

Policy number: 104

Subject/Title: MPH & MS Committee Structures

Effective Date: Fall 2010

Policy Statement:

MPH Student Requirements

The following describes committee structure requirements for MPH students. Requirements vary based on their chosen integrative learning experience (ILE):

- Capstone course: students who choose to complete a capstone course as their ILE option are not required to elect a formal committee. These students will work directly with their faculty advisor to ensure the completion of their degree requirements.
- Independent ILE: students who choose to complete a capstone course as their ILE option are not required to elect a formal committee however, students have the option to work directly with a supervising faculty member different from their faculty advisor if the supervising faculty will be overseeing their independent ILE.
- Thesis: students who choose to complete a thesis as their ILE option are required to form a committee made up of the following:
 - Faculty advisor – the student's faculty advisor will also serve as the thesis chair if a different thesis supervisor is not elected.
 - One additional member – this additional member serves to provide additional expertise in support of the student's research. This member will be chosen by the student and faculty advisor and can come from within or outside of their primary discipline.

MS Student Requirements

The following describes committee structure requirements for MS students. All MS students are required to complete a thesis and are required to form a committee made up of the following:

- Faculty advisor - the student's faculty advisor will also serve as the thesis chair if a different thesis supervisor is not elected.
- One additional member – this additional member serves to provide additional expertise in support of the student's research. This member will be chosen by the student and faculty advisor and can come from within or outside of their primary discipline.

Additional Membership:

Additional members serve to meaningfully contribute to the thesis research. In most cases additional members are not required, unless noted above. Additional members may include the following:

- Thesis Supervisor – A thesis supervisor can be elected when the student's research is being led a committee member other than the student's faculty advisor. Any committee member may serve as the thesis supervisor.
- Certificate representation – students who elected the Maternal & Child Health graduate certificate must include faculty representative on their committee. A list of appropriate faculty can be found on the certificate planner and verified by the certificate coordinator. Students who elect this certificate must include a focus of maternal and child health in their thesis.
- Optional members – these members serve to provide additional expertise in support of the student's thesis topic. Optional members may be internal or external to UTHealth Houston School of Public Health.

Reason for Policy: The proposed committee structure was developed to facilitate faculty mentoring of students based on major, certificate, degree program and integrative learning experience option.

Definitions:

- Faculty advisor – the student’s faculty advisor is responsible for ensuring the student is completing their academic requirements and for providing input on the student’s fall and spring evaluations. (See [Policy 200 Student Evaluation](#) for more information) All students are assigned a faculty advisor at admission. Students may request to change their faculty advisor to better align with their academic and research interests by completing a [Change of Advisor Request](#) form.
- “UTHealth Houston School of Public Health Faculty” must be a currently appointed assistant, associate or full professor; with a primary or secondary appointment at the school.
- Non-UTHealth Houston School of Public Health Faculty – includes an elected member, either an optional member or thesis supervisor, who does not fall within the definition of a ‘UTHealth Houston School of Public Health Faculty’. These members must have a terminal degree and a copy of their CV is required when the student submit their committee elections.
- A full list of UTHealth Houston School of Public Health Faculty can be found on the [faculty directory](#) webpage.

Scope and Audience: All UTHealth Houston School of Public Health MPH and MS students.

Responsibilities and Procedures: Outlined above

Related Policies, Forms and Information:

- Additional information and forms about the ILE can be found on the [mySPH Integrative Learning Experience](#) webpage.
- Additional information and forms about the thesis process can be found on the [mySPH Student Research](#) webpage, including the [Master’s Thesis Committee Membership Form](#).

History:

- Approved by Academic Council: October 19, 2010
- Endorsed by Executive Council: October 21, 2010
- Updated for clarity by Academic Council: October 21, 2016

Responsible Office/Contact Information:

Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services
Office Phone: 713-500-9032
E-mail: SPHStudentServices@uth.tmc.edu