



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Dear Incoming Student:

On behalf of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health (DLSPH), I am writing to welcome you to the Social and Behavioural Health Sciences Program (SBHS) and the respective PhD specialization which you have been admitted. The *Health and