

# Simmons UNIVERSITY

Department of Public Health



## Master of Public Health Program

### *Student Handbook*

2025-2026

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## **Preface**

This Student Handbook is published by Simmons MPH faculty and staff. It is updated annually on July 1st and throughout the year if the need arises. The Student Handbook provides current information on university policies, program requirements and expectations.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with all changes that are made to the Student Handbook. Students are subject to the most recent version of this handbook.

While the handbook is formally revised on an annual basis, the program reserves the right to change any policy, process, or procedure at any time. Students will be notified of any such changes via e-mail and the new Student Handbook will be available in Orientation.



## Simmons University Department of Public Health

The Simmons University Department of Public Health (Simmons Public Health) offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health and an online Master of Public Health, the Simmons MPH. The Simmons MPH prepares students to address health inequities and positively impact public health at the local, national, and global level. Delivered through a blend of online courses, self-paced content, and live sessions, as well as in-person immersion experiences and a culminating practice experience, the curriculum provides students with real-world skills to ensure that they graduate ready to serve as effective public health practitioners.

The Simmons MPH explores the core areas of public health: epidemiology, biostatistics, health policy/health services, environmental health, and social/behavioral health. Additionally, our practice-based curriculum incorporates courses specifically designed to develop students' leadership, management, advocacy and organizing skills. The culminating experience of the program, the Health Equity Change Project, provides students with on-ground public health experience through which they demonstrate their ability to create, implement, and evaluate projects, programs, and/or campaigns targeted at improving health equity across populations.

### Department Mission, Vision, and Values

#### Mission

Simmons Public Health trains public health practitioners to advance population health and health equity through innovative education, transdisciplinary collaboration, applied research and practice, community organizing and engagement, and health advocacy for systems change. Our programs prepare students in the general principles and practices of public health, and to address structural determinants of health often situated in historical systems of racism and intersectional forms of oppression.

#### Vision

Simmons Public Health advances a vision where all individuals and communities are assured a fair and equitable opportunity to achieve optimal health and well-being, ensuring inclusivity across identities, locations and circumstances.

#### Values

**Social Justice.** We value social justice as a core concept of health equity, which embraces the uniqueness, dignity, and inherent value of all individuals and communities and challenges power differentials and structures that preclude fair opportunity for optimal health for all.

**Community Partnership.** We strive always to work alongside communities seeking health equity, through partnered knowledge production, community-identified priority setting, and collaborative action towards social change.

**Scientific Rigor and Integrity.** We strive for outstanding performance in enacting health equity that is built on the foundation of scientifically rigorous research, evidence-based public health practice, and personal and professional integrity and ethics.

**Critical Systems Thinking.** We employ a critical lens to understand, assess and address broad systems and structures that produce and reproduce inequities and injustices in health.

**Transformative Leadership.** We advance a model of leadership that challenges existing paradigms, imagines new systems and structures, and embraces innovative approaches to create sustainable change for health equity.

## **Public Health Program Improvement and Advisement**

The MPH Program, along with Simmons' undergraduate public health program, is advised on its curricula, policies, practices and accreditation by two standing committees:

- **Public Health Steering Committee.** The Public Health Steering Committee consists of Simmons faculty with public health expertise and meets three to four times per year. Two students from the MPH Program and two students from the Bachelor's program serve as Student Representatives on the Public Health Steering Committee.
- **Community Advisory Committee.** The Community Advisory Committee consists of public health leaders in practice in community-based and academic settings in Massachusetts and nationally, including Simmons Public Health Program graduate and undergraduate alumni.

## **Public Health Steering Committee Student Membership**

Students are invited to express their interest to serve on the Public Health Steering Committee. Responsibilities include the following:

1. Commit to one year in this role, with possibility of a 2-year term
2. Attend a Steering Committee meetings and Student Advisory Committee meetings (described below)
3. Complete regular, proactive outreach to the student body to ensure representation of multiple viewpoints based on broad feedback from fellow students on key issues/areas of program development
4. Participate in the review and feedback process on program evaluation data/reports and contribute to the ongoing accreditation process
5. Be currently matriculated in classes and in good academic standing

## **MPH Student Advisory Committee and Town Hall**

The MPH Program has a Student Advisory Committee (SAC) which is a voluntary student group tasked with helping the Program Director, faculty, and administration improve and evolve the Simmons MPH Program.

The mission of the SAC is to improve student satisfaction and contribute to the continual improvement of the Simmons MPH program. The group will also advise the Program Director on virtual campus-wide issues pertaining to the student body, activities, education, and development.

The Student Advisory Committee convenes minimally once per term in a town hall format. SAC members, including the Public Health Steering Committee Student Representatives, are

asked to commit to planning and attending the MPH Town Hall meetings.

## Program Learning Framework

The Simmons MPH curriculum is designed to help students realize a set of nationally-recognized core MPH competencies and foundational knowledge ([CEPH, 2024](#)), as well as competencies specifically targeted to advance leadership for health equity. These are incorporated into the Program Learning Framework.

Foundational Public Health Knowledge
<i>Profession and Science of Public Health</i>
1. Explain public health history, philosophy and values
2. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services
3. Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and addressing a population's health
4. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other community relevant to the school/program
5. Discuss the science of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.
6. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge
7. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population's health
<i>Factors Related to Human Health</i>
8. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population's health
9. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health
10. Explain the social, and political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities
11. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease
12. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health and ecosystem health (e.g. One Health)
MPH Foundational Competencies
<i>Evidence-Based Approaches to Public Health</i>
1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice

2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice
<i>Public Health &amp; Health Care Systems</i>
5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and systemic levels
<i>Planning &amp; Management to Promote Health</i>
7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs
<i>Policy in Public Health</i>
12. Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes
14. Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity
<i>Leadership</i>
16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges
<i>Communication</i>
18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors



19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation to a non-academic, non-peer audience with attention to factors such as literacy and health literacy
20. Describe the importance of cultural humility in communicating public health content
<i>Interprofessional Practice and/or Intersectoral Practice</i>
21. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health
<i>Systems Thinking</i>
22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than a standard narrative
<b>MPH in Health Equity Concentration Competencies</b>
1. Apply the history and principles of health equity, human rights, and social justice to public health challenges
2. Analyze systems of oppression and structural-level determinants of health, including racism and other forms of marginalization, drawing parallels to patterns of health disparities
3. Appraise one's own position, values, and biases, within the systems and structures that shape population health
4. Employ skills of community organizing, advocacy, and participatory methods to engage community members in assessing and/or addressing community health issues
5. Evaluate public health as a vehicle for transformative change by appraising past and potential future models of innovation at community and institutional levels

## Professionalism in the MPH Program

### Professional Ethics

Simmons MPH advances the [Public Health Code of Ethics](#), a set of professional standards and expectations created by the American Public Health Association and intended for public health practitioners throughout the field.

### Live Session Expectations

Live sessions occur each week in all Simmons MPH courses. Your attendance is required at all live sessions, subject to the attendance policy (below). The live session class time is intended to deepen your understanding of the asynchronous materials and any work you have experienced in a given week. It also offers a time to discuss, demonstrate and analyze

skills that will be applied in practice.

