PH.D. IN HEALTH SCIENCES

Overview
This program is currently pending final approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. The program is anticipated to begin Fall of 2020.

The Doctor of Philosophy in Health Sciences degree program is designed to prepare allied health professionals to assume major leadership, research and educational positions within their professions, as well as to provide career advancement opportunities. The PhD in Health Sciences will be a broad-based, interdisciplinary/interprofessional degree that will allow graduates to place their individual health field in the context of the allied health disciplines, the health care delivery system as a whole, and the larger issues of health and wellness across the continuum of the health care system. Graduates will be well prepared to assume essential roles as faculty and researchers at colleges and universities, as well as assuming leadership roles in clinical agencies, governmental and health care organizations, and industry.

The Doctor of Philosophy in Health Sciences will offer specialization tracks in Emergency Medical Sciences, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies and Respiratory Care, as well as a generalist concentration in Health Sciences. The program of study for the Doctor of Philosophy degree includes formal courses and electives in research design, statistical methods, health systems management, communications (publications and grant writing), education, leadership, and advanced course work in a health science professional track.

Admission Requirements
General graduate admissions standards and program-specific admissions standards are listed below. Applicants must have completed a bachelor's or graduate degree (master's or professional doctorate) in a relevant allied health discipline such as emergency health sciences, medical laboratory sciences, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant studies, respiratory care, or speech language pathology. Students entering with a bachelor's degree must take an additional 30 semester hours of graduate level course work, as approved by the individual student's major advisor and the program director as a part of the student's program plan. These hours may be taken from existing graduate programs offered by UT Health San Antonio as part of one of the existing allied health professional degree programs, or graduate courses offered by the School of Nursing, School of Medicine or School of Biomedical Sciences.

Students entering the program with a master's degree in an allied health related discipline from a regionally accredited college or university will receive credit for up to 30 semester hours of their master’s degree professional program. Acceptance of transfer credits from another graduate program must be approved by the Registrar and the student’s major advisor and program director.

With permission from their major advisor and the program director, students entering the program with a professional doctorate (e.g. audiology doctorate [AuD], doctor of physical therapy [DPT], or occupational therapy doctorate [OTD]), may apply credit from their professional doctoral degree towards the 30-credit hour requirement. With permission, these students may also apply up to 9 SCH of additional doctoral level professional coursework towards the PhD specialization area requirements. A limited number of students may be allowed to enroll concurrently in School of Health Professions professional doctoral programs (e.g. OTD/PhD, DPT/PhD).

Applicants must provide official transcripts from each college or university attended and documentation of appropriate certification and/or licensure (as applicable) in their health profession by a major U.S. certification/licensing agency.

Courses taken outside the United States may be considered for transfer with the approval of the program director, but all such courses must be evaluated by the Education Credentials Evaluators (ECE) and be judged equivalent by U.S. standards.

Students may attend full-time (≥ 9 SCH per semester) or part-time (< 9 SCH per semester) but all students are expected to attend year-round, including summer sessions. Most students will complete at least two courses per session for the fall, spring, and summer sessions for a total (on average) of 18 SCH per year. Students may request a reduced academic load which must be approved by their major adviser and program director.

Applicants must:
1. Possess a minimum overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
2. Submit official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended.
3. Submit scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). No minimum GRE score is prescribed, however combined verbal and quantitative scores of 297 or above are considered to be competitive.
4. Complete any prerequisite courses (where required) with a grade of 3.0 or better. School of Health Professions professional programs require specific undergraduate prerequisites and these courses must be completed by the time the student begins the professional program. Students entering with a master’s degree or higher in an allied health discipline will not be required to complete additional prerequisite courses.
5. Documentation of certification and/or license in an allied health or allied health related discipline (as applicable).
6. Three letters of recommendation from persons who are knowledgeable about the quality of the applicant's scholarly activities and/or work experiences.
7. Acceptable healthcare experience in the professional area of study is required for admission. Prior research experience, especially in a health sciences environment, will also be considered and has the benefit of increasing the candidate's understanding of the biomedical research process.
8. Transcripts from institutions outside the United States must be submitted in the original language and must be accompanied by an acceptable evaluation agency translation for each course (NACES®, WES or ECE).
9. International applicants only: Submit Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores; minimum scores 560 (paper) or 68 (Internet) or IELTS advanced version Band score of ≥ 7.0
10. Specific admission requirements may be waived by the Graduate Faculty Council. Requests for waivers will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Degree Requirements
Students must complete 98 semester credit hours (SCH) in order to graduate from the program. Students holding a master’s degree (or higher) in an allied health related discipline will be able to transfer up to
Sample Plan of Study

