Health Policy

The PhD Program in Health Policy (formerly known as Health Services and Policy Analysis) at UC Berkeley is distinguished by its interdisciplinary application of the social and behavioral science disciplines to real-world health issues. Students select a specialty field from among three tracks (Health Economics, Organizations & Management, and Population & Data Science) while receiving rigorous training in quantitative research methods. Students augment their training through skills and knowledge from UC Berkeley's top-ranked Economics, Political Science, and Sociology departments, as well as the Haas School of Business and the Goldman School of Public Policy. Graduates of the Health Policy program are well prepared to assume academic careers in research and teaching. The program's interdisciplinary social and behavioral sciences approach to health services and policy research is a cornerstone of the PhD program that enables students to tailor much of their coursework to their own research interests.

Admission to the University

Minimum Requirements for Admission

The following minimum requirements apply to all graduate programs and will be verified by the Graduate Division:

1. A bachelor's degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution;
2. A grade point average of B or better (3.0);
3. If the applicant has completed a basic degree from a country or political entity (e.g., Quebec) where English is not the official language, adequate proficiency in English to do graduate work, as evidenced by a TOEFL score of at least 90 on the iBT test, 570 on the paper-and-pencil test, or an IELTS Band score of at least 7 on a 9-point scale (note that individual programs may set higher levels for any of these); and
4. Sufficient undergraduate training to do graduate work in the given field.

Applicants Who Already Hold a Graduate Degree

The Graduate Council views academic degrees not as vocational training certificates, but as evidence of broad training in research methods, independent study, and articulation of learning. Therefore, applicants who already have academic graduate degrees should be able to pursue new subject matter at an advanced level without the need to enroll in a related or similar graduate program.

Programs may consider students for an additional academic master's or professional master's degree only if the additional degree is in a distinctly different field.

Applicants admitted to a doctoral program that requires a master's degree to be earned at Berkeley as a prerequisite (even though the applicant already has a master's degree from another institution in the same or a closely allied field of study) will be permitted to undertake the second master's degree, despite the overlap in field.

The Graduate Division will admit students for a second doctoral degree only if they meet the following guidelines:

1. Applicants with doctoral degrees may be admitted for an additional doctoral degree only if that degree program is in a general area of knowledge distinctly different from the field in which they earned their original degree. For example, a physics PhD could be admitted to a doctoral degree program in music or history; however, a student with a doctoral degree in mathematics would not be permitted to add a PhD in statistics.
2. Applicants who hold the PhD degree may be admitted to a professional doctorate or professional master's degree program if there is no duplication of training involved.

Applicants may apply only to one single degree program or one concurrent degree program per admission cycle.

Required Documents for Applications

1. **Transcripts:** Applicants may upload *unofficial* transcripts with your application for the departmental initial review. *If the applicant is admitted,* then *official* transcripts of all college-level work will be required. Official transcripts must be in sealed envelopes as issued by the school(s) attended. If you have attended Berkeley, upload your unofficial transcript with your application for the departmental initial review. *If you are admitted,* an official transcript with evidence of degree conferral *will not* be required.
2. **Letters of recommendation:** Applicants may request online letters of recommendation through the online application system. Hard copies of recommendation letters must be sent directly to the program, not the Graduate Division.
3. **Evidence of English language proficiency:** All applicants who have completed a basic degree from a country or political entity in which the official language is not English are required to submit official evidence of English language proficiency. This applies to institutions from Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Latin America, the Middle East, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, most European countries, and Quebec (Canada). However, applicants who, at the time of application, have already completed at least one year of full-time academic course work with grades of B or better at a US university may submit an official transcript from the US university to fulfill this requirement. The following courses will not fulfill this requirement:

   - courses in English as a Second Language,
   - courses conducted in a language other than English,
   - courses that will be completed after the application is submitted, and
   - courses of a non-academic nature.

If applicants have previously been denied admission to Berkeley on the basis of their English language proficiency, they must submit new test scores that meet the current minimum from one of the standardized tests. Official TOEFL score reports must be sent directly from Educational Test Services (ETS). The institution code for Berkeley is 4833. Official IELTS score reports must be sent electronically from the testing center to University of California, Berkeley, Graduate Division, Sproul Hall, Rm 318 MC 5900, Berkeley, CA 94720. TOEFL and IELTS score reports are only valid for two years.

Where to Apply

Visit the Berkeley Graduate Division application page (http://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/).

Admission to the Health Policy PhD Program

Successful applicants have a clear research focus in health policy and/ or health services research. Experience working in the health sector is viewed favorably by the admissions committee, as is prior research experience.

Entering students should have a foundation of basic knowledge in microeconomics, epidemiology, and statistics. A master's degree is preferred but not required for this program. Applicants without a master's degree should have at least two years of related experience. Additional admission requirements include GRE scores (average scores for admitted applicants are in the 80th percentile or above) and three letters of recommendation.

Curriculum

Core Courses

Courses Required

5 Courses in one of the specialty fields:
Health Economics
Organizations and Management
Population & Data Science
3 Courses in fields aside from the student's designated track.
3 Research Methods Courses
Theories and Methods in Health Policy and Health Services Research (2 semesters)
Dissertation Seminar (all semesters after passing the specialty field exam)
Health Services Research Colloquium (every semester of the 1st 2 years)

Specialty Field Examination

A comprehensive written examination in the student's specialty field must be successfully completed prior to the qualifying examination.

Quantitative Research Methods Paper

An empirical research paper to demonstrate the student's ability to use doctoral-level quantitative research methods with real data must be successfully completed before the end of the third year of the program.

Qualifying Examination

An oral qualifying examination must be passed before the student can be advanced to doctoral candidacy.

Dissertation

An original research dissertation is required for the PhD degree.