Below is a list of expectations for live sessions:

**Be on time.** Log in to the session early enough to have your audio and camera setup. Be ready to work when the class time begins.

**Be on camera.** Your presence and participation in class are dependent on how you show up. All students are required to appear on camera.

**Be professional.** Simmons MPH is a professional education program in an applied field - live classroom is an extension of the field and therefore you are expected to treat live class time as you would a professional setting.

**Respect the classroom.** Your live session classroom space should be in a quiet area to avoid distractions or interruptions. Be sure that your face is in frame and that your camera has appropriate lighting.

**Be Prepared.** Each week you are expected to prepare for the live session prior to class time; specific details on work to be completed before the live session can be found in the course work area for each week. Instructors will review this prior to the live session and use it to inform discussion and deepen learning.

**Be Engaged.** You are expected to be ready to work during your live session. The live session is not a passive experience - it requires your full presence and commitment to learning. Each week you should prepare to listen to your classmates, offer feedback and engage in a lively discussion.

## **Professional Communication**

Students must be respectful in all communications with faculty, staff, and peers. Students must be open to feedback and demonstrate a willingness to incorporate feedback into their academic work.

## **Social Media Use**

Professional values and ethical standards extend to all forms of social media. Violations in relation to these professional standards and behaviors may result in exclusion (dismissal) from the program.

## **Curriculum**

Simmons MPH is a 42-credit master's program that may be completed in 24 months on the traditional program track and 15 months on the accelerated program track. The program includes 36 credits of core courses, a 3-credit elective course, and 3 credits earned through immersions.

## Program Sequence of Core Courses

### Traditional Program

Term 1	MHEO 410 Health Equity & Social Justice (3 credits) MHEO 415 Epidemiology (3 credits)
Term 2	MHEO 420 Socio-Structural Determinants of Health (3 credits) MHEO 425 Biostatistics (3 credits)
Term 3	MHEO 435 Community-Based Research (3 credits) MHEO 440 Health Policy Analysis & Change (3 credits)
Term 4	MHEO 465 Health Advocacy & Organizing (3 credits) MHEO 490 Public Health Project Planning (2 credits) Elective
Term 5	MHEO 450 Environmental Health & Justice (3 credits) MHEO 495 Health Equity Change Project I (3 credits)
Term 6	MHEO 470 Global Health and Political Economy (3 credits) MHEO 496 Health Equity Change Project II (3 credits)

### Accelerated Program

Term 1	MHEO 410 Health Equity & Social Justice (3 credits) MHEO 415 Epidemiology (3 credits) MHEO 435 Community-Based Research (3 credits)
Term 2	MHEO 420 Socio-Structural Determinants of Health (3 credits) MHEO 425 Biostatistics (3 credits) MHEO 465 Health Advocacy, Community Organizing, & Innovation (3 credits) MHEO 490 Public Health Project Planning I & II (3 Credits)
Term 3	MHEO 440 Health Policy Analysis & Change (3 credits) MHEO 470 Global Health & Political Economy (3 credits) MHEO 495 Health Equity Change Project I (3 credits)
Term 4	MHEO 450 Environmental Health & Justice (3 credits) MHEO 496 Health Equity Change Project I (3 credits) Elective (3 credits)

## Immersion

Simmons MPH students are required to participate in two hands-on learning opportunities, called immersions, that provide students with on-ground experiences examining public health issues. Simmons MPH partners with expert organizations in the field in delivering our immersion courses.

During immersions, students join their classmates and professors to learn about pressing public health challenges, liaise with local communities, and learn about health systems and issues firsthand. The immersion courses take place during breaks between terms and include the following:

- MHEO 430 Immersion: Racism, Oppression & Health (1 credit, Boston)
- MHEO 461 Immersion: Arizona (2 credits, Arizona)

Students must complete all prerequisites and complete any required pre-immersion and post-immersion webinars or other course requirements to attend the immersion course. Students are responsible for meeting all terms, conditions, deposits, and deadline dates for immersion courses as set forth by Simmons University and partner organizations.

Immersion dates and plans are subject to approval based on current or emerging federal, state, and university guidelines or policies related to COVID-19 or any other public health or national emergency. The program will email students the most up to date information, including the possibility of immersions taking place virtually if/as needed.

## Service-Learning

Students must complete a service-learning placement of at least 20 hours as part of the course, MHEO 465 Health Advocacy, Community Organizing and Innovation. This placement allows students to complement their learning about the skills, tactics and strategies of community mobilization and organizing, while contributing to such efforts in their local community. It also prepares students to network with community partners for MPH-related learning and future health equity work.

## The Health Equity Change Project (HECP)

The Health Equity Change Project (HECP) is a two-term academic and applied experience that satisfies the Applied Practice Experience (practicum) and the Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) required of accredited Master of Public Health Programs. Students implement their projects during the final two terms of the program, supported by two courses: MHEO 495 Health Equity Change Project I and MHEO 496 Health Equity Change Project II. The HECP is the culminating learning experience of the MPH Program where students synthesize their prior learning across the curriculum and put their acquired skills into practice.

## Applied Practice Experience

Students work with an established organization (“practicum placement site”), under the supervision of a community-based Preceptor, to develop, implement, and evaluate an

innovative project that proactively addresses a health inequity. Students are required to complete a minimum of 150 hours in practice with the organization. Students must demonstrate attainment of selected MPH foundational and concentration competencies, evidenced through a portfolio and final report.

### **Integrated Learning Experience**

Students must also complete the Integrative Learning Experience. The ILE is a high-quality written product which evidences synthesis and integration of MPH foundational and concentration competencies. The product should be appropriate for students' educational and professional objectives.

### **Progression through the HEC**

Students must identify a preceptor and practicum placement site prior to beginning the preparatory coursework for the HEC. Students should work closely with their Academic Advisor to ensure timely completion and verification of all forms prior to enrolling in MHEO 490 Public Health Project Planning.

Prior to beginning their practicum, students complete preparatory coursework to prepare for the Health Equity Change Project in MHEO 490 Public Health Project Planning. During this planning course students create their HEC Proposal, including selection of competencies they will demonstrate through their practicum.

Students must complete and submit all required assignments and forms for program approval before they may enroll in MHEO 495 Health Equity Change Project I. If students fail to complete these requirements, or do not receive program approval within the specified timeline, they will be unable to register and/or enroll in the HEC course sequence. Please refer to the Health Equity Change Project Guidebook for detailed requirements.

### **Pre-requisites**

The courses and immersions listed below require students to successfully pass the listed pre-requisite(s) with a "B-" or better:

MHEO 425 Biostatistics

- Students must pass MHEO 415 before they can take MHEO 425.

MHEO 430 Immersion: Racism & Health

- Students must pass MHEO 410 before they can take MHEO 430.

MHEO 461 Immersion: Arizona

- Students must pass MHEO 410, MHEO 415, and MHEO 420 or MHEO 425.

MHEO 465 Health Advocacy, Community Organizing and Innovation

- Students must pass MHEO 430 before they can take MHEO 465.

MHEO 495 Health Equity Change Project I



- Students must pass MHEO 410, MHEO 415, MHEO 420, MHEO 425, MHEO 430, MHEO 435, MHEO 465, and MHEO 490 before they can take MHEO 495. Students must receive Program approval of their HECP Proposal before they can take MHEO 495.

