Frequently Asked Questions about the MSW/MPH Dual Degree

What’s the difference between a “concurrent” degree and a “dual” degree?

Concurrent Degree Program students apply and are admitted directly to the “concurrent” program as part of the regular graduate admissions process, being accepted into both schools at the same time. Dual Degree Program students are admitted to either Social Welfare or Public Health, and apply to add the other program as a second degree in the next year, or after they have completed one of the programs.

How long will the program take?
It takes a minimum of three years plus one intervening summer to complete all requirements for the MSW and MPH degrees together, rather than the four years that would be required if the two degrees were pursued separately. You will be enrolled in both Schools during the three years.

What is the minimum unit requirement to obtain both degrees?
All students are required to be enrolled in a minimum of 12 units/semester. The particular requirements for the dual program will vary according to the specializations selected. However, all MSW/MPH students must complete certain minimum course work and field education/internship requirements and a comprehensive examination or final project. It is important to note that Dual Degree students generally take extra units each semester in order to complete both degrees within three years plus one summer.

What concentration/specialization options are available for MSW/MPH dual degree students?
In Social Welfare students specialize in Management and Planning, Gerontology, Health, Children and Families, or Community Mental Health. Within the School of Public Health, students may select one of eight areas of specialization; most frequently chosen are Health and Social Behavior, Health Policy and Management, Interdisciplinary, and Maternal and Child Health. Students applying to the dual degree by adding either the Public Health or Social Welfare major should select their concentration/specialization area(s) carefully and not anticipate changing once admitted.

What is the application process?
Current students wishing to add the additional MSW or MPH degree apply to the second school for dual enrollment beginning the following fall. Students apply online through the campus Graduate Admissions Application system (http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/index.shtml), and follow the application instructions for the School to which they are applying.

When is the deadline to apply?
The application deadline is December 3. Late or incomplete application files will not be considered.

What are my chances of getting accepted to the Dual Degree Program?
Admission to one school does not automatically guarantee admission to the other, and the number of applicants accepted varies. Students are encouraged to meet with their program advisors, talk with Admissions staff at each school, attend informational meetings, and seek input from current MSW/MPH students.
If I don’t get accepted the first year can I reapply the following year? Yes, students can resubmit an application and be evaluated again as part of the admissions process at either school the following year. Re-applicants are advised that, depending on which program they are applying to, they may or may not be able to complete the dual degree in three years if they re-apply for admission in their second year of graduate study. Students are encouraged to gather feedback on their initial application and make efforts to address the requirements or competencies needed for reconsideration.

How can I enhance my application to the Dual Degree Program? Students are encouraged to discuss their professional goals and application with their advisors and members of the MSW/MPH Dual Degree Committee. It is important to understand the core requirements for admission at each school. There may be circumstances in which students may choose to retake the GRE or enroll in a math/statistics course during the first year. The School of Public Health requires strong math/quantitative skills as part of evaluating candidates for admissions. Students considering the dual degree option should have a quantitative GRE score in the 50th percentile or better. Another strategy is to take a course in the school you are planning to apply to during your first or second semester and/or apply for a Graduate Student Research (GSR) position in that School. This will help students become more familiar with the curriculum and programs of that school, and offer an opportunity to get to know faculty who might be asked to write a letter of recommendation or be considering their application.

Does it matter which school I apply to first? Each student must individually evaluate his or her best fit and starting point. Typically more students enroll in the School of Social Welfare first and then apply to the School of Public Health.

Can I apply to any of the Public Health Programs during my first year in the Social Welfare Program? You can apply to the Health and Social Behavior and the Health Policy and Management Programs during your first or second year in the Social Welfare Program. However, you will only be considered for admission to the Maternal and Child Health or Interdisciplinary Program during your second year in the MSW Program.

Do I have to pay Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition in both Schools? Students enrolled in most University of California graduate professional degree programs pay Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition (PDST), as determined by The Regents, to sustain and enhance the quality of the professional schools’ academic programs and services. Both the School of Public Health and the School of Social Welfare at Berkeley charge PDST; students in combined MSW/MPH degree programs pay the higher of the two. See the Registrar’s Office Fee Schedule for current amounts: http://registrar.berkeley.edu/current_students/registration_enrollment/feesched.html.

Where can I get more information?
School of Social Welfare Admissions: http://socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/
School of Social Welfare Admissions: socwelf@berkeley.edu
School of Public Health Admissions: http://sph.berkeley.edu/
School of Public Health Admissions: sphinfo@berkeley.edu