



Midwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety  
Education and Research Center

## Frequently Asked Questions

Occupational and Environmental Health Nursing Graduate Program

University of Minnesota School of Public Health  
Environmental Health Sciences Division

### **Question 1. How many nursing students are currently in the Occupational and Environmental Health Nursing (OEHN) program?**

Answer: There are currently two PhD nursing students and 5 MPH nursing students. The students are at variable stages in their educational programs. Typically, 2-5 nursing students are enrolled per year.

### **Question 2. Are all of the OEHN students in the same concentration areas of study?**

Answer: The study concentrations are varied depending on students' interests. The program faculty attempt to match students' interests with their research and practicum experiences. A few examples of current student concentration areas are: international occupational health, potential hospital exposures to chemotherapeutic agents, and performance assessment systems/tools for OEHN practice.

### **Question 3. Is it possible to work full-time while completing the OEHN graduate program?**

Answer: Yes, although the recommendation is to start the program with one or two classes to determine the course level that can be managed while working full-time. For some students, taking one on-line class and one in-person class might make an easier transition when beginning the program. The advantage of the in-person class is to benefit from interaction with cross-functional disciplines and develop supportive, on-going relationships.

### **Question 4. Is the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) funding assured for students every year?**

Answer: The NIOSH funding is authorized by the federal government on a year-to-year basis. This funding primarily provides for tuition support. While economic and political factors may affect the availability of the annual NIOSH funding, since the program began in 1976, tuition support has been available every year since that time. Of course it is possible that this could change in the future.

### **Question 5. When does the U of M OEHN program know about funding for the coming academic year?**

Answer: The University's fiscal year is from July 1 – June 30. The academic year starts in September each year. It is possible that there could be some carry-over funding from the previous year (for example, unused funds from students taking fewer credits than anticipated) that could be used to support students who start the program outside of the start of the academic year in September. Generally the availability of new funding for the academic year is known by May of the same year.

**Question 6. What if students have an employer with a tuition reimbursement program? Are they still eligible for NIOSH tuition support?**

Answer: Yes. If the employer has tuition support available for the student, that frees up funding for other students to be able to take advantage of the NIOSH grant. Sometimes corporations have budget limitations which prohibit use of tuition reimbursement, so NIOSH tuition support is not contingent upon using employer sponsored tuition reimbursement if available in company benefits.

**Question 7. If the OEHN's spouse is an employee of the University of Minnesota, does that result in any financial discount to the OEHN student?**

Answer: No, but it may give the spouse opportunity for the University's scholarships and financial support.

**Question 8. How does the U of M School of Public Health OEHN program interface with the U of M School of Nursing?**

Answer: Due to the introduction of the DNP program, the Master's degree programs are being discontinued in the School of Nursing. The School of Nursing continues to offer the Masters of Nursing degree (MN) to students who already have a science-based Bachelor's degree and want to become RNs. It is no longer possible to complete the dual degree program (MS/MPH degrees) between the School of Nursing and the School of Public Health. However, there are two required courses to be taken within the School of Nursing: Research in Nursing (3 credits) and Interventions of Health Populations (2 credits). Depending on OEHN interest, other School of Nursing courses could be taken as electives.

**Question 9. Are there dual degree programs with other colleges within the U of M?**

Answer: There may be dual degree programs available depending on OEHN interest. For example, the law school offers a 4 year program that includes public health administration. The student would be encouraged to explore these opportunities with the college of interest.

**Question 10. Is it possible to take some credits before being accepted into the program and then transfer those credits into the degree program upon acceptance to the program?**

Answer: It is possible to transfer up to 12 credits into the School of Public Health before being formally accepted into the program. However, tuition support from NIOSH would not be available until formal acceptance into the program.

**Question 11. How do I get started with the program?**

Answer: First of all, candidates need to complete the on-line application to the program, submitting a transcript from the undergraduate nursing program. Three letters of support are required, one of which should be from the graduate's School of Nursing if recent and still possible; otherwise, employers may provide a letter of support. Finally, the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is required. There are on-line study guides and possible classes that can be taken to prepare for the GRE if needed. For information on how to apply to the School of Public Health see:

<http://sph.umn.edu/students/prospective/admissions/>