competencies emphasize the theories, principles and practices at the foundation of the discipline, and the philosophical and cultural implications of the field. They also incorporate applied elements of the discipline.

Core Academic Major (18 credits)

Students complete all classes listed for the core academic major:

- CHE 501: Introduction to Community Health (3 credits)
- CHE 503: Foundations of Healthcare (3 credits)
- CHE 505: Health and Wellness (3 credits)
- CHE 511: Sexuality throughout the Lifespan (3 credits)
- CHE 521: Legal and Ethical Aspects of Healthcare (3 credits)
- CHE 531: Developing Health and Wellness Programs (3 credits)

MAJOR CONCENTRATION

Students complete the practicum and classes for one area of concentration (9 credits):

- CHE 509: Practicum in Community Health Education Practicum (3 credits)
- PLUS** six credits from among any one of the following areas of concentrations:

Master of Science in Community Health Education

Environmental Health
Physical Health
Social Health

Emotional Health
Intellectual Health
Spiritual Health

RESEARCH PREPARATION (3 CREDITS)

Master's students must pursue studies providing advanced research knowledge necessary for success in their final projects (thesis). At least three semester credits of research preparation coursework is required and this might focus upon quantitative and qualitative methods or participatory action research techniques including subject selection, research design, and statistical analysis, as appropriate to each student's proposed project.

Through this requirement, students learn to effectively define applied problems or theoretical issues and articulate the rationale for the study. They should learn to present an effective scholarly review of the academic literature and implement quantitative, qualitative or participatory action methods for evaluating academic issues.

Required:

One of the following research preparation classes, selected with guidance from the senior faculty advisor:

Required:

Minimum of three credits selected from among the following modules

- RES 500: Survey of Research Methods (3 credits)
- RES 502: Understanding Research Journal Articles (3 credits)
- RES 504: Introductory Research Statistics (3 credits)
- RES 506: Advanced Research Statistics (3 credits)
- RES 508: Qualitative Research (3 credits)
- RES 510: Participatory Action Research (3 credits)
- RES 512: Effective Data Analysis (3 credits)
- RES 520: Social Science Research Methods (3 credits)

Comprehensive Examination (2 credits)

Once students have completed the coursework elements of their degree, they will be asked to schedule the Comprehensive Examination. The primary mentor and a faculty member representing the secondary academic area conduct both the written and oral components of the examination. The written portion is open book style with selected essay questions requiring creative responses that reach for the higher levels of cognition. The answers are expected to draw from both the primary and secondary competencies of the student's program with proper referencing of the scholarly literature. The oral component of the examination is normally completed by telephone conference and is intended to allow detailed investigation of the student's written responses.

Required:

EXM 880: Comprehensive Examination (2 credits)

Master of Science in Community Health Education

Thesis Proposal (2 credits)

Master's students are expected to prepare a formal research proposal within their area of concentration for research under the direction of the primary mentor and according to University expectations. At a minimum, the research proposal should clarify the thesis statement and methodology (including the data gathering instruments and data analysis techniques) and provide an effective overview of the scholarly literature that sets the foundation for the thesis. The research proposal should also include a brief manuscript outline that demonstrates how the student will present in written form the various elements of the research project.

Required:

RES 885: Thesis Proposal (2 credits)

Thesis Project (4 credits)

Following approval of the thesis proposal, with a project focused in the area of concentration, students will begin the research project. The thesis may take the form of a traditional research project or it may be a major scholarly project of the type appropriate to the discipline. Whichever approach to the thesis is chosen, the resulting project must demonstrate mastery of a body of knowledge in the major field of study, be the original work of the student and represent a meaningful contribution to the betterment of the human condition or an improvement to the professional field.

The thesis research may be conducted via quantitative, qualitative, or participatory action research. The body of the thesis manuscript, structured according to a set of approved manuscript guidelines, should exceed 75 double spaced, typewritten pages. In addition, the thesis may take the form of a scholarly project, and as such, must follow the guidelines provided by the University for such projects.

