

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions

UTSPHSA is committed to ensuring the admissions process is fair and unbiased. To achieve this, a holistic review process is used to evaluate each program applicant individually. All applicants are expected to submit an online application by the program's reported deadlines through the program's designated application service. During the review, applicants may be evaluated based on a number of criteria, including overall grade point average (GPA), pending coursework, and recommendations from professional, academic, or community sources highlighting the applicant's leadership skills, community service, and potential for success. However, individual admission items, information, or a combination of these do not guarantee an invitation to interview, admission, or selection into UTSPHSA programs.

It is important to note that any information received by university officials regarding individual applicants outside of the formal admissions process or system will not be taken into consideration during the admissions review or selection process. Additionally, if a faculty member has a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest, they will recuse themselves from the entire admissions review cycle.

Non-Degree Seeking Admissions

Individuals interested in enrolling in courses offered by the school may be admitted and enrolled as non-degree-seeking students. Individuals interested in auditing a course should see our Course Audit Policy. Non-degree seeking students must have an academic background similar to those ordinarily admitted to the school as full-time students. Course prerequisites and minimum grade point averages (GPA) are generally consistent with the published admissions criteria. The Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs may grant permission to an individual to enroll as a non-degree seeking student, but only if space is available. Currently, enrolled students have priority for course enrollment.

Non-degree-seeking students are not eligible to qualify for financial aid. However, payment installments may be arranged through the Office of the Bursar for the amount of tuition and fees owed.

Students who want to enroll as non-degree-seeking students must:

- Express their desire to enroll as a non-degree-seeking student in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs.
- Receive approval from the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs.
- Register as a non-degree-seeking student for a maximum of four semesters. Exceptions to this rule will be decided by the school.
- Students who seek future enrollment in a Certificate or Degree Program may enroll for a maximum of 9 semester credit hours as a non-degree-seeking student.

Non-degree-seeking students who seek future enrollment in a school's program may transfer course hours taken as a non-degree-seeking student with the approval of UTSPHSA and the Office of the University

Registrar. However, they must do so within five years of completing the non-degree coursework. It is the responsibility of the student to determine if the course is transferable to their school. Non-degree-seeking students must go through the appropriate approval process and communicate directly with the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs. Non-degree-seeking students do not have to register for classes consecutively each semester but may skip a semester without penalty.

Course grading policies and standards for non-degree-seeking students are the same as those for regular students. All grades received as a non-degree-seeking student will be included on the student's transcript and used for computing the cumulative grade point average (GPA). A if the student is subsequently admitted to a certificate or degree program.

Course Audit Policy

To audit a course, all auditors must complete and submit an Audit Course Form to the Office of the University Registrar with the necessary approvals. If you are a student at UT Health San Antonio, you may audit courses by paying an auditing charge of \$25 per course, with approval from the instructor and department chair of the department offering the course. If you are not officially enrolled in UT Health San Antonio courses, the auditing charge is \$25, and if you are enrolled, it is \$5. The auditing charge is non-refundable. Courses taken for audit do not apply toward degree requirements. Individuals interested in enrolling in courses offered by the school as non-degree-seeking students should see our policy on **Non-Degree Seeking Admissions**.

Attendance Policy

Attendance and active participation are crucial for students to learn effectively and contribute to overall classroom learning. Therefore, each student is expected to attend class regularly and on time. The University has a policy to grant an excused absence to a student for the observance of a religious holiday, provided that the student has followed the correct procedure for requesting an excused absence. (See Student Absences (<http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/generalacademicpolicies/studentabsences/>)). The appropriate course instructor(s) must approve absences for religious holidays in advance of the actual holiday. Similarly, students who need to take a military leave of absence must seek formal approval from the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs per the University policy.

It is important to note that persistent tardiness and absences may impact students' grades for class participation. Whether the absence is excused or not, the attendance grade (if set by the course instructor) will suffer due to repeated absences (except for those related to religious holidays or military service) and tardiness. If a student's absences exceed 20 percent of the course, they may receive a failing grade for the entire class.

Students who fail to comply with all assignments scheduled during the time of any absence will be subject to the grading policy of UTSPHSA.