#### MHEO 496 Health Equity Change Project II

- Students must pass MHEO 495 before they can take MHEO 496.

#### MHEO 485 GIS and Spatial Analysis

- Students must pass MHEO 415 and MHEO 425 before they can take MHEO 485.

### **Simmons MPH Academic Policies**

*For information on Leaves of Absence and Program/University Withdrawal, please see the Student Progression Policies section.*

### **Attendance and Participation**

In the field of public health, people depend upon us to show up and to fulfill important responsibilities, and courses are a part of your preparation for that professional role.

#### **Attendance**

Attendance is required at every live session, and students are expected to attend for the full duration of the live session.

Understanding that situations may arise when students may not be able to attend a live session, students are allowed one absence per course, per term. For all other absences, points will be automatically deducted from the final grade for missing a live session in full or in part:

- For the first missed session, 1 point will be deducted.
- For the second missed session, 4 additional points will be deducted.
- Three or more missed sessions results in automatically failing the course.

Exceptions to the attendance policy may be made in extenuating circumstances. Students should inform the instructor in advance of the absence and provide proper documentation.

#### **Participation**

Participation refers to your preparation, attentiveness, engagement, and level of interaction during live sessions as well as your overall professionalism. Participation also applies to your fulfillment of weekly asynchronous activities. Students must demonstrate active participation in both synchronous and asynchronous portions of the courses to succeed. Exceptions may be made with prior/prompt notification of the professor and proper documentation.

#### **Coursework Completion while on Active Duty/Military Assignments**

Students who are required to participate in weekly or monthly meetings, weekend drills, annual trainings, military schooling or another training or official military event as a member

of the ROTC, National Guard, Reserves, or as a member of the Inactive Ready Reserve, will be excused from class but must follow these policies:

- The student must provide a copy of their orders or a letter from a unit commander or a readiness/full-time staff Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO).
- If a student seeks to be excused from class while at drill, on orders, etc., the student is required to contact the section instructor about making up missed work prior to the class session. The section instructor is responsible for giving the student a reasonable extension for making up missed work. A one-day extension per day of class excused is recommended.

## **Religious Observances**

Classes may be scheduled and held on days that for some students fall on one or more Religious Holidays. Please consult the academic calendar to see the dates when classes are held in a given year.

Students who are unable, because of their religious beliefs, to give a class, to attend classes, or to participate in an examination, class, or work requirement on a particular day to observe a religious holiday shall be excused from the class, study, or work requirement and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up the examination, study, or work they may have missed consistent with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 151c, Section 2b.

Religious accommodation is a legal right for students and faculty; it is not a matter left to the discretion of any section instructor or administrator. Absences due to religious observances are not limited to certain religions or particular holidays; the law covers all religions and all religious holidays. Questions about absences for religious observances should be directed to the Office of Student Life.

## **Transfer of Credits**

### **Transferring credits earned prior to entering the program**

Under special circumstances, the MPH Program Director may award students credit for graduate work completed at another accredited institution. A maximum of two (2) courses may be accepted. Transfer courses must be graduate-level. The lowest grade accepted for transfer is a B. Transfer courses may not have been credited or used towards another degree. Courses for transfer may not have been taken more than five years prior to date of petition. No credit is granted for more than the value assigned by the host institution. Program applicants should work with their admission counselor to explore the possibility of petitioning for transfer credit during the admissions process. Current students should work with their Academic Advisor regarding transfer credit. Approval from the Program Director is required.

### **Transferring credits earned during the program**

Under special circumstances, the MPH program may allow students to petition in advance to take an elective course at another institution. Students should consult with their academic advisor at least one term prior to the term in which an elective course takes place to consider this possibility. Approval from the MPH Program Director is required.

## Reference Style

Within the Master of Public Health Program, students are required to follow the most up-to-date edition of APA Style for referencing. Unless otherwise noted, please carefully cite all references according to this style and include a complete bibliography of sources for assignments. Students can access the [Public Health Library Guide](#) for guidance on citation formatting and public health research.

## Simmons University Academic Integrity Policy & Student Code of Conduct

Please refer to [Simmons University policies webpage](#) for University-wide policies on Academic Integrity, Code of Conduct, and other student resources.

## Online Examinations

Most of your quizzes and tests will be conducted online. Unless otherwise stated, you may not collaborate with others or use any references during any examination.

This means that during an exam you may not:

- Open another browser window or use any other method to look up an answer
- Communicate with anyone via online chat, telephone, email, text message, in-person, or via any other method.
- Use your phone or video camera
- Ask someone to take the exam for you or
- Copy or photograph exam questions for your personal use or to share with others

Remember, unless otherwise instructed, you will be required to have your two-way video camera on during the online exam and a section instructor with access to your photo ID will be proctoring the exam online. All students will be required to sign the Simmons Honor Pledge prior to exams. After the exam, you may not discuss it with other students who have not yet taken it.

It is the student's responsibility to assure proper technology (i.e. computer, webcam, etc.) and reliable access to the internet/technology prior to synchronous sessions, and exams in particular in order to complete course work (i.e. exams, synchronous/asynchronous sessions, assignments, etc.). If a student anticipates a technology issue prior to any of these situations, their Section Instructor and Student Support should be notified proactively. Exam retakes are not allowed. Students should contact Student Support immediately if there is a technology issue during an exam. All of these situations will be reviewed by the Section Instructor, Course Lead and Program Director.

## Technology Disputes

To assure consistency with respect to managing technology-related disputes in regards to submission of coursework (discussion board posts, examinations, quizzes, written work, or other assignments), the only documentation that will be used to determine the outcome of any appeal will be that which is provided by Simmons University. All technology related issues should first be reported to the [Service Desk](#) of the [Simmons Technology Support](#)

[Center](#).

No outside evaluations, repairs, or connectivity issues will be part of the process related to any review (e.g., grade appeal, program exclusion). It is the student's individual responsibility to ensure that they have submitted all exams, quizzes, and course work in the time allotted.

## Turnitin

Turnitin is a text-matching software tool that is integrated into the online LMS and is available to faculty for both educational purposes (i.e., improving student writing and citation practices) and for the review of student work in case of suspicion of plagiarism or other breaches of Simmons's academic integrity policies.

Turnitin indicates whether the text in a submitted document matches text in its database, which has three components: the Internet, journal article databases, and papers previously submitted to Turnitin by participating universities.

Additional information on the use of Turnitin is available via [Simmons Technology Support](#) by exploring the [“How-To”](#) articles.

## Grading Policies

### Grades and Their Values

LETTER GRADE	Range	GPA	Key Abbreviations
A	95–100	4.00	W – Withdrawal AU – Audit CIP – Course in progress NG – No Grade I – Incomplete
A-	90–94	3.67	
B+	87–89	3.33	
B	83–86	3.00	
B-	80–82	2.67	
C+	77–79	2.33	
C	73–76	2.00	
C-	70–72	1.67	
D+	67–69	1.33	
D	63–66	1.00	
F	65 - 0	0.0	

### Rounding

Grades .75 or higher will be rounded up to the next whole number; this grading rule applies to final grades.