Required:

RES 890: Thesis Project (4 credits)

Oral Review of Thesis (2 credits)

Once students have prepared the thesis manuscript, they will be asked to schedule the formal oral review process. The primary and secondary faculty members will conduct both the formal physical review of the thesis manuscript and the oral review of thesis.

The physical review of the thesis manuscript usually takes the review committee four to six weeks. Each reviewer will prepare questions and commentary relative to the underlying review of the literature, the thesis methodology, the mechanics of the project, and the presentation of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The Oral Review of Thesis is conducted under the direction of the primary mentor with the assistance of one qualified member of the faculty. The examination is carried out by telephone conference call, Skype or another synchronous venue and is designed to allow detailed investigation of the thesis. The faculty reviewers explore with the student issues related to the thesis including methodology, review of literature and interpretation of the findings.

Master of Science in Community Health Education

One outcome of the thesis review process is a set of final expectations directing the student through the remaining tasks for completing the thesis manuscript. Once The final manuscript is approved, the student will submit the formal document to an approved bindery, following the bindery expectation of the University, and later ship the bound thesis to the University for permanent archival storage. A PDF version sent by email attachment or CR-Rom will permit the University to publish the thesis in the eCampus Library.

Required:

EXM 895: Oral Review of Thesis (2 credits)

THE THESIS COMMITTEE

Formation of Thesis Committee

Master's students have a Thesis Committee of two qualified graduate faculty appointed to oversee and govern the student's program structure, progress of studies, comprehensive examinations and thesis project

Responsibilities of Thesis Committee

Under leadership of the Committee Chair, responsibilities of the Committee are as follows:

- Directing the preparation and approval of the student's plan for study, clarifying the timeline for study and the assignment of faculty to provide instruction and to assist with the functions of the Thesis Committee.
- Providing direction regarding the student's foundational studies, core studies, specialization, and research preparation coursework.
- Providing leadership by integrating appropriate research preparation coursework or assignments within the plan for study, distributing the coursework to appropriate faculty for instruction and advisement.
- Providing leadership for the written and oral components of the student's comprehensive final examination, in unity with the other Committee members
- Providing oversight, direction, and mentorship during the conduct of the student's research project and manuscript preparation, in unity with the other Committee members
- Providing leadership for the physical and oral reviews of the research manuscript, in unity with the other Committee members.
- Assisting the student in making formal changes in the plan study and timeline for completion, by written addendum, as needed to assure effective progress throughout the program of study.
- Providing final approval for the student's Thesis and overall degree program and cooperate fully in building the appropriate archival records for the University of record.

Master's Committee Appointment Schedule

The Committee Chair is appointed immediately following the Master's student's registration and continues in charge of the student's program until final completion is recorded at the school of record. While the secondary and tertiary members of the Thesis Committee are identified and confirmed at the onset of the program, and listed in the plan of study, they become active later, just prior to the activities in which they are asked to participate.

Master of Science in Community Health Education

Building the Student's Plan for Study

Immediately following registration, Master's students begin work with their assigned Committee Chair in structuring their formal plan for study. The process determines and formalizes the elements of the student's Master's program and the timeline for completion. The plan for study includes the following essential elements:

- The designation of the degree major for the Study Plan
- Identification of the required array of coursework for each element of the program.
- Identification of the secondary and tertiary members of the Thesis Committee.
- Appointment and notification of the course module instructors
- Acceptance of transfer courses for the student's program.
- The timeline for completion of the degree program.

These activities require active participation in program planning by the student and may take considerable time to complete the dialogue and exchange of information. Students are strongly advised to discuss in detail the elements in the plan for study including the coursework, the examinations, and elements of research including the manuscript guidelines.

