The Path of Distinction (PoD) was created to provide medical students with a formal option to merge medical training with the principles and practice of public health by organizing existing and new programs, courses and experiences into a meaningful series of courses and service-learning experiences. The program will allow students to enhance their clinical training by incorporating population health-based studies.

A framework to customize population-focused experiences

Students who participate in the PoD may focus their public health studies on a number of areas including urban, rural, or global health by opting to take an additional eight credits of electives during the four years of medical school. The PoD is not intended to compete with existing School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) programs such as WARM, TRIUMPH, or the Global Health Program, rather, it provides a framework to customize population-focused experiences and organize courses and opportunities into a meaningful educational offering.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Medical students who participate in the PoD will:
• Complete a minimum of 8 credits of public health coursework
• Work with a project mentor to complete a public health project
• Complete a scholarly paper
• Provide an oral presentation or poster
• Be recognized as having completed the Path of Distinction in Public Health in their Dean's letter
• Gain credits that are transferable to the UW-Madison MD-MPH Dual Degree Program

PoD CURRICULUM

All PoD students are required to complete a minimum of eight credits of approved electives along with a public health project. This is intended to deepen the student’s public health knowledge. Courses and experiences may be selected based on the student’s specific area(s) of interest.
• PHS 712 Leadership in Medicine and Public Health (1 credit), required
• Public health elective credits (minimum 7 credits)
• Public health project

“I came to UW Madison because programs like the PoD promoted helping students like me develop a public health lens and structure it around a clinical practice. I hope to be able to combine the training from the PoD with my clinical experience to have impactful, empowering encounters with communities and patients.”

Carly Kruse, MD PoD student, Class of 2017
PUBLIC HEALTH PROJECT
All PoD students complete a 160 hour public health project. PoD students complete their public health project between their M1 and M2 year. This allows students to establish a framework for further developing their public health knowledge and skills throughout medical school. Some students are able to combine their Shapiro Summer Research project with their PoD projects, while others are able to develop a project through a WARM summer externship or through a global health field experience. Ultimately students are able to develop a project that will benefit their own unique interests.

Group advising sessions are held monthly during the spring semester to help students plan and fine tune their summer projects. We encourage all PoD students to attend these sessions in order to receive the assistance they need from PoD staff.

PoD students work with a project mentor while completing the project.

PROJECT MENTOR
With the assistance of PRIME staff, PoD students work with a mentor while completing their project. The mentor guides the student during the project, providing feedback and assistance with the written and oral presentation requirements.

PROJECT SUMMARY
Mastering the competency of communicating effectively is one of the cross-cutting interdisciplinary competencies for public health professionals and as such is a requirement of the PoD. PoD students are required to complete both an oral and written summary of their public health project.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
Students complete an 8-10 page scholarly paper or published manuscript.

ORAL COMMUNICATION
Students may choose one of the following for the oral communication component of their Project Summary.
• 10 minute presentation
• Poster

ADMISSIONS PROCESS
To ensure the success of all students, the PoD program requires students to pass all medical school coursework to remain in the PoD. Students can apply during their first two years of medical school but are encouraged to apply early to plan for elective courses and summer field experience opportunities.

ADMISSION DEADLINE
Application Deadline: January 15
Application Materials available at: med.wisc.edu/pod

HOW TO APPLY
Required Application Materials:
• Application
• Resume
• Personal statement (max 500 words) describing your previous experience and motivation to combine public health with your clinical training.

Submit application materials to: mdpublichealth@mailplus.wisc.edu.

Path of Distinction in Public Health Program:
Website http://med.wisc.edu/pod
Email mdpublichealth@mailplus.wisc.edu
Phone (608) 263-2298
Fax (608) 263-2820
Address 2363 Health Sciences Learning Center 750 Highland Avenue Madison, WI 53705