About the Program

Public health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through organized efforts of society. It is a combination of science, skills and beliefs that is directed toward the maintenance and improvement of health of all the people through collective or social actions. Health is an essential condition for all successful individuals, communities, private businesses and industrial enterprises within our society. To address the need for competent professionals in the areas of public health, it becomes imperative that the department provides a dynamic and progressive curricula. To meet the demand for these professionals, the department of public health and social work at Slippery Rock University offers a bachelor of science in public health (health science) and a minor in public health. These programs offer an educational and experiential or internship component. The program also has student organizations to enhance the instructional component.

Public Health (Health Science)

This major is designed to provide a broad foundation in health promotion, intervention, the nature and patterns of disease in communities and program planning and evaluation. The curriculum emphasizes healthy lifestyles, service learning, multi-cultural health needs, technology and scientific research/advances relevant to improving the health of individuals and communities. Upon completion of this program, students are eligible to sit for the Certified Health Education Specialist Examination. This is a national credentialing examination for people who wish to practice health education in a community setting. Our multidisciplinary curriculum is aimed at assuring that all public health graduates are prepared for entry-level positions in a variety of settings. The curriculum can satisfy many of the pre-professional requirements for physical therapy, occupational therapy, or physician assistant programs. Graduates are well prepared to continue their education toward a master’s of public health degree or other graduate health-related degrees.

Public health first semester freshman students may choose to be in the University’s Pre-Physical Therapy 3+3 Program. This allows them to fulfill the prerequisites for the Physical Therapy Program at Slippery Rock University as well as satisfy the requirements for the Public Health Program in three years as long as they meet certain grade requirements. If admitted to the program, they then spend the next three years earning their doctorate in physical therapy. Public Health first semester freshman also have an option of being in the Pre-Physician Assistant 3+2 Program. This allows them to fulfill the prerequisites for the Physician Assistant Program at Slippery Rock University as well as satisfy the requirements for the Public Health Program in three years as long as they meet certain grade requirements. If admitted to the program, they then spend the next two years in earning a masters degree in Physician Assistant Studies.

Minor in Public Health

Slippery Rock University students completing a minor in public health will acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to play an important role in addressing the challenges of public health, health promotion and wellness. The public health minor complements majors in fields such as exercise science and therapeutic recreation.
Career Opportunities
Upon completion of a degree in public health at SRU, students are prepared for a broad spectrum of possible career paths. Recent graduates have begun their careers in state and local health departments, community-based wellness programs, non-profit health organizations, and federal government health programs. Graduates can become health professionals who are responsible for delivering health programs that target specific population groups; for example, a health promotion or intervention program aimed at improving the quality of life for older adults. Other programs could be in the area of maternal and child health through which graduates might provide information to help reduce the risk of low birth weight. Some graduates prefer careers in health statistics whereby they compile data into reports and monitor trends in leading health indicators. Several graduates have worked in substance abuse and risk management programs. Still other graduates have become health coaches for insurance companies.

Internships
The capstone experience in the Public Health Program is the senior internship experience scheduled on completion of all coursework at the end of the senior year. It is through this process that students often identify the area of public health in which they would like to be employed. The internship experience is a full-time, 12-week work experience during which students complete a major project that showcases entry-level professional skills.

Student Organizations
In 1996 Slippery Rock University was the first institution of higher education to develop a student chapter of the Pennsylvania Public Health Association. The purpose was to promote knowledge and intellectual development of each member in the field of Public Health. PPHA is a recognized professional public health organization, providing students with an opportunity to become affiliated with a professional organization. Students are eligible to attend the PPHA annual state meetings at reduced rates, to receive the PPHA newsletter and to participate in many activities at the state level. The campus chapter provides students with opportunities to learn more about professional opportunities in public health through speakers, service projects and field trips. The PPHA collegiate chapter meets monthly. Programs include services, speakers and social gatherings. Members conduct an annual student health fair in April for Public Health Awareness Day. The department and college subsidize travel expenses so students may attend the PPHA annual conferences in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, or Harrisburg to further enrich their educational experiences.

For more information:
Admissions Office
146 North Hall Welcome Center
201 Campus Drive
Slippery Rock University
Slippery Rock, PA 16057
724.738.2015
asktherock@sru.edu
www.sru.edu/admissions

Department of Public Health and Social Work
Michael Cleary, chairperson
100 Jack C. Dinger Annex
103 Field House Road
Slippery Rock University
Slippery Rock, PA 16057
724.738.2267
michael.cleary@sru.edu
www.sru.edu/publichealth

www.SRU.edu
A member of Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education