Criminal Background Check Policy

Applicants must submit to and favorably complete a designated criminal background check as a requirement of admission. Please note that an offer of admission is not official or final until the criminal background check(s) is received and deemed favorable. Admission may be denied or rescinded due to an unfavorable background check.

Additionally, agencies where students pursue their Applied Practice Experience may require that students placed in their agencies pass an additional criminal background check before being allowed to work in their facilities. Students will bear the responsibility and costs associated with any background check.

Academic Advisement Policy

Students pursuing the M.P.H. should seek advisement from the M.P.H. director or faculty advisor so that they may be assisted in creating a plan for degree completion, considering the impact of previous coursework, current semester credit hours attempted, and total allowable semester credit hours for the attainment of the degree. If receiving financial aid, students should seek advisement from the Office of Financial Aid and, where necessary, the Office of Veteran Services, which have separate limits for funded credit hours.

Transfer of Credit Policy

Students may transfer up to 9 semester hours from CEPH-accredited programs. Transfer credits from other regionally accredited institutions may also be accepted with the approval of UTSPHSA. However, they must do so within five years of completing such coursework or prior to enrolling if the transfer course is a prerequisite. Credit for coursework from regionally accredited institutions may be transferred, provided that the student submits a Course Waiver/Substitution Request Form available in the Office of the University Registrar. Students must follow this procedure for UT Health San Antonio courses and those completed elsewhere. The transfer of credit is subject to approval by the M.P.H. director.

Grading Policy

Based on their level of performance, students are assigned one of four grades: A (above average graduate work), B (average graduate work), C (below average graduate work), and F (failing graduate work). F grades are not acceptable for graduate credit.

Additionally, certain courses may allow students to register on a pass/fail basis, in which case the grade is either Pass (P) or Fail (F); in such cases, no letter grade is assigned.

Other symbols used to report the standing of students in their classes are P=Pass; NP=No Pass; W=Withdraw; I=Incomplete; IP=In Progress (for certain courses); and AU=an Audited Course. A grade of U and NP are equivalent to a grade of F.

Grade Point Average

The grade point average is calculated using all grades (A through F). The following scale of points per semester credit hour is used to calculate the grade point average:

A = 4 points (90-100)

B = 3 points (80-89)

C = 2 points (70-79)

F, U, NP = 0 points (69 or below)

Incomplete Grade Policy

When a student is unable to complete all of the course requirements by the end of the course due to non-academic reasons like illness, family

emergencies or similar situations, a grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be assigned. This is not a permanent grade, and the student must complete all the incomplete work within one year unless a leave of absence has been granted. Once all the work is completed, the instructor will submit the course grade to the Office of the University Registrar using a Change of Grade Form. If the incomplete work is not completed within the designated time or when the student submits a Graduation Application (<https://registrarhelp.uthscsa.edu/m/83146/l/991263-applying-for-graduation/>), the grade of "I" will be changed to an "F" grade.

It is important to note that if a course with an "I" grade is a prerequisite for another course, the "I" must be removed before the student can enroll in the next sequential course.

Progression Policy

To continue in the programs of UTSPHSA, a student must:

- absolve any contingencies related to admission to the program within the period stated in the letter of admission or within the first semester if not stated;
- maintain satisfactory progress (B average in first nine hours); and
- maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of B (3.0) for all courses while enrolled in UTSPHSA degree programs. (See Scholastic Probation Policy)

Scholastic Probation Policy

The student must make satisfactory progress toward the degree during their entire enrollment. Any student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and informed that their ability to continue in the UTSPHSA degree program may become delayed, interrupted, or conditional. Each semester, the Academic Council will assess the academic progress of students placed on academic probation. If a student does not fulfill the requirements to continue in the program, the Academic Council may terminate enrollment at any time.

Requests for Accommodations and Disabilities Procedures

In accordance with the Handbook of Operating Policies 4.2.3 (<https://uthealthsa.sharepoint.com/RAC/Documents/HOP/Chapter04/4.2.3.pdf>), Request for Accommodation Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), any student requesting accommodation must submit the appropriate request for accommodation under ADA and the ADAAA (Form ADA-100) to the Office of the Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs of UTSPHSA and a copy to the ADA Compliance Office.