Once all of the decisions have been made concerning the plan for study, the student and Committee Chair sign the formal document. Copies of the document are sent to the University headquarters for entry to the permanent student record. The plan for study is then distributed to the participating schools and becomes the document that determines effective progress toward the degree. When the expectations laid out in the plan for study have been successfully accomplished, the student is recommended for the degree by the Committee Chair. Students are alerted that the University can make no commitment to inclusion of course modules and assignment of instructors to a student program until after the plan for study has been fully processed and approved.

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Master of Science in Community Health Education

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COURSE MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

Core Academic Subjects

CHE 501: Assessing Needs for Community Health Education

This class provides an understanding of the basic foundations for planning in community health education. Topics help students understand the health problems which exist within identified community groups and how to clarify the community resources available to tackle the problems. Students understand the importance of careful health-related data collection and analysis.

CHE 503: Understanding Community Health Education Strategies

This class examines techniques for needs assessment undertaken within a target and reviews the development of measurable goals and objectives for effective health education. Topics review model interventions that have succeeded in related communities.

CHE 505: Establishing Community Health Education Programs

This class is a focus upon the implementation of community health education programs and vital interventions. Students will understand the means for comprehending the detailed needs of the target population. Topics will examine use of a wide array of educational strategies and practices.

CHE 507: Research and Evaluation of Community Health Education

Students understand the means for conducting effective evaluations and research concerning community health education. Topic focus upon importance of the setting, tests utilized, use of surveys and observations, epidemiological data, or other methods of data collection. Topics clarify how health educators make use of research to improve their practices.

CHE 509: Administration of Community Health Education Programs

Students examine community health education strategies, interventions, and programs. Topic reviews the importance of a thorough understanding of the target population, use of effective array of educational methods and services.

CHE 511: Promotion of Community Health Education

This class is focused upon promotion and advocacy for community health education. Topics help students effectively translate scientific language into understandable information.

Major Concentration

Environmental Health

CHE 521: Urban Ecology (3 credits)

The class will explore the urban environment as it refers to environments dominated by high-density residential and commercial buildings, paved surfaces, and other urban-related factors that create a unique landscape dissimilar to most previously studied environments in the field of ecology. Methods used for studying urban ecology involve chemical and biochemical techniques, temperature recording, heat mapping remote sensing, and long-term ecological research sites.

CHE 523: Sanitation and Hygiene (3 credits)

Clean water, basic toilets and good hygiene practices are essential for the survival and development of children. Today, there are around 2.4 billion people who do not use improved sanitation, and 663 million who do not have access to improved water sources. Without these basic needs, the lives of millions of children are at risk. For children under five, water- and sanitation-related diseases are one of the leading causes of death. Every day, over 800 children die from preventable diseases caused by poor water, and a lack of sanitation and hygiene. UNICEF's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) team works in over 100 countries worldwide to improve water and sanitation services, as well as basic hygiene practices. Last year, UNICEF's efforts provided nearly 14 million people with clean water and over 11 million with basic toilets. In times of crisis children are particularly vulnerable; UNICEF responds and provides emergency relief to those in need.

Physical Health

CHE 531: Components of Physical Health (3 credits)

This class will cover the vital elements of assuring physical health including: proper nutrition and diet, physical exercise, proper rest and sleep, the issues of alcohol and drugs, and overall medical self-care.

CHE 533: Building Physical Wellness (3 credits)

Students will investigate aspects of life that are necessary to keep oneself in top condition and optimal physical wellness through beneficial physical activity and exercise and healthy eating habits. Elemental components of physical wellness include building muscular strength and endurance, cardiovascular strength and endurance and flexibility. The class reviews how physical wellness is attained by developing personal responsibility for our own health care, such as caring for minor illnesses and knowing when professional medical attention is needed. Topics also review how health and wellness and the physical benefits of looking good and feeling terrific most often will lead to the psychological benefits of enhanced self-esteem, self-control, determination ,and a standard of social direction.