### Add/Drop

The Add/Drop period begins at the start of the semester and goes through week 4 of the term. Students may add or drop a class in Workday themselves until Friday of week 2 by 11:59pm Eastern Time. If a student wishes to add or drop a class during week 3 or week 4 of

the term, they may do so with the approval of their academic adviser. Students will not be able to make changes to their registrations themselves in Workday after the 2nd Friday of the semester.

All students who change their schedule by dropping or adding a course should consult with Academic Advising to ensure they will continue to meet degree and graduation requirements. Students should also consult with Student Financial Services to be fully informed of the impact of course changes on their financial aid.

Please visit the [Tuition Refund Schedule](#) webpage and view the “All Graduate Students” charts to assist with your understanding of the financial effects of dropping a course.

For registration guidelines and dates per semester, please refer to the [Office of the Registrar](#) or the [Academic Calendar](#).

### **Course Withdrawal**

If you are unable to continue in a specific course you can withdraw from the course up until the Friday of the 8th week of the semester by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Please refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for semester specific withdrawal dates. After this deadline, students cannot withdraw from a course: students will remain registered and earn a letter grade.

It is highly recommended that you speak to your instructor and your academic advisor prior to requesting a course withdrawal. A grade of “W” will be noted on your official transcript. Students are allowed to withdraw from each course (i.e. MHEO 415) no more than twice.

Students must inform Academic Advising via email if they intend to withdraw from a course, as they will need approval from Advising in order to complete the course withdrawal paperwork. Students who elect to withdraw from a course during the withdrawal period may still be responsible for a portion of the tuition. The percentage of tuition to be refunded is calculated using the official drop date of the course, as determined by the Registrar, based on your online (Workday), written or email request. Non-attendance does not constitute a drop or withdrawal from the course.

A student who withdraws from all courses and does not plan to return to Simmons will need to complete a Program Withdrawal form. For information on Program/University Withdrawal, please see the [Student Progression Policies](#) section.

In all cases, students should be aware that any reduction in the number of registered credit hours and subsequent charges may impact their financial aid and expected program completion date.

### **Incomplete**

Required coursework must ordinarily be completed by the last day of the term, as listed on the [Simmons University Academic Calendar](#). In extenuating circumstances, students may request an "incomplete" by obtaining approval from the course Section Instructor. Students must inform their Academic Advisor of their intention to request an incomplete.



The student must request the Petition for Incomplete Grade form from their Instructor. The form must be completed and submitted in order to be officially granted an incomplete grade in the course. Once the form is submitted, a grade of "I" will be entered by the Office of the Registrar.

It is the student's responsibility to monitor their progress and complete all work so that the Section Instructor can submit a final grade by the date set. Students can only extend their final grade with an incomplete for two weeks from the last day final grades were due. If a student does not submit required work by the new due date, the Instructor will grade the student based on what has been done up until that point.

Grades not submitted by the section instructor to the Office of the Registrar on the approved deadline will automatically be converted to a grade of "F". Incomplete grades not accompanied by a petition will be automatically converted to a grade of "F" by 11:59pm EST on the date grades are due.

### **Audit**

Students who would like to audit a course in the MPH program should contact the Program Director.

### **Student Responsibilities Involving Time Zones**

The MPH program defaults to Eastern Time; program communications and other documentation will include Eastern Time. Students are responsible for adjusting for time zone differences.

Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due in the student's home time zone (*i.e.*, if an assignment is due at 11:59pm and a student lives in the Pacific time zone, the assignment must be turned in at 11:59pm Pacific Time).

### **Grade Appeal**

Grade appeals can occur for the following three reasons: 1) computational error; 2) arbitrariness or capriciousness; 3) unlawful discrimination. If a student believes that they have the basis to appeal a final grade, they should follow the grade appeal procedures and deadlines outlined below.

A grade appeal must be initiated within five days of the posting of the grade under appeal. A student cannot appeal a grade after they have graduated. Students should contact their Academic Advisor for assistance with the grade appeal process.

### **Explanation of Grounds for Appeal**

#### **1. Computational Error.**

The section instructor is alleged to have made a mistake in the mathematical computation of the course grade. If the section instructor discovers a computational error in calculating a student's grade, they should submit the changed grade to the Registrar's Office. The section

instructor should notify the student of the error and resulting change; the student has the right to question or appeal this grade following the procedures outlined below. If a student believes that a mistake has been made in the computation of their grade, they should first speak with the section instructor. If the section instructor agrees, they should notify the Program Director and the Registrar's Office to update the grade. If the section instructor does not agree, the student may then follow the procedures and deadlines outlined below.

## 2. Arbitrariness or Capriciousness.

The student alleges that the grade was based on something other than performance in a course (i.e. non-academic criteria); or the grade reflects standards different from those applied to other students in the course; or the grade departs from the standards of evaluation set forth in the syllabi or other written document in a substantial, unreasonable, and unannounced way. In this case, the student should follow the procedures and deadlines outlined below.

## 3. Discrimination.

The student alleges that the grade reflects a violation of the University's [non-discrimination policy](#). In this case, the student should follow the [Grievance Procedure](#) for bringing a claim of unlawful discrimination.

# Grade Appeal Procedures

## Level I Procedure

### **First Step:** Informal Resolution with Section Instructor.

If the student believes they have received an unfair course grade, they shall attempt to resolve the matter informally with the section instructor who assigned the grade. The section instructor shall meet with the student to consider their reasons for believing the final grade to be unfair. If the section instructor does not believe there is merit for a grade change, they notify the student. The student may then proceed to the second step below. If the section instructor believes there is reason to change the grade, they should notify the Registrar's Office and the Program Director of the grade change.

**Deadlines:** The student must make their appeal to the section instructor no later than five days after the grade has been posted. If the grade is not to be changed, the section instructor will notify the student of their decision within five days of their meeting. If the grade is to be changed, the section instructor notifies the Registrar's Office and Program Director within five days of their meeting with the student. The Registrar's Office will notify the section instructor when the change has been processed so that the section instructor can notify the student.

### **Second Step:** Informal Resolution with Program Director.

If, after the section instructor's notification of their consideration of the initial grade appeal, the student continues to believe that the grade is unfairly assigned, the student shall meet with the Director of the Program in which the course was taken and explain the grounds for the student's grade appeal. The student will provide all supporting course materials. The Program Director shall meet with the section instructor. If the section instructor, after

discussion with the Program Director, agrees that the grade should be changed, If the section instructor does not agree, the student may proceed to the third step below.

**Deadlines:** The student must submit an appeal with the Program Director within five days after notice of the decision in "first step" above. The Program Director informs the student of their decision within five instructional days of their meeting.

### Level II Procedure

If a student is unsatisfied with the decision of the Level I appeal, the student may pursue a Level II appeal with the School of Sciences and Health Professions' Graduate Program Appeals Committee (SSHP GPAC). The student must request a meeting with the SSHP GPAC Chairperson to initiate Level II academic appeal. Refer to the [Appeals Procedures](#) section of this handbook for specific details and requirements related to Level II academic appeals.