The ADA Compliance Office will:

- determine if additional medical information is needed and furnish the individual with any forms/questionnaires necessary for the health care provider to complete.
- evaluate information to determine eligibility within the ADA and the ADAAA guidelines.
- coordinate with the necessary institutional staff and the individual to identify the essential functions of the job or the program of study and determine whether there is an effective, reasonable accommodation that will enable the

employee, student, fellow, post-doc, or resident to perform those essential functions (interactive process).

- follow-up on the individual's status/progress annually or earlier as needed.

Reasonable accommodations under the ADA and ADAAA are an ongoing process. At any point, the individual receiving the reasonable accommodation may request a reevaluation of their request from the ADA Compliance Office. Requests or changes to the original requests will be handled by implementing the interactive process.

Full-Time/Part-Time Status Policy

Full-time graduate students enroll in a minimum of nine (9) semester credit hours (SCH) in the fall and spring or a minimum of six (6) SCH in the summer. Part-time graduate students enroll in fewer than nine SCHs in the fall and spring or fewer than six SCHs in the summer. If receiving financial aid, students should seek advisement from the Office of Financial Aid and, where necessary, the Office of Veteran Services, which have separate hour limits for funded hours.

Repeating a Course Policy

A student cannot retake a course more than twice for credit. There may be financial implications for students who repeat courses, including no longer eligible to receive federal aid for the cost of the repeated course. Students must pay the per-credit tuition and fees for the retake course. The last grade of a repeated course will count towards the cumulative overall point average (GPA) with grades of W and I grades excluded.

Credit Hours Definition and Excess Credit Hour Policy

The standard definition of a semester credit hour is one hour of class time per week in the semester. Therefore, as a general rule, classes held three hours a week for one semester are three semester-hour courses.

To avoid being charged non-resident tuition, resident students must know the number of credit hours required for their degree and avoid taking more than the maximum hours above the program requirement.

Students, including those charged non-resident tuition for exceeding the maximum hours above the program requirement, can appeal decisions that place them under penalty of non-Texas resident tuition rates after reviewing their coursework. To file such an appeal, students must write to the Registrar; a paper letter or email is sufficient.

Once the written appeal has been received, the Registrar or designee will review each course the student has taken in college from all previous institutions attended and those taken at the health science center. This will be the only opportunity for reconsideration of credit counted towards excess hours. Any documentation related to the appeal, including the original request, will be scanned into the student's electronic record. The decision of the Registrar or designee is final.

Examination Policy

Examinations must be taken on the date and time scheduled by the instructor. Should extenuating circumstances prevent the student from taking the examination as prescribed by the instructor, the course instructor must grant prior approval to postpone the examination. If a student misses an examination without prior approval by the instructor, a grade of F will be recorded for the examination.

Readmission Policy

Those enrolled previously in graduate public health courses at UTSPHSA must complete an Application for Readmission. Transcripts from any colleges or universities attended since the previous enrollment in UTSPHSA must be submitted. Re-applicants may be requested to provide recent professional references or a written statement related to their reason for seeking readmission.

Those not registered for two consecutive terms, including summers, must apply for readmission. Those who have received and were previously granted official permission for leave of absence are excluded from the readmission process unless they do not return from a leave of absence within the three consecutive term limits. In such cases, students will be withdrawn from UT SPHSA and must apply for readmission.

Readmission applicants are subject to all requirements, procedures, and acceptance criteria outlined in this catalog.

Academic Misconduct Review Process

Academic misconduct can take on various forms, such as plagiarism, self-plagiarism, cheating, collusion, fabrication, unauthorized assistance, or the use of materials without permission, including during examinations. Complaints for academic misconduct must be submitted in writing, alongside any supporting evidence, to the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs within ten (10) days of the alleged misconduct or the day the complainant learned of the alleged misconduct. The complainant must retain original evidence about the alleged misconduct. The Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs will evaluate the report and meet with the complainant to decide whether additional action is warranted. If necessary, the student named in the complaint may be interviewed by the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs, allowing the student to respond and review the available information.

