

RURAL COMMUNITY HEALTH, MASTER OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

The Master of Behavioral Science (MBS) in Rural Community Health program prepares for work in various behavioral and social science fields including health psychology, substance abuse prevention, elder care, youth health and empowerment, sociology, education and advocacy, training and technical assistance, and program evaluation. MBS students develop applied behavioral science projects that respond to the needs of local organizations, academic institutions, and practitioners. Typically these projects include issues such as suicide prevention, school violence, substance addictions, trauma-informed early childhood interventions, elder care, and family poverty. The program encourages students and practitioners to embrace culturally sensitive and multi-scale definitions of "health" that include evidence based prevention practices along with a range of other strategies for healing, outreach, education, advocacy, assessment, and research. The MBS aligns with Western's liberal arts commitment by involving several disciplines (including Psychology, Sociology, and Geography) and providing a formal venue for students to develop applied experiences that generate scientific insight about community health related problems. The MBS is a 39-credit program that includes topical coursework in community health, violence and trauma, health disparities, geospatial analysis, psychopathology, health psychology, and evaluation methods. After successfully completing a practicum proposal, MBS students must complete a major research-based practicum project.

Program goals include:

- Improving students' understanding of behavioral and social science, especially with the most current research related to the determinants and effects of childhood trauma, the psychological and social dimensions of addiction, strategies for preventing violence in schools and households, the effects of chronic poverty, and the role of trauma-informed interventions in contributing to community health.
- Developing students' capacities for applied research in behavioral and social sciences, including the use of appropriate methods, research designs, sampling techniques, data collection, management and analysis, training and technical assistance, collaboration, health promotion, and communicating science to public audiences.
- Advancing the role of behavioral and social science in rural communities by preparing practitioners to increase capacity and collaboration among agencies, organizations, and communities to address problems of community health in rural communities.
- Fostering student capacities to work with rural and Native American communities on issues related to health promotion, healing practices, cultural trauma, youth suicide and substance use, and youth-oriented solutions for health and empowerment.
- Enhancing students' opportunities to pursue private and public sector careers, or doctoral-level study, in a range of behavioral and social science fields, including health psychology, prevention, elder care, youth health and empowerment, sociology, education and advocacy, training and technical assistance, and program evaluation.

Program Prerequisites:

BA or BS degree from an accredited institution of higher education is required. Preferred qualifications include a BA or BS in fields such as psychology, sociology, social work, health sciences, public health, Native American Studies, anthropology, regional planning, or communications;

completion of an undergraduate course in statistics or quantitative research methods or evidence of a working knowledge of statistics or quantitative methods.

Admissions Criteria:

- Admission will be based on an overall package that considers academic excellence as well as relevant work experience, research, and community involvement. Admissions materials must be submitted online and must include: academic transcripts showing a recommended minimum 3.2 GPA from the degree-granting school; a resume or Curriculum Vitae outlining related research, leadership, outreach, professional experience and /or volunteer work; a letter of purpose describing the student's interests and goals regarding behavioral science and/or community health; a writing sample (course paper or professional report) of at least 3 single-spaced pages; and two letters of recommendation from professors or supervisors in related fields.
- GRE scores will be accepted but are not required for admissions consideration. International students must submit their score from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or IELTS. Students with a degree from a college or university where English is the language of instruction are not required to submit the TOEFL/IELTS score.
- Applicants are expected to have been in contact with an MBS program faculty member prior to submission of application. Documentation of this will be included as a formal expectation in the application process.

Provisional Admittance Policy

Students who have some deficiency in undergraduate training or incomplete credentials may be approved for provisional admission into the MBS in Rural Community Health program upon the recommendation of the Director of the MBS and approval by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

To be admitted provisionally into the MBS in Rural Community Health program, applicants must demonstrate:

- some formal background or training in community health, psychology, sociology, or related field (e.g. coursework, internships, work study), and:
- ability to manage the assigned graduate courses while completing their undergraduate program or other provisions (e.g. the personal statement and references should indicate the candidate's ability to undertake such an academic load and course work at the graduate level).

In accordance with School of Graduate Studies Admissions Policies, a provisionally admitted student will have a maximum of one calendar year to complete any prerequisite academic coursework.

The MBS Program Director will assess provisionally admitted student progress towards completion of prerequisites and success in all MBS program and course work through meetings scheduled monthly and at the end of each semester within the required completion timeline.

Conferral of the MBS degree requires a total of 39 credits of 600-level coursework with a grade of B- or above, including the successful completion of a 6-credit practicum.

All students must complete the following:

Code	Title	Credits
Core Courses		
12 credits from the following:		12
MBS 601	Behavioral Science and Community Health	
MBS 602	Quantitative Methods and Research Design	
MBS 603	Quantitative Analysis in Behavioral Science	
MBS 604	Qualitative Methods and Analysis	
MBS 605	Health Disparities	
Elective Courses		
18 credits from the following:		18
MBS 611	Program Planning and Evaluation	
MBS 612	Violence and Trauma	
MBS 613	Lifespan Development I: Childhood to Emerging Adulthood	
MBS 614	Lifespan Development II: Adulthood to End of Life	
MBS 640	Geographic Information Systems	
MBS 660	Geospatial Analysis	
MBS 668	Psychopathology	
MBS 669	Health Psychology	
MBS 692	Independent Study	
MBS 697	Special Topics in Rural Health	
Practicum Coursework		
minimum of 9 credits required		9
MBS 698	Community Health Practicum Proposal	
MBS 699	Community Health Practicum	
Total Credits		39