The PhD program in Health Sciences consists of four major core areas: Education (12 SCH), Research & Statistics (16 SCH), Leadership (10 SCH), and the Professional Track (9 SCH). The nine (9) hours of Professional Track credit provides advanced cognate courses in specific allied health disciplines. Specialization areas may include emergency health sciences, medical laboratory science, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, respiratory care, speech-language pathology, and health sciences. The specialization in health sciences may include additional course work in outcomes research, health sciences education, health systems management, and clinical services.

In addition to the coursework described above, students must complete 12 SCH of elective course work which may include the advanced biomedical sciences, clinical sciences, education, management and supervision, leadership principles, measurement and statistics, and additional research courses that are available at UT Health San Antonio. Elective courses will require approval by the student’s major advisor and the program director and will be individualized based on the student’s interests and career goals. Students may request completion of elective course work at other regionally accredited colleges and universities offering appropriate doctoral level graduate course work. Student learning outcomes for the PhD in Health Sciences have been developed for each major core area and are mapped to individual courses.

Each student will have an individualized Program Plan which will include the prescribed core courses in education, research, statistics, leadership, and the professional tract, as well as a projected timeline for completion. Electives will be included in the student’s program plan, based on the student’s interests and career goals. Each student’s individualized Program Plan (i.e. Plan of Study) must be approved by the program’s Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS).

Students holding a master’s degree (or higher) in an allied health related discipline will be able to transfer up to 30 SCH into the PhD program. For students holding an appropriate master’s degree, the minimum number of additional semester hours required for the PhD degree in Health Sciences will be 68 semester credit hours (not including the master’s degree requirement of 30 SCH). Students entering the program with only a bachelor’s degree will be required to complete a master’s degree in an allied health specialty or complete 30 SCH of acceptable graduate credit for a total of 98 SCH. Students holding a professional doctorate (e.g. DPT, OTD) may request that up to 21 SCH of additional course work completed in their professional doctoral program be transferred in, and applied toward elective and/or professional track PhD program requirements.

Objective/Program Outcomes

The educational objectives of the program are designed to prepare outstanding allied health professionals to assume major educational, leadership, and research positions within their professions, as well as to provide career advancement opportunities. The program will prepare individuals for careers as faculty in colleges and universities, as educators in multiple settings, as outcome and health services researchers and as leaders within allied health, and more broadly, within health care and higher education. The program is unique in Texas, providing an interdisciplinary/interprofessional health science core and the opportunity to take additional, discipline specific course work and engage in research relevant to allied health. The outcome of the program will be a graduate who can address the larger issues of health and wellness across the health care continuum.

Each course is evaluated by students anonymously using a standardized course and instructor evaluation system (IDEA). The IDEA system (https://www.ideaedu.org) provides each faculty, program director and department chair with a personalized on-line dashboard and a wealth of resources to improve instruction. Summary data is reviewed each semester by personnel in the School of Health Professions Dean’s office and distributed for review to each of the school’s departments. Course evaluations are reviewed by each faculty member and the program director. Suggestions for change and additions are incorporated as appropriate.

Program Outcomes Assessment includes administration and review of annual Graduate Exit Surveys, Graduate Six-Month Follow-Up Surveys, graduate job placement, and monitoring graduate career success in achieving leadership positions.

Program Policies

All students must abide by the School of Health Professions program policies and procedures (http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/schoolofhealthprofessions/policiesandregulations) as well as all general academic policies (http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/generalacademicpolicies) and institutional policies (http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/institutionalpolicies) listed in this catalog.

Background Checks and Drug Screening

Background checks are required prior to matriculation. Any events that occur after the initial background check that might affect the student’s status in the program must be reported to the department immediately. Students are required to comply with additional requests for background checks at any time during their course of study.

Students are responsible for the cost and fees of any/all required background checks and drug screenings.