Social Health

CHE 541: Social Relationships and Health (3 credits)

This class will examine matters of social support, social integration, stress and cumulative disadvantage and they impact human social relationship and health. A case study will be used to examine how social isolation used to torture prisoners has a long term and drastic effective. Topics will covet some key research findings including: social relationships have significant effects on health; social relationships

Master of Science in Community Health Education

affect health through behavioral, psychosocial, and physiological pathways; relationships have costs and benefits for health; relationships shape health outcomes throughout the life course and have a cumulative impact on health over time; and the costs and benefits of social relationships are not distributed equally in the population.

CHE 543: Social Determinants of Health (3 credits)

The class will examine the social determinants of health (SDH) as the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. Topics will review these forces and systems including economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems. Students will write about vital ways to support, guide and strengthen the capacities of countries to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate initiatives to promote health equity.

Emotional Health

CHE 551: Good Mental Health (3 credits)

Students will study mental health and the mental illness that are usually including in that meaning, such as depression and anxiety, eating disorders and addictions, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, among others. Further, students will examine what it means to be in good mental health, and what we can do to foster mental wellbeing, ensuring people are at their best.

CHE 553: Emotional and Mental Health Effect Our Physical Wellbeing (3 credits)

This class explores why mental and emotional health is essential to our physical wellbeing. Topics will cover the health impact from stress disorders, anxiety, depression and other emotional disturbances. Topics' covering stress, anxiety, or emotional distress, and how the body reacts in a way that might tell us that something isn't right, such as, high blood pressure or a stomach ulcer, after a particularly stressful event, such as the death of a loved one. The class will also examine how poor emotional health can weaken the body's immune system, making it more likely to get colds and other infections during emotionally difficult times. Also, when we are feeling stressed, anxious, or upset, we may not take care of our health, reducing exercise, not eating nutritious foods or abusing alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs indicating a sign of poor emotional health.

Intellectual Health

CHE 561: Identification of Intellectual Wellness (3 credits)

This class will examine how the intellectual dimension of wellness encourages creative, stimulating mental activities. And how an intellectually well person effectively uses the resources available to expand one's knowledge, improve one's skills, and create potential for sharing with others. They are also organized and structured in their efforts toward creative intellectual pursuits. Intellectual Wellness is having a curiosity and strong desire to learn. It is valuing many experiences, staying stimulated with new ideas, and sharing ideas. It is the ability to engage in clear thinking and recall, and to think independently, creatively and critically.

CHE 563: Intellectual Disability and Cognitive Disorder (3 credits)

This class will review Intellectual disability (ID), general learning disabilities, and mental retardation

Master of Science in Community Health Education

(MR), as generalized neuro-developmental disorders characterized by significantly impaired intellectual and adaptive functioning with an IQ score under 70 and deficits in two or more adaptive behaviors that affect everyday and general living. The focus of the class will not be entirely on cognition, but include components related to mental functioning and the individuals' functional skills in their environment. The issues of Down syndrome and fragile X syndrome are examples of intellectual disabilities that will be examined.

Spiritual Health

Master of Science in Community Health Education

CHE 571: Impacts of Spiritual Wellness (3 credits)

Students will study how individuals with high levels of spiritual wellness experience increased physical, social, and emotional health. The class will examine factors that play a part in defining spirituality such as, religious faith, beliefs, values, ethics, principles and morals and how some gain spirituality by growing in their personal relationships with others, or through being at peace with nature. Readings will show how the human spirit is the most neglected aspect of our lives and how the spirit as the aspect of ourselves can carry us through a major personal crisis.

CHE 572: The Role of Spirituality in Health and the Search for Meaning (3 credits)

Students will review the writings of Victor Frankl, a psychiatrist, who wrote of his experiences in a Nazi concentration camp: "Man is not destroyed by suffering; he is destroyed by suffering without meaning." Topics will study how in the past few decades, physicians have attempted to balance their care by reclaiming medicine's more spiritual roots, whereby spiritual or compassionate care involves serving the whole person, the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. Students will investigate and write about how while patients struggle with the physical aspects of their disease, they have other pain as well: pain related to mental and spiritual suffering, to an inability to engage the deepest questions of life.