Others may be interviewed by the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs, as needed. All personnel and students are required to cooperate with the investigation. Following the investigation, the Academic Council will receive a written report from the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs, including the details of events, the investigative process, and the investigation results. The investigation will take no more than fifteen (15) business days.

Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Actions

The report from the Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs will be submitted to the Academic Council, which has fifteen (15) business days to consider and recommend disciplinary actions or sanctions to the Dean. Depending on the severity and frequency of a substantiated violation of the Student Conduct Policy, the Academic Council has the authority to impose actions or sanctions.

Any sanctions or disciplinary action that the Academic Council recommends will be carried out in accordance with the applicable UTSPHSA and UT Health San Antonio policies. Any recommended disciplinary actions/sanctions are required to be completed within the strict timeline as outlined in the decision letter from the Academic Council. The decision of the Academic Council is final, pending further appeal to the Dean as outlined in the Student Academic Grievance Policy.

For students in dual degree programs, the policies and procedures of their respective professional schools (such as those in pharmacy,

nursing, medicine, dentistry, and health professions) or their professional licensing boards may require further conduct reviews.

Professional Conduct Policy

UTSPHSA aims to provide the highest quality education, research, and service. Participation in service activities is an important attribute of the public health professional. A hallmark of outstanding students and alumni is the desire and ability to make meaningful service contributions. Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate professional characteristics and behaviors in all activities related to their education. Each student is responsible for notice of and compliance with the provisions of the Regents' Rules and Regulations, Rule 50101 (<https://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/rules/50101-student-conduct-and-discipline/>), and the standards for conduct (https://wp.uthscsa.edu/compliance/wp-content/uploads/sites/174/2021/06/HOP_14.1.1.pdf) of the Health Science Center.

A breach of professional conduct outlined in this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal from the school. The process for corrective action is outlined in the standards for conduct (https://wp.uthscsa.edu/compliance/wp-content/uploads/sites/174/2021/06/HOP_14.1.1.pdf) of the Health Science Center. The Dean may find that the disciplinary process falls under a program's expectation of professionalism and, thus, may determine that the disciplinary process may be adjudicated outside of the process described in the standards for conduct.

Residence Required for Graduation

Students must spend a minimum of two full semesters, or the equivalent, as a full-time student in residence at UTSPHSA to be eligible for the degree and to meet the "in residence" requirement.

Time Limits and Extensions Policy

Each program has a written policy on time-to-degree (Plan of Study) to guide the student. Full-time and part-time students in the M.P.H. program are expected to complete their degree program within five (5) years. Students can request a one-year extension in case of extenuating circumstances. Students who do not graduate within the six-year limit will be dismissed from the program and need to request readmission to complete the degree program in effect at the time of readmission and may be required to repeat courses previously taken. Generally, taking a leave of absence (LoA) does not extend the time-to-degree.

Required Enrollment Policy

Students have two options for the Integrative Learning Experience: (1) a capstone, and (2) a discovery-based paper or project. Students who opt to complete a discovery-based paper or project must enroll during the semester in which the research proposal is submitted and continuously through the semester in which all requirements for graduation are completed, including the semester in which students graduate. Absences from the degree program may not exceed three (3) consecutive semesters unless a formal leave of absence is granted.

English Proficiency Requirement

Prospective students who are not U.S. citizens and do not have permanent resident status are subject to the same requirements, procedures, and acceptance considerations that apply to first-time

applicants. Additionally, students must meet specified requirements by the Office of International Services (OIS).

Only degree-seeking applicants are eligible to apply for a student visa status.

Applicants from countries where English is not the official language or countries exempted from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the Duolingo English Test requirements must submit scores on the TOEFL, IELTS, or the Duolingo English Test. The minimum required scores are listed below:

TOEFL 84

IELTS 7.0

Duolingo 115

Scores on TOEFL, IELTS, and Duolingo tests taken more than two years before the date of application are unacceptable.

Countries exempted from the TOEFL, IELTS, and Duolingo requirements:

Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada (except Quebec), Cayman Islands, Dominica, Eswatini, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guam, Guyana, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad-Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Virgin Islands, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Transcripts from all previous educational experiences (from secondary schools through any post-secondary educational institutions) published in a language other than English must be accompanied by an attachment that translates the wording on each document verbatim into English. Transcripts must be evaluated by an approved current NACES member or AACRAO.

