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**Policy Number:** 300

**Subject/Title:** Doctoral Degree Breadth and Minor Requirements

**Effective Date:** Spring 2011

**Policy Statement:**

Each doctoral student requires one (1) major area of study and two (2) additional areas of study. The additional areas can be one (1) minor area of study, and one (1) breadth area of study OR two (2) minor areas of study. The additional areas serve two major purposes in a student's curriculum:

- further prepare the student to complete a dissertation and to be prepared for independent inquiry;
- enable the student to gain competencies in the core interdisciplinary fields of public health (biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental sciences, behavioral sciences and management and policy sciences).

The minor and the breadth are separate from the major, and all students must have a variety of courses from outside of their major discipline.

Students who have elected a graduate certificate may have this certificate, and required coursework, count as a breadth. Students who have elected a certificate requiring committee representation must include a UTHealth Houston SPH faculty member representing the certificate on their Dissertation Committee if not already included.

Students completing a major in the Department of Management, Policy and Community Health (MPACH) may choose a minor from one of the different internal tracks. However, at least one of the areas (either the second minor or breadth) must be from one of the other four public health disciplines: Biostatistics, Behavioral Sciences, Environmental Sciences, or Epidemiology.

**Update – Fall 2018:**

DrPH students who matriculated Fall 2028 or later are required to complete one (1) minor only as a breadth area and its coursework is built into the curriculum.

**Update – Fall 2025:**

Doctoral students who matriculated Fall 2025 or later are required to complete one (1) minor area of study. Students should review the specific requirements of their degree program, as individual programs may have additional requirements.

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**Reason for Policy:** Define breadth and minor requirements for doctoral students.

**Definitions:**

- Minor: A minor is three (3) or more courses of at least 9 semester credit hours from one of the public health core disciplines defined by the department offering the minor.
- Breadth: A breadth is a customized three (3) course sequence of at least 9 semester credit hours defined by the student in collaboration with their committee or advisor. It typically focuses on interdisciplinary topics related to the student's research interests, dissertation methods, or future goals. The purpose of a breadth is to expand the coverage of public health disciplines, therefore, at least one (1) of the courses must be outside the student's

major and minor disciplines. Between the major, minor and breadth, students should have coursework beyond at least three (3) public health core disciplines.

**Scope and Audience:** All UTHealth Houston School of Public Health doctoral students.

**Responsibilities and Procedures:** Students should discuss minor/breadth options with their faculty advisors.

**Related Policies, Forms and Information:** Students should discuss minors and breadth/topic areas with their faculty advisors.

- Requirements for all degree programs (including major and minor areas of study) can be found in the [UTHealth Houston Academic Catalog](#).
- Additional information for minor and breadths (including historical requirements) can be found on the [mySPH Minors and Breadths](#) webpage.

**History:**

- Approved by Academic Council: October 19, 2010
- Endorsed by Executive Council: October 21, 2010
- Edited by Academic Council to include link to examples of Minor and Breadth Areas: October 13, 2014
- Updated by Academic Council to eliminate the breadth/second minor requirement, providing academic departments with the flexibility to tailor degree plans to better align with industry needs: August 19, 2024
- Endorsed by Executive Council: August 22, 2024

**Responsible Office/Contact Information:**

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