### Level III Procedure

Students who are unsatisfied with the Level II appeal decision may seek further review through the Level III appeal procedure which is heard by the Dean of the School of Sciences and Health Professions (SSHP). Refer to the [Appeals Procedures](#) section of this handbook for specific details and requirements related to Level III academic appeals.

Please note that although individual assignments become part of a course grade appeal, only the final grade in a course is open to appeal under this process. As a result of the grade appeal process, the final grade may be raised, lowered, or stay the same. The grade appeal process will not attempt to grade or re-grade individual assignments or aspects of course work other than the final grade. Similarly, no new or revised course work can be requested by the student or accepted by the section instructor as part of a grade appeal process. Records of all graded material, including examinations, papers, homework, etc. shall be maintained by individual section instructors until the end of the grade appeal procedure period. Students are strongly encouraged to maintain copies of all work submitted to the section instructor as well as graded work returned to the student by the section instructor.

## **Student Complaint Process**

The Department of Public Health applies a restorative approach to complaints and grievances from students related to an instructor's performance or expectations, when appropriate. Through a restorative approach, we seek to identify and repair the impact through effective and positive communication.

For any university-related concerns beyond an instructor's performance or expectations, MPH students should refer to the MPH Student Handbook; undergraduate students should refer to the Simmons University Undergraduate Course Catalog. To make a report on any of the following issues, please contact the following individuals:

- [Unlawful Discrimination/Harassment](#): General Counsel's Office
- [Title IX \(Sexual Harassment\)](#): Title IX Coordinator
- [Accessibility-Related Concerns](#): Section 504 Coordinator

- [Bias Impact Report Process](#): to report bias, microaggressions, or prejudice.

Any issue that does not fall into one of the above categories is eligible for the process specified below. If you are unsure where your circumstance falls, please contact the program director for guidance.

### **1. Seek resolution directly with the instructor**

If possible, an individual student or group of students should directly discuss with the Section Instructor involved in any misunderstanding or grievance related to the Section Instructor's performance or expectations. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the student has the prerogative of informing the section instructor of the intention of bringing the situation to the Program Director.

### **2. Confer with the Program Director**

If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved with the instructor, the student may go to the Program Director to discuss the situation. The Program Director will review all information available. If further action appears necessary, the Program Director, or designee, will first approach the student and instructor about whether they are amenable to participating in a Restorative Conference between all individuals involved.

In instances where either or both invitees decline to participate, the Program (and/or Dean or Simmons) will address the matter outside of the Restorative Conference process.

### **3. Restorative Conference**

The Restorative Conference is a voluntary process through which a student (who is reporting concerns regarding the performance or expectations of their Section Instructor) and the respective Section Instructor may meet with the assistance of the Program Director to discuss the conduct and its impact and to engage in an opportunity for growth.

The goal of the conference is to provide an opportunity to remedy the impact the student felt and for the instructor and/or program to be a participant in repairing the impact felt by the student. The conference may conclude with a written agreement that outlines specific actions that will be taken by all individuals involved. If there is no written agreement, the facilitator will share a summary of the conference with the individuals involved.

1. The Program Director or other appointed facilitator will contact the student, instructor, and any others involved in the situation to gather information and understand the impact that the incident has had on the student. Others may be consulted based on their relationship with any of the people involved or if they have been identified as having knowledge of the situation.
2. Should the student and instructor both voluntarily agree to participate in a conference, at a mutually agreed upon time a conference will be convened (usually virtually) with all invited participants. During the conference, all parties have the opportunity to share their perspectives on the incident, its impact on themselves and others, and what they would like to see happen as a result. Together, the group will begin to identify actions intended to repair the impact.

3. At the end of the conference, the facilitator will produce a draft of a written agreement. Once the drafted agreement is signed, the conference is considered completed. If there is no written agreement, the facilitator will provide a summary of the conference and the conference is considered completed.
4. Each individual who signed the agreement is responsible for ensuring that it is followed. All parties understand that other dispute resolution options may still be available if commitments are not met. All of the participants understand that other and/or additional measures may be implemented by the Program, Department Chair, Dean, or Simmons to address the conduct in question.
5. Where appropriate, the facilitator(s) may report back to the Department as to the result of the conference. However, details of the conference dialogue will generally not be shared with anyone outside the conference itself, except in circumstances where it is appropriate to share the information with other University stakeholders in accordance with University policy and as needed. Any notes taken by the facilitator(s) during the conference will generally be destroyed upon its conclusion unless the notes are needed as a part of another University process.

## **Student Progression Policies**

### **Registration and Academic Plan of Study**

Students should register for courses each term in accordance with their Academic Plan of Study, provided by their Academic Advisor. Students who do not register for classes in consecutive terms and are not on an official leave, or have not officially withdrawn, will be administratively withdrawn by Simmons. If a student is administratively withdrawn by Simmons, a new admissions application will be required to be considered for return to active student status.

### **Length of Time to Complete Degree**

Students must complete the degree within the established time allotted, beginning from the date of first enrollment and regardless of semester(s) away from the University. The specific amount of time for degree completion varies by program:

- All programs must be completed within five years of enrollment.
- Dual degree programs must be completed within six years of the date of first enrollment.

### **Satisfactory Progress Towards Degree**

Students must receive a passing grade of “B-” or better in all required MPH courses to demonstrate attainment of learning outcomes associated with the Program Learning Framework.

### **Leaves of Absence, Withdrawal from the University**

#### **Withdrawal from the University**

Students who wish to withdraw from the program and university must complete the



University Withdrawal Form, which they can obtain from their Academic Advisor. Students should consult with their Academic Advisor and with Student Financial Services for information on the implications of withdrawal for tuition and student loans.

A request for withdrawal is effective on the day it is received by the Registrar's Office. Students who withdraw during the semester are assigned grades based on the Course Withdrawal policy.

If a student withdraws from all of their courses, fails to return from leave of absence after the date approved by the Registrar, fails to register for any courses by the end of the Add/Drop period, or fails to confirm their plan of study, they will be withdrawn from the University.

### **Voluntary Leave of Absence**

Students wishing to leave the University for a temporary period, with the intention of returning to complete their degree, may apply to take a leave of absence (LOA). Students considering a leave of absence should consult their Academic Advisor and establish a new plan of study.

In order to take an official leave of absence, students must complete a Leave of Absence form and an Intent to Return form, both of which will be provided by their Academic Advisor. A student requesting a LOA must state the reason for the leave and the semester in which they intend to return. Students who take a leave of absence during the semester are assigned grades based on the Course Withdrawal policy.

Leaves will not be ordinarily granted for periods longer than one academic year. The request for the extension of a leave (for a maximum of one year) is approved only in unusual circumstances. Extension requests must be made before the expiration of the original leave of absence. Leaves of absence for graduate students may not exceed a cumulative total of two years. Students who do not return at the end of an authorized Leave of Absence will be withdrawn from their academic program and may need to reapply to the program. Students are expected to register for classes upon returning from a leave of absence.

### **Involuntary Leave of Absence**

Simmons University is committed to the safety and well-being of its community members and to the integrity of the living and learning environment. Our goals, therefore, are to maintain the health and safety of each individual in our community and to enable all enrolled students to participate fully in the life of the University.

