



WESTERN
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH SCIENCES

Higher Values in Higher Education
Academic Excellence • Educational Opportunity
Personal Growth • Social Responsibility

Health Education at Western Illinois University is an interdisciplinary field aimed at promoting health and preventing disease, disability, and premature death through education-driven behavior change activities designed for individuals, groups, and communities. Graduate-level health educators are generally hired as directors of health education/promotion programs in a variety of settings.



Program Location: Macomb, Quad Cities

Admission Requirements

All candidates must meet the general admission requirements of the WIU School of Graduate Studies. Each candidate must show evidence of having completed coursework in human diseases either prior to admission as a degree candidate or before completion of his or her program of study.

Degree Requirements

Students choosing to pursue a Master of Science in Health Sciences may choose from two options: (1) Public Health or (2) School Health. The Public Health option requires 42 semester hours (SH), including an internship, while the School Health option requires 36 SH. Both options include 15 SH of core courses; required option courses; and a capstone project of a thesis, professional paper/project, or a comprehensive exam. A post-baccalaureate certificate program in Health Services Administration (12 SH) is also available.

The core curriculum for the MS in Health Sciences is consistent with the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHEC); the Public Health option required courses are consistent with the Council for Education in Public Health (CEPH) areas of knowledge basic to public health; and the School Health option is consistent with the Illinois School Health endorsement. Graduates are competent to assess individual and community needs for health education; plan health education strategies, interventions, and programs; conduct evaluation and research related to health education; administer health education strategies, interventions, and programs; serve as a health education resource person; and communicate and advocate for health and health education.

Credentialing

Graduates of the program are eligible to obtain credentialing as a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) from the NCHEC.

Career Opportunities

Health Sciences program graduates are prepared to be directors of programs in the areas of community and public health education. Graduates are highly marketable. According to the U.S. Department of Labor projections, the demand for health educators is expected to exceed the available workforce between 2012 and 2022. Factors that have increased this demand include an increased rate of chronic illnesses (i.e., cancer, hypertension, arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease), an aging population, and the rise in childhood and adolescent obesity and eating disorders, to name a few.

Health educators are employed as directors and leaders in a variety of settings. These include college and university health centers, hospitals and clinical care settings, nonprofit agencies (e.g., American Heart Association, American Red Cross, Hospice, American Diabetes Association), local and state departments of public health, disaster and emergency services agencies, government programs and agencies (e.g., Centers for Disease Control), business and industry, and schools.

U.S. Department of Labor Statistics data report that upon degree completion, the average salary range for graduate-level trained health educators is \$40,000 to \$60,000.

Health educators have an opportunity to choose among various focus areas, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Alcohol and drug education, prevention, and intervention
- Smoking cessation
- Maternal health and wellness
- Risk reduction for chronic diseases (heart disease and cancer)
- Sexual health
- Violence and abuse prevention and intervention
- Geriatric health
- Child and adolescent health
- Emotional health and stress management
- Employee/worksites wellness

“While studying for the master’s degree in Health Education at the Department of Health Sciences of WIU, I gained a lot of new knowledge and managed to develop many new skills. Each and every class I took during my study made its unique contribution to my professional development and to my ability to meet various competencies, which any health educator should possess.”

— Aziz Nabidzhonov, MS, 2010

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Faculty Expertise

Nine faculty members, holding advanced degrees from 17 universities across the United States, provide course instruction and research mentoring to graduate students. Efforts are made to provide a faculty mentor who matches each student’s interests. Faculty have expertise in the following areas: women’s health; program evaluation; risk assessment; needs assessment; community development; emergency preparedness; bioterrorism; health behavior theory; environmental health; sexuality education; health services administration; alcohol and drug prevention; health risk appraisal; diabetes education; geriatric health; eating disorders; and spiritual, emotional, multicultural, and occupational health.

Assistantship Opportunities

A limited number of graduate assistantships, which provide a monthly stipend and a tuition waiver, are available. Undergraduate and graduate grade point averages, scholarship records, recommendations, and a personal statement provide the criteria for awarding assistantships. Applications are made through the School of Graduate Studies.

Western Illinois University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people, including, but not limited to, minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. WIU has a non-discrimination policy that includes sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, and veteran status.

Internship Opportunities

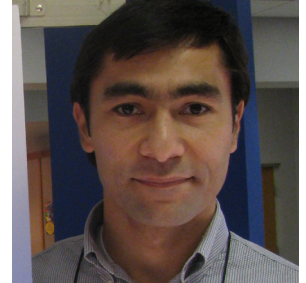
The capstone internship experience allows students to experientially apply their academic training in various health agencies, institutions, organizations, businesses, and industries at local, regional, national, and international sites. Students have previously interned at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; American Red Cross; Illinois Hospital Association; Genesis Medical Center; Friendship Manor; Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney, Australia; Peace Corps; John Deere Health; and the American Heart Association.

Distinctive Features

Departmental faculty members have served in leadership positions in such organizations as the American Public Health Association, the American School Health Association, Society for Public Health Education, American Association for Health Education, National Safety Council, and the Illinois Sex Education Task Force. This wide variety of professional preparation and strong commitment to serving students enables the department to provide a rich breadth of courses and research opportunities leading to the comprehensive and thorough training of its graduates. By taking courses at Western, students are able to complete courses in a traditional classroom setting, online, or via distance education.

Featured Alumna

Sharon Pierce, the 2007 Department of Health Sciences Distinguished Alumna, graduated with degrees in Health Sciences and Health Education and began her career as a dental hygienist. She went on to work as a public health dental hygiene adviser for the Division of Dental Health (DDH)—Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and became the administrative assistant in the DDH. In her career, she has been the assistant chief for the DDH, the coordinator of the Experimental Organ Transplantation Program for the Illinois IDPH’s Division of Chronic Diseases, and the fiscal coordinator and administrator of the Family Planning Program and Child Health for Illinois. She retired as the assistant chief of the HIV/AIDS Program.



Aziz Nabidzhonov

Contact Information

For admissions process and general program information, contact the School of Graduate Studies, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455, (309) 298-1806, (877) WIU GRAD toll-free, Grad-Office@wiu.edu, wiu.edu/grad.

For specific program questions, contact Associate Professor Maureen Bezold, graduate coordinator, Department of Health Sciences and Social Work, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455, (309) 298-1076, MP-Bezold@wiu.edu, wiu.edu/health, or Lorette Oden, department chairperson, LS-Oden@wiu.edu.