Immunizations Policy

Immunizations are required of all students. The Board of Regents may require immunizations against additional diseases for some students. The Board of Regents may require further immunizations in times of emergency or epidemic. For a list of required immunizations, reference the Immunizations section of this catalog (<http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/institutionalpolices/immunizations/>).

Student Employment Policy

Full-time master's students may elect to seek employment opportunities with the approval of the faculty advisor. If employment is within UT Health San Antonio, the appointment should not exceed 0.5 FTE. Students in the university work-study program should not perform duties directly related to their research projects.

There may be circumstances under which part-time graduate students desire gainful employment within UT Health San Antonio (<http://www.uthscsa.edu/>) (or full-time employees choose to pursue part-time graduate studies). Students and employees should consult with the department chair and HR upon review of the student employee policy

(HOP 4.3.5.) (<https://uthealthsa.sharepoint.com/RAC/Documents/HOP/Chapter04/4.3.5.pdf>).

Conflict management plans should be developed when a full-time employee is enrolled in the same program as their supervisor, and the supervisor has responsibilities in which the full-time employee is enrolled.

Records and Registration

The Office of the University Registrar will announce and provide the registration process to all students, department chairs, departmental chairs, and their assistants before the start of each semester. For individual registration concerns, students should confer with the department chair.

A student must register each semester that they are enrolled in a course. This includes courses in Research, Thesis, and Dissertation. No student can receive credit for a course for which they have not registered.

Consequences for Non-Payment of Tuition and Fees

In graduate programs where students are responsible for paying their own tuition and fees, payment must be made by the census date of each semester (which is always the 12th class day). Each semester has one official start date for new students; thus, one census date is listed on the school's official Academic Calendar. Students should refer to the Academic Calendar to determine their census date based on their start date.

Failure to pay tuition will result in the following:

- Discontinued enrollment in the degree programs of UTSPHSA.
- Termination from the program with loss of pay, benefits, and privileges.
- Necessity to re-apply for admission for the following semester.
- Barred from readmission for the current semester.
- Initiation of loan repayments (if applicable).
- Potential loss of visa status and possible deportation for international students.
- Withholding of a student's official transcript.
- Withholding of a diploma to which a student would otherwise be entitled.

Adding and Dropping Courses Policy

Students may add courses during official add days designated by the Office of the University Registrar (<http://students.uthscsa.edu/registrar/>) each semester. Students are not permitted to add classes to their schedules after the census date, typically the 12th class day of the spring and fall semesters, without approval from the Dean and the Vice President of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs.

A student not on academic probation may drop a course at any time before final grades are assigned, provided the student is passing the course at the time of the request and has obtained the signed approval of the course director and department chair.

The Registrar will record the symbol **W** for courses dropped after the census date. A student on academic probation will not be allowed to drop a course.

In case of illness and with the consent of the Dean, a student may drop a course without penalty at any time before the beginning of final examinations.

Students appointed in Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) and Teaching Assistant (TA) positions in UTSPHSA should consult their mentor and academic program coordinator before dropping below full-time status. Dropping below full-time status may result in the scholarship being revoked and being required to pay the full tuition charge for that semester.

Registration for Final Term

It is a requirement that a student must be registered for the semester in which they graduate.

In Absentia (INTD 1000)

Students must be registered for the graduation semester, and all fees and tuition apply. In Absentia status is a type of registration that allows students to maintain student status at the university while completing research elsewhere. In Absentia may also allow students who have completed all their graduation requirements to enroll for degree conferral. Registration In Absentia is designated as zero credit hours, and the student is assessed a \$25 fee. Registration In Absentia is most commonly applied for August or February degree conferral. Students using the In Absentia designation must successfully defend their thesis or manuscript on or before the last day of the fall or spring term as outlined in August or February In Absentia degree conferral timelines. All forms required by UTSPHSA and the final approved thesis must be electronically submitted by the August or February In Absentia degree conferral timelines, whichever is relevant to the student's last semester.