Practicum

CHE 509: Practicum in Community Health Education Practicum (3 credits)

Participants investigate core aspects of community health education within the professional health and wellness environment through close contact with practitioners and real world situations. Students may pursue practicum through a supervised practice, apprenticeship, professional practice, advanced field study or other external exploration under the direction of a qualified mentor and an approved field site sponsor. Students participate in the practicum for a minimum of 50 contact hours. The field placement is expected to afford students appropriate practical hands on experience and in-depth knowledge of a specific area of community health education. Students complete a daily journal and prepare a paper summarizing their findings for the practicum.

Research Preparation

RES 500: Survey of Research Methods (3 credits)

This course inspects the foundational techniques of scholarly research. Topics explore sources of scholarly research literature, proper methods for evaluating research reports, fundamentals of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

RES 502: Understanding Research Journal Articles (3 credits)

Students study effectiveness and problems in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data from studies and investigate the applicability and generalization of findings and the proper manner of presenting the details of their own research studies. Topics investigate the rigor or various research methods, replicability, bias, and validity issues, and the appropriateness of statements of findings and recommendations from research.

RES 504: Introductory Research Statistics (3 credits)

This course covers the basic statistical concepts, theory and methods in statistical research.

Master of Science in Community Health Education

Topics include variables, graphs, frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, probability theory, binomial, normal and Poisson distributions, statistical sampling theory, and statistical decision theory.

RES 506: Advanced Research Statistics (3 credits)

This course covers parametric and nonparametric hypothesis testing. Topics include sampling theory, Chi-square test, least squares regression, correlation theory, non-linear regression, analysis of variance, Student's t-test, and various methods in nonparametric analyses.

RES 508: Qualitative Research (3 credits)

This course provides detailed study of qualitative research methods. Topics survey historical and theoretical foundations of qualitative research, explore major qualitative research strategies, and build an understanding of the art and science of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative information. The course provides background on qualitative research, the politics and ethics of qualitative inquiry, and the major paradigms informing qualitative research.

RES 510: Participatory Action Research (3 credits)

This course provides the foundational principles of participatory action research. Topics survey theoretical foundations of action research, the methodology and applications of PAR in contemporary culture. Students assess the rigor and usefulness of participatory action research.

RES 512: Effective Data Analysis (3 credits)

This course examines modern scientific data analysis including the elements of effectiveness in study design, data gathering, processing of statistics and interpretation of findings.

RES 520: Social Science Research Methods (3 credits)

This course examines essential issues in social science research. Topics include assessment of data gathering techniques using selected case studies from journal articles. Students learn to measure attitudes and performance, use tests in data gathering, contrast and compare uses of statistical and qualitative methods, and evaluate focus group research.

Finishing Activities

EXM 980: Comprehensive Examination-Doctoral Students (2 credits)

This is the traditional comprehensive examination of doctoral students conducted by the graduate committee immediately following completion of the academic coursework and prior to undertaking the dissertation. The examination usually includes both written and oral components and is confined to the programs of studies completed by the student.

RES 985: Thesis Proposal (4 credits)

Participants prepare a formal Thesis research proposal according to publish University policies and guidelines.

Master of Science in Community Health Education

RES 990: Thesis (8 credits)

This course governs the conduct of the Thesis project for the Doctoral level student. The Thesis is a major undertaking that is a demonstration of mastery of a field of study and an original contribution to the field usually 150 or more pages in length. The Thesis project may take any of several forms, depending upon the field of study and the expectations of faculty. This may be quantitative or qualitative research, participatory action research. Doctoral students may re-enroll for this course for noncredit, as needed.

EXM 995: Oral Defense of Dissertation-Doctoral Students (2 credits)

This examination is an oral defense of the doctoral Thesis conducted by the graduate committee immediately following their reading of the Thesis manuscript. The process follows guidelines published by the University.