In instances in which a student's mental, emotional, or medical health poses a threat to themselves and/or others, becomes a barrier to appropriate or prescribed levels of self care, or causes significant disruption to the activities of the University community, such students may be required to take an involuntary leave of absence from the University.

In instances when a student's mental, physical or emotional health may pose a direct, imminent, threat to the safety and well-being of the Simmons community, or the student has been admitted to a health care setting to undergo intensive medical or psychological treatment (hospitalization, intensive outpatient or inpatient program), the Director of Student Support or designee, as an interim measure, can place the student on an involuntary leave of

absence from the University. When applicable the student will be informed in writing of the actions that led to the student being placed on leave and direct the student to the process for return. The student's parent/guardian/emergency contact person may be notified that the student is in a potentially dangerous situation.

Any student placed on an involuntary leave of absence will not be allowed to remain on campus, including participating in Simmons sponsored events.

In circumstances when the student has not met direct threat/inpatient criteria, the Director of Student Support or designee may, based off of observable/recorded behavior, still require a student to undergo an individualized psychological and/or medical assessment in order to make an informed decision regarding the student's ability to meet the academic, social and emotional requirements of being a Simmons student. This evaluation can be conducted by a member of the University's clinical staff, or by a student's external health care provider who is treating the student. The student will be required to sign a release that gives permission to the University's designated clinical personnel to speak with their external evaluating health care provider and to allow for the release of any relevant medical reports as part of the assessment. If the student chooses not to engage in the process listed above, then she/he will be required to take an involuntary leave of absence.

If following the evaluation, a leave is deemed unnecessary, the Dean for Student Affairs or designee may impose other conditions and/or requirements which the student would be required to comply with as a condition of continued enrollment at the University.

In any instance in which a leave is required, the Dean for Student Affairs or designee will provide written notice to the student, including the specific requirements that must be met as a condition of eligibility for re-enrollment, the timeline for initiating and completing the return process, as well as the procedure for appealing the decision.

The duration of the leave is typically no fewer than six full months, although the specific length of the leave will be based on the student's individualized assessment and determined by the Dean or designee on a case-by-case basis. When a student takes leave before the end of a semester, whether voluntary or involuntary, Simmons' usual tuition schedule applies.

### **Process for Returning to Simmons after an Involuntary Leave**

Simmons University students who have been placed on an Involuntary Leave of Absence will be required to undergo an individualized assessment to be cleared to return to Simmons, prior to their return to the University. They are also required to sign an authorization form that enables the hospital, treatment facility, and/or all pertinent external health care providers to release information necessary for the review process. The review process will involve an interview with the appropriately licensed Simmons clinical staff member as well as the Dean of Student Affairs or designee.

Following the interview with an individual of the clinical staff, a recommendation that is based off the student's report, the student's treatment history, information gathered from the external treatment facility, and/or a student's personal health care provider, will be shared with the Dean for Student Affairs or designee regarding the student's readiness to return. Then, on a case by case basis, the Dean of Student Affairs or designee will make a

determination if the students are permitted to return to the Simmons community. If it is determined that the student can return, the student will meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee to establish a plan to return to the University and identify community resources. As a condition of continued enrollment and, if applicable, as a condition of re-admittance to the residence halls, the following criteria must be met:

1. The consulting health care provider must find that the student has maintained a significant level of physical, mental, or emotional stability along with the skill set necessary to successfully engage in the student's academic program as well as the activities associated in being a Simmons student.
2. The student and the consulting Simmons clinical staff member in conjunction with all relevant external health care providers must establish and agree upon a plan for continued managed care after returning to the University.
3. The student must commit to following the recommended and established treatment plan. If, after reviewing all pertinent information, the Dean of Student Affairs or designee denies a student's request to return from an involuntary leave of absence, or the student disagrees with the conditions established as part of the return process, the student can appeal the decision in writing to the Vice President of Student Affairs.

### **Academic Probation**

Students must pass all core, required MPH courses with a "B-" or better, and must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.67. If a student receives a grade below "B-" in a required MPH course, they will be placed on academic probation, and will need to repeat the course in the next available semester. If a student achieves a final grade of "B-" or better when repeating the course, they are removed from probation status.

Students may pass elective courses with a "C" or better, so long as they have maintained the minimum cumulative GPA requirement of 2.67. In the event a student does not meet the minimum passing grade, or GPA requirement, the student will be placed on academic probation and must take another elective.

Students may be placed on academic probation as a result of a violation of the Simmons Honor System. In such cases, the terms and duration of the academic probation will be provided in writing to the student once their case has been reviewed according to Simmons' policies.

### **Dismissal**

Students who do not pass any two courses (including a repeated course) with "B-" or better will be dismissed from the Simmons MPH program.

### **Appeal for Reinstatement**

#### Level I Procedure

A student who has been dismissed from the Simmons MPH program has the right to appeal

for reinstatement to the Program Director. Within three (3) days of receiving a dismissal letter, a dismissed student can submit an appeal letter to their Academic Advisor. The Academic Advisor will submit the letter and any additional documentation to the Program Director for review. The appeal letter should include an explanation regarding the circumstances that led to the failed courses, a plan to address the circumstances, and the student's plan for moving forward in the program. Students may also submit additional documentation for their appeal. The Program Director will respond to the student's appeal within 10 business days of its receipt.

### Level II Procedure

If a student is unsatisfied with the decision of the Level I appeal, the student may pursue a Level II appeal with the School of Sciences and Health Professions' Graduate Program Appeals Committee (SSHP GPAC). The student must request a meeting with the SSHP GPAC Chairperson to initiate Level II academic appeal. Refer to the [Appeal Procedures](#) section of this handbook for specific details and requirements related to Level II academic appeals.

### Level III Procedure

Students who are unsatisfied with the Level II appeal decision may seek further review through the Level III appeal procedure which is heard by the Dean of the School of Sciences and Health Professions (SSHP). Refer to the [Appeal Procedures](#) section of this handbook for specific details and requirements related to Level III academic appeals.

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**

To be eligible and continue to receive Federal Student Aid (FSA), students must make satisfactory academic progress toward achieving and completing their program of study through measurement of qualitative (GPA) and quantitative (completed credits) standards.

- Qualitative Standard: Students enrolled in a graduate degree program must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.67.
- Quantitative Standard: A graduate student must complete at least 50% of all credits attempted. This is calculated by dividing the total credits earned by the total credits attempted.
- Graduate students are required to complete all credits within the timeframe established by Simmons. All credits attempted will count towards this timeframe. Graduate degree candidates should consult their program as the number of credits required varies per program.
- Note: Withdrawals after the add/drop period count as attempted but not completed credits.

For more information on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), please see the complete information and policies on the [Student Financial Services Website](#).

## **Appeal Procedures**

Students must begin an appeal process with the Level I appeal procedure carried out within the program. The SSHP Graduate Program Appeals Committee (GPAC) considers formal, Level II appeals relating to academic performance, professional performance, or program

exclusion. Level III appeals are heard by the SSHP dean whose decision is final.

## Level I Procedure

The Level I appeal procedures are carried out within the MPH program and are detailed within this handbook. Students should refer to the relevant section of this handbook for details of each procedure.

### Grade appeal

Students may appeal their final grade under certain conditions: (1) computational error; (2) arbitrariness or capriciousness; (3) unlawful discrimination. If a student believes that they have the basis to appeal a final grade, they should initiate a Level I appeal following the procedures and deadlines outlined in the [Grade Appeal Procedures](#) section of this handbook.

### Appeal for reinstatement

A student who has been dismissed from the MPH program has the right to appeal for reinstatement to the Program Director. Refer to the [Appeal for Reinstatement](#) section of this handbook for further details.

If the student finds Level I appeal is unsatisfactory they may pursue a Level II appeal.

## Level II Procedure

To initiate a Level II appeal, the student must contact the Chairperson of the SSHP Graduate Program Appeals Committee (SSHP GPAC). The SSHP GPAC Chairperson will explain the process to the student and provide the student with the SSHP Graduate Program Level II Appeals Committee Student Submission Form to gather more information.

The SSHP GPAC Chairperson will convene a 3-person committee (Secondary Appeal Committee) to determine whether there are grounds for appeal. Appeals are considered if:

- there is new information that could influence the outcome;
- the student views the original, first level decision as a disproportionate response for the circumstance;
- the student believes that the policies were administered unfairly by the program or department.

The Secondary Appeal Committee will review information from the Appeals Committee Student Submission Form and may arrange a virtual hearing (e.g., via Zoom) with the student. If it is determined that there is grounds for appeal the case goes on to a full committee hearing.

If the student's case goes on to a full committee hearing, the student will be provided with instructions for completing the formal Appeal process, including required forms or other documentation. A full SSHP GPAC Hearing will be scheduled to hear and vote on the students overall appeal case. The student will be notified of the decision within 10 business/university days of the hearing.



After a successful Level II appeal, the program must work with the student to make appropriate changes in accordance with the decision of the full SSHP GPAC.

If the Level II appeal is unsuccessful, the student may pursue a Level III appeal.

### **Level III Procedure**

Students must file a Level III Appeal by emailing the Dean of SSHP within 5 business/university days of receipt of the Level II decision. The SSHP Dean will hear the student's appeal and make a final decision. The Dean will contact the student to arrange a meeting. The student will be notified of the decision within 10 business/university days of the meeting. The Level III Appeal decision is final and binding.

## **Academic and Educational Records**

### **Commencement Participation Requirements**

Simmons University holds an in-person Commencement ceremony in May of each year. Graduate students who complete their programs by May of a given calendar year will be invited to participate in that same month's (May) in-person Commencement ceremony. Graduate students whose degrees are conferred in July and August directly following May Commencement will be invited to participate in the online Commencement ceremony and the in-person May Commencement ceremony of the following year.

### **Contact Information and Email Communications**

All students are responsible for keeping their contact information up to date. Students can obtain a Name and Address Change form from the Registrar's Office. Students are responsible for information sent to their simmons.edu email address. Students may forward the Simmons email to another email account.

## **Student Works**

### **Definition**

Student Works are papers, computer programs, dissertations, theses, artistic and musical works, and other creative works made by Simmons students in the pursuit of their academic coursework while enrolled as a student.

### **Ownership and Use**

Students shall own copyright in student work except in the following cases:

1. Copyright to Traditional Works authored by faculty with assistance from students shall be owned by faculty or the University in accordance with the terms of this policy.
2. The University shall own a student work that is a sponsored or externally contracted work as set forth in this Policy.
3. Students Works created in the course of the student's employment by the University shall be considered Works Made for Hire, and the University shall retain ownership and use of such works.
4. Works created by students for third parties as part of an internship or experiential

learning program are not subject to this policy.

To ensure that Simmons University continues to respect learners' rights, as a matter of policy, Simmons University and section instructors may not and will not accept information from learners under an obligation of confidentiality. Types of information that could be subject to confidentiality requirements include information obtained from an employer, unpatented inventions and information obtained pursuant to a nondisclosure agreement. Information that is subject to an obligation of confidentiality may not be used in any part of the Simmons University learning process, including but not limited to web postings, materials prepared for a course, dissertation work and comprehensive examinations.

To the degree that applicable laws or regulations provide for confidentiality, such as in connection with certain learner records and financial aid, Simmons University will abide by such laws or regulations.

Faculty members do not have authority to modify this policy. Simmons University therefore recommends that prior to disclosing any information to section instructors, learners ensure that the information being disclosed is not the confidential information of a third party.

## **Copyright**

As a community of scholars, Simmons University subscribes to the belief that intellectual property rights should be respected and honored, and that fair and appropriate use of published materials is both a legal and an ethical obligation that all members of the Simmons community should observe.

It is the policy of the University that all members abide by the relevant copyright laws. These laws include:

- The Copyright Law of the United States of America
- Title 17, U.S. Code, Sec. 101, et. seq.
- General Revisions of the Copyright Law
- Public Law 94-553 (effective January 1, 1978)
- 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act
- Public Law 105-304
- 1998 Sonny Bono Term Extension Act
- Public Law 105-298

The intent of the [Simmons University Copyright Policy](#) is to encourage scholarship conducted in the spirit of honest inquiry. Using the works of others obligates scholars to acknowledge such use whose works are protected by the law. It is the individual user's responsibility to comply with copyright law. You should permanently keep a copy in your files of any permission-to-use that you obtain. It is the individual user's responsibility to comply with copyright law. You should permanently keep a copy in your files of any permission-to-use that you obtain.

## **Intellectual Property**

As a community of scholars, Simmons University subscribes to the belief that intellectual

property rights should be respected and honored, and that fair and appropriate use of published materials is both a legal and an ethical obligation that all members of the Simmons community should observe. Students should consult the [Simmons Intellectual Property Policy](#).

Simmons students are not permitted to copy, upload, post, sell or otherwise share course materials from Simmons University courses through online services– which includes (1) tests, syllabi, exercises and other intellectual property developed or created by the section instructor and/or the University; and (2) lectures by section instructors and/or notes based on those lectures. Such online services include but are not limited to Coursehero, Luvu and OneClass.

Enrolling in a course at Simmons gives students permission to use such course materials for the purposes of participating in the class: listening to lectures, engaging in class discussions, reading the materials, taking notes on them, discussing them with classmates, and completing tests and assignments. It does not give you the right to post course materials, developed by a Simmons section instructor and/or by the University. Only the section instructor and/or the University has the right to share, sell, copy, upload, post or otherwise distribute such course materials, including notes based on section instructors' lectures.

Unauthorized copying, distribution or sharing of course materials developed by Simmons section instructors and/or the University, including lecture notes, is a violation of both the Simmons Honor Code and the federal Copyright Act.

### **Access to Learning Resources**

For regulatory, accreditation and other business purposes, the online learning management system may be accessed and observed by persons other than Simmons students, faculty and staff. Access to courses may be granted by the Program Director only after review of the request and determination that access is necessary, appropriate, does not infringe on the activities of learners and faculty, and does not threaten the academic integrity of the online course. Although the learning management system is not open to public access, it is not a private or confidential domain; neither students nor faculty should assume privacy within the online course.