The student who expects to defend and enroll In Absentia should submit an Add/Drop Enrollment form, which can be obtained from the student's Academic Coordinator for registration in INTD 1000 as the registration placeholder, which must be signed by the department chair, supervising professor, and Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs. This must be accomplished **before the first day of classes of the new semester**; otherwise, the student will be required to enroll as a full-time student.

Student Grade Appeal Procedures

A student grade appeal is a complaint against a decision or action made by the course instructor that impacts a student's grade on an individual assignment, assessment, or examination. A student may only appeal individual assignments, assessments, and examinations through this process. Students must use the Student Academic Grievance Procedures for complaints about a final course grade. Confidentiality is essential for all academic review/grievance procedures. Students may seek counsel or advice concerning the academic review process from the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs.

Step 1. A written petition must be submitted by the student to the course instructor. This petition should contain (a) the name of the student; (b) the course; (c) the grade which is being challenged; (d) the dates the student received grade; (e) name of faculty member/s involved; (f) dates student met with the faculty; (g) student's reason for grieving the grade and a brief statement of the student's concerns; and (h) evidence of how the grade was awarded arbitrarily, capriciously, or prejudicially. The student should retain a copy of the documents submitted for their records. Within seven business days (unless special circumstances, such

as progression in the program, require more rapid action), the faculty will respond to the student in writing with a decision. For the purpose of this grade appeals process, business days are established by the University. If the course instructor does not resolve the student's concern, the grievance moves to Step 2.

Step 2. A written petition must be submitted by the student to the course instructor's department chair. This petition should contain (a) the name of the student; (b) the course; (c) the grade which is being challenged; (d) the dates the student received grade; (e) name of faculty member/s involved; (f) dates student met with the faculty; (g) student's reason for grieving the grade and a brief statement of the student's concerns; and (h) evidence of how the grade was awarded arbitrarily, capriciously, or prejudicially. The student should retain a copy of the documents submitted for their records. Within seven business days (unless there are special circumstances, such as progression in the program, which require more rapid action), the department chair will respond to the student in writing with a decision. For the purpose of this grade appeals process, business days are established by the University. The decision of the department chair is final.

Student Academic Grievance Procedures

An academic grievance is a complaint against a decision or action made by the school that impacts a student's academic record. A student may only grieve the final grade for the course. Students must use the Student Grade Appeal Procedures for complaints related to individual assignments, assessments, and examinations. Confidentiality is essential for all academic review/grievance procedures. Students may seek counsel or advice concerning the academic review process from the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs. The term is further defined at <http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/generalacademicpolicies/grievances/>.

The University of Texas System and the policies of the University require a formal grievance procedure to allow students to report any perceived act, omission, or issue of an academic nature that may adversely affect the student. The student grievance may include grade disputes or other academically related issues. It is preferred that efforts be made by the student and the faculty member involved to resolve the issue before proceeding through the grievance process. If the issue cannot be resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student is encouraged to submit their grievance through the grievance process. The sequence of procedures involved in the grievance process is outlined below.

Grievance Process

1. The student has up to 10 business days from the date they were issued the grade or evaluation to file a formal complaint.
2. A formal complaint is filed by submitting the Student Complaint Form to the relevant department chair for the Program with a copy delivered to the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs.
3. An ad hoc grievance committee of the department chair, the program director, a student representative, and the Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs will have up to 30 business days to investigate the grievance.
4. The department chair will chair the ad hoc grievance committee. If the program director also serves as the department chair, the program director will appoint a senior graduate faculty member of the program to serve on the ad hoc grievance committee.

5. If the formal academic grievance is filed against the department chair or the program director, then the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs will serve as the chair of the ad hoc grievance committee and will identify a senior faculty member as the third member to serve on the ad hoc grievance committee.

6. If the Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs is named in the complaint, then the Dean (or their designee) will represent UTSPHSA on the ad hoc grievance committee.

7. Documentation from the student and faculty will be collected, and the department chair will schedule face-to-face meetings.

8. A written and signed summary of the decision rendered will be provided to the student by the department chair. The department chair will send a copy of the signed summary to the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs.

