



5th-Year Master's Program in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences

Brown University School of Public Health

The 5th-Year Master's Degree in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences (BSHS) allows Brown undergraduates to continue at the University for a Master's degree after completing a Bachelor's degree. Up to two courses of the eight required for the Master's degree may be completed while the student is an undergraduate, leaving only 6 tuition units to be paid. The undergraduate courses to be carried over may not be undergraduate concentration requirements and must have earned at least a B grade. At least six semester courses must be taken while in BSHS residence. Students must apply for the 5th-year program before they complete their undergraduate studies—preferably in the Fall or early in the Spring semester of their Senior year. Students who complete their undergraduate degree mid-year (so-called “point-five’s”) may apply up to the May 31 deadline.

Applications to the program are accepted each year on a rolling basis beginning in January and ending in May. Admission decisions are made by the Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences and by the Graduate School. Students must be enrolled as active undergraduates at the time of application, however admission to the Master's program may be deferred for up to two years with the approval of the Department Chair.

APPLICATION

Rising juniors and seniors who are interested in pursuing a 5th-Year Master's Degree in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences should contact the BSS Graduate Program Director or Academic Coordinator. Students must complete the online application through the SOPHAS website before graduation, but may defer their admission for up to two years with the approval of the Department Chair. The online application may be completed as early as September 1 of candidates' Senior year, but consideration does not occur until the following Spring semester.

Applicants are not required to take the GRE. The BSHS Master's Program does not have undergraduate major or course pre-requisites, but good candidates will have undergraduate concentrations and/or course work in Public Health, Human Biology, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, or Gender or Urban Studies. Applicants should possess a strong background in undergraduate courses that emphasize critical thinking skills, scientific or analytic writing, and quantitative or logical reasoning. Prior coursework in statistics will prove helpful but is not required. Prior research or volunteer experience in public health, social intervention, or program implementation/evaluation is helpful but is not required. The admissions committee takes a holistic approach to evaluating applicants. Previous coursework, grades, letters of recommendation, employment, and personal and professional goals are all taken into consideration.

Those considering applying are strongly encouraged to take two of the courses required to achieve the Master's degree as an undergraduate. In order for undergraduate courses to be applied to the completion of the Master's degree, those courses must be taken for a grade, must earn at least a B, and must not be concentration requirements. Exceptions to this rule may be made in special circumstances by the Department Chair. Contact with a BSS faculty member by the first semester of the applicant's senior year, at the latest, is also strongly encouraged.

FINANCIAL AID

Undergraduate financial-aid awards do not extend into graduate school, however all applicants are automatically considered for a merit-based scholarship that is equivalent up to a 25% tuition discount, and are considered in a variety of ways.

COURSE OF STUDY

The interdisciplinary Master's program in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences (BSHS) in the Brown University School of Public Health trains graduate students who are interested in analyzing the complex behavioral and social determinants of public health, and in developing interventions to change behaviors and improve social contexts related to public health.

The BSHS program is ideal for students who are interested in working in health program evaluation, program management, community-based organizations and other non-profit services, managed care, treatment intervention research, and clinical trials. The BSHS program is also a good fit for those interested in pursuing doctoral-level training in public health, psychology, public policy, and social welfare.

Please see the BSHS Handbook for degree requirements and course work. All requirements listed in the Handbook apply to 5th-year Master's students and ALL REQUIREMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED IN ONE YEAR. Once a student matriculates as a 5th year master's student, the timing of the program begins in that term and the student has two terms in which to complete the degree. For example, the norm is for a 5th year student to matriculate in the fall term and complete the following spring term (one academic year). However, if a 5th year student matriculates in the spring term, they must complete the degree the following fall term (one calendar year).