## **Support Services**

### **Library Resources**

The Simmons University Library fully utilizes online and information technologies that facilitate providing information resources and services that support the University's curricular and research activities. The online catalog is an integrated library information system used to manage the Library's collections. It includes records for books, journals, government publications, audio-visual and multimedia materials, World Wide Web sites, and other library resources. Researchers can also connect to other library catalogs. Simmons MPH students may also access the [Public Health Research Guide](#) for research and citation resources. For more information, please contact the library directly at [library@simmons.edu](mailto:library@simmons.edu) or 617-521-2781 (Circulation Desk) 617-521-2784 (Reference Desk).

## The Writing Center

The Simmons University Writing Center can provide useful information and access to tools that can aid students in successful writing. For further information or questions, please visit the Writing Center's [webpage](#).

## Tutoring Support

Section Instructors serve a first line support for students who need extra help in their courses. Students should seek support from their instructor during office hours or as otherwise arranged. Students may also speak to their Academic Advisor to seek any additional support or referrals.

The Simmons Writing Center is available for students, in a limited capacity, to assist in the understanding of the structure of the current citation format and proofreading papers.

## Financial Aid

If you receive financial aid, it is extremely important to remain in contact with your financial aid counselor at the Office of Financial Services. Please contact [sfs@simmons.edu](mailto:sfs@simmons.edu) or [617-521-2001](tel:617-521-2001).

If a student is faced with financial hardship and is therefore unable to purchase textbooks before the start of the term, they may be able to receive book vouchers, which can be requested through the Office of Student Financial Services. Students will need to present a Simmons University student ID card in order to request a book voucher. Simmons University IDs can be obtained through the Campus Card Office. Students should request an ID card as soon as possible, as this process may take 2-3 weeks.

## Diversity and Inclusion

Simmons is committed to inclusive excellence in all aspects of an individual's community experience. Our values, vision and mission mandate that we strive to create an environment that is free from bias, prejudice, discrimination and hurtful/hateful acts that can prevent each member from thriving in the Simmons community.

**Our Value Statement.** We honor the humanity, dignity, and individuality of each member of our Simmons community.

**Our Vision of Our Community.** Simmons University will be a warm, welcoming, inclusive community that appreciates, values, and respects the humanity, dignity, diversity, and contributions of all its members. We are committed to engaging one another to address the dynamic, evolving issues of our community and our world.

**Our Diversity and Inclusion Mission.** We seek to extend to the entire Simmons University community opportunities for learning, growth, success, and meaningful participation and to build a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive culture for our community. To that end, we will engage in ongoing work to combat racism, bias, and all forms of individual and institutional

oppression.

We believe diversity is necessary in all aspects of an educational and residential environment to ensure inclusive excellence. As an academic community, rich with varied life experiences, perspectives, and values, we are uniquely positioned to facilitate the ongoing engagement and intellectual dialogue that honors the inherent and unique characteristics of each member of our community. This includes, but is not limited to, interrogating socially constructed concepts and addressing issues of power, phobia, isms, or any other detractors to building and sustaining an equitable community.

Simmons will affirm diversity and inclusion by moving beyond tolerance and civility to a respect and appreciation that recognizes the social positioning of underrepresented and marginalized segments of the population.

Simmons values academic excellence, intellectual freedom, critical thinking, leadership, innovation, respect for the dignity of all individuals, and continuous improvement. We adhere to policies and practices that promote and support diversity and inclusion. We prepare students to be well informed, open-minded, and sensitive to the values and diversity of others. We strive to foster an atmosphere where students can become actively engaged leaders in a changing, diverse society. We promote this goal through proactive and continual exchange of ideas among students, faculty and the general college community.

To ensure that these goals are attained, Simmons University commits to the following principles.

- We recognize, respect and honor the inherent individuality of all. We strive to ensure that all decisions concerning the educational progress of students are based on considerations appropriate to an academic institution and not on factors such as race, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, or veteran status.
- All students are given equal access to the University's programs and resources. Admission to the University's undergraduate baccalaureate program considers people who self-identify as women. the University is committed to admitting qualified students of any race, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, or veteran status to all programs and activities made generally available to students at the University, including scholarship and loan programs, athletic programs, and other College-administered student services, and social, educational and recreational programs.
- We subscribe to the policies set forth in Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which mandates equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities in educational programs and activities.
- We are committed to creating an atmosphere where diversity is supported with understanding, respect, and encouragement. the University does not tolerate unlawful or other harassment of employees or students. Any discrimination or harassment by any member of the faculty, staff, or student body against any other member of the community will be handled according to the process articulated in the [Bias Response Protocol](#), [Title IX Policy](#), Faculty Policy Manual, Employee Handbook, and other relevant Simmons policies.

The [Office of Communications, Diversity and Inclusion](#) is located in the Main Campus Building, C-216K. They can be reached at 617-521-2041 or [multicultural@simmons.edu](mailto:multicultural@simmons.edu).

## Advising and Support

### Academic Advising & Student Support

General academic advising questions can be sent to [mphadvising@simmons.edu](mailto:mphadvising@simmons.edu).

Each MPH student has a dedicated Academic Advisor (AA). The AA provides guidance with regard to questions or conflicts that might arise with progression through the program or courses, your plan of study, and leave of absences. In addition, your AA might assist with clarification of your learning styles and needs, along with guidance on academic policy or information in the student handbook. Your Academic Advisor may also reach out to you regarding special program requirements like the MPH immersion courses.

Students can find their Academic Advisor in Starfish or in Workday.

### Career Advising

Simmons Online offers career support services throughout students' time in the program and after graduation. Career development is a valuable tool for you as you consider, define and refine your career goals related to the completion of your program.

- 1-on-1 Career Coaching Appointments  
Connect directly with a career advisor to discuss your career goals, your resume, or your networking strategy. During these appointments, staff can help with résumé reviews, mock interviews, salary negotiation, career goal and path definition, and much more.
- Employer Connections  
The career services team works with employers and program alumni to help answer key questions related to your field, so you can learn tips and tricks for getting hired. You can work with the career services team to help create a networking strategy to engage with alumni and employers alike. You also have access to exclusive job postings.
- Career Resources  
The career services team offers a library of career resources to assist students with application materials and career development. Resources include guides for interviews, tips for writing résumés and cover letters, templates, and more.

Students can visit the [Career Education Center](#) at any time to explore additional online resources.

## Course Cancellation Policy and Program Tuition

### Course Cancellation Policy

Simmons University reserves the right to cancel any courses without prior notification; however, every effort will be made to provide information on cancellations in a timely manner. In the event of cancellation, Simmons University will refund tuition charges

according to the refund schedule through Student Financial Services.

## **Program Tuition**

Tuition is charged by the credit hour. Tuition charges may be obtained by multiplying the number of credits by the per-credit tuition rate. The current tuition rate is available through Student Financial Services.

## **FERPA and Other Simmons University Policies**

Students have the right to view their official educational records, and the [University's student record-keeping practices](#) are based on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

Simmons University prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Please see the University's [Notice of Non-Discrimination](#) for information on how to report concerns or questions relating to sex discrimination.

Students should review and familiarize themselves with the [Simmons University Student Handbook](#) which includes policies applicable to all Simmons University students, including the [student grievance process](#).