9. If the student is unsatisfied with the final decision reached by the department chair, program director, and Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs, the student should follow the Appeal Process.

10. All documents, including but not limited to emails, memos, letters, and written summaries, will be maintained by UTSPHSA.

Appeal Process

The student may provide an appeal within ten business days of receiving the written summary of the grievance process.

An appeal is filed by submitting to the Dean a letter signed by the student outlining the arguments for the appeal, the Student Complaint Form, and the written summary of the grievance process.

The Dean will have up to 30 business days to decide after the formal grievance process. The Dean's judgment will be considered final and provided to the student in writing.

Should a student exhaust the grievance process outlined by UTSPHSA, a complaint may be filed with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/>). More information about the types of complaints investigated and the procedures for investigations can be accessed on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/>) website. The complaint form is also available on the website.

Probation and Dismissal Policy and Procedure

The student must make satisfactory progress toward the degree during their enrollment. Any student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and informed that their ability to continue in a UTSPHSA degree program may become delayed, interrupted, or conditional. Each semester, the Academic Council will assess the academic progress of students placed on academic probation. If a student does not fulfill the requirements to continue in the program, enrollment may be terminated at any time by the Academic Council.

The Academic Council, with the consent of the Dean, may terminate enrollment for any graduate student who lacks satisfactory progress. Any graduate student who receives two unsatisfactory grades (F, U, or NP) in consecutive semesters will be considered for dismissal by UTSPHSA programs. Any graduate student who is at risk of failure to complete

work for an incomplete course within the designated time will also be considered for dismissal by UTSPHSA program's.

A student recommended for dismissal from a UTSPHSA degree program can appeal the decision according to the Student Academic Grievance Policy. If the student decides to appeal the recommendation for dismissal, the student may still register and attend courses in the subsequent semester; however, the student is not required to do so. Should the student elect to appeal the dismissal and attend classes the next semester, an expedited appeal review process may be requested to ensure that a decision on the appeal is reached before the census day for the semester in which the courses are being taken. If a student is receiving financial aid, it is important to seek guidance from the Office of Financial Aid and, if applicable, the Office of Veteran Services regarding their responsibility for making financial payments. This includes being aware of the responsibility for returning such funds if the student is unsuccessful in the appeal review process.

To initiate the expedited appeal review process, the process outlined below must be followed:

1. The student has up to five business days from the date they received the recommendation for dismissal to file a formal appeal by submitting to the Dean a letter signed by the student outlining the arguments for the appeal and requesting an expedited review process.
2. The Dean will assemble an ad hoc appeals committee, following the committee structure outlined in the grievance process.
3. The ad hoc appeals committee will have up to three business days following the receipt of the appeal to render a decision and provide a written summary to the Dean. All documentation will be collected by the department chair and delivered to the Dean.
4. The Dean will have up to two business days to provide the student with a written and signed summary of their decision. The department chair will send a copy of the signed summary.
5. The Dean's decision will be considered final and is not subject to further appeal.
6. All documents, including but not limited to emails, memos, letters, and written summaries, will be maintained by UTSPHSA.

For students enrolled in dual degree programs, please refer to the Student Handbook (<https://uthscsa.edu/public-health/student-life/>) for additional information concerning continuation in the program.

Petition

If students face any issues that may impact their program progression or completion, they can petition the Academic Council for reconsideration. To do so, they should first consult with the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs and then complete the Student Petition Form (<https://uthscsa.edu/public-health/academics/>) available from the Office for Academic Affairs. The decision of the Academic Council will be communicated to the students in writing.

If a student disagrees with the decision of the Academic Council, they may file a petition for reconsideration with the Dean. The decision of the Dean is final.

Student Nonacademic Grievance Procedure

If a student wishes to file a non-academic grievance, they must provide the names of relevant individuals involved, the location and date of the incident, any witnesses, and a detailed description of what

happened. If the accused individual is an employee of the health science center, the written grievance should be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor. Please refer to the Student Mistreatment Policy (<http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/institutionalpolices/studentmistreatmentpolicy/>) for information on the non-academic grievance procedure.

Withdrawal

Permission for withdrawal from UT SPHS A may be granted by the Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs upon concurrence by the department chair of the program. Students who wish to withdraw must complete and sign the Student Clearance Form (available electronically in My Student Center (<https://students.uthscsa.edu/>)). The form will route to the department chair and the Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs (or their designee).

In the case of withdrawal, before grades have been assigned (and thus the dropping of all courses), the grading symbol W will be recorded for each course not completed. In the case of withdrawal after the midpoint of the course through the end of a semester, the appropriate grade will be recorded for each completed course.

An application for readmission by a student who has previously withdrawn is subject to the same requirements, procedures, and acceptance considerations that apply to first-time applicants.

Leave of Absence (LoA)

Permission for a LoA from UTSPHSA for up to one year (three semesters) may be granted by the Associate Dean of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs subject to prior approval by the Academic Council. Such permission will be granted only for extenuating circumstances (e.g., military duty, prolonged illness with appropriate physician's confirmation and notice, or death in the immediate family) and indicates that the student can return to the program within the one-year time limit.

Students who meet the criteria for non-registration of one or more terms may not apply for a LoA, including those considered to have withdrawn. Stipends will be suspended for a student's leave, and there is no guarantee that the stipend will be reinstated upon return.

Students request a LoA in writing to the department chair for their program, including the reasons for the request, the last day of class attended, and the expected return time. If a student is not currently enrolled in courses, the request for a LoA must be submitted before the census date for the current term. Students currently enrolled in courses may submit a request for a LoA at any time in the semester. If the department chair approves the request for a LoA, the department chair will submit the approved request to the Office of the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs for final approval. After the Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs approves the request, the student is notified by a letter. The student must complete the Student Clearance Form (available electronically in My Student Center). The form will be routed to the department chair and Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs for approval. The form will automatically drop any courses for which the student is currently enrolled.

Generally, taking a LoA does not extend the time-to-degree.

Graduation

The degree of Master of Public Health is awarded upon the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 45 semester credit hours, including a 180-hour applied practice, an integrated learning experience, the requirements particular to each program as documented by the department, and certification of the candidate by the Dean and the President to the Board of Regents.

Unapproved use of artificial intelligence or instant messaging platforms for any course activity is considered academic misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary action. (Please see Academic Dishonesty, Policy 14.1.1 (https://wp.uthscsa.edu/compliance/wp-content/uploads/sites/174/2021/06/HOP_14.1.1.pdf) of the UT Health San Antonio Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP).

Commencement

Graduation exercises are held each academic year in May.

The Dean (or their designee) will be present to address the students and participate in the presentation of diplomas. All graduate candidates in Master of Public Health programs also participate in the UT Health San Antonio Commencement.

Student Identify Verification

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and the U.S. Department of Education require that institutions offering distance or correspondence education demonstrate that any student who registers in such a course or program is the same student who participates in the complete course or program and receives credit for that participation must have their identity verified by using, at the discretion of the institution, methods such as (1) proctored examinations; (2) secure logins and passcodes; and (3) any such technology or practices that are determined to be effective in verifying student identification. This policy is meant to protect the privacy of students enrolled in distance or correspondence courses or programs.

Charges, including additional costs, associated with verifying student identity will be communicated to students in writing at the time of registration and enrollment.

Computer and Other Technology Requirements

UTSPHSA offers courses with online components or other activities requiring computer use. Students must possess a basic level of computer proficiency. Students should be familiar with computers, the Internet, and software, including the programs required for word processing, email, and presentations.

Students must have a computer that satisfies the specification requirements of UTSPHSA. Please refer to the Student Handbook (<https://uthscsa.edu/public-health/student-life/>) for specification requirements.

Students are required to obtain Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. The University Bookstore offers students the Mac and Windows versions of Microsoft Office Suite at a considerable discount.

Use of Artificial Intelligence or Machine Learning Tools

Students are expected to complete assignments without substantive assistance from others (except for team assignments that rely on the contribution of designated team members), including the use of ChatGPT, GroupMe, WhatsApp, or any other artificial intelligence or instant messaging platforms. Although these technologies may help students develop ideas or initial drafts of assignments, their use is prohibited without the expressed written consent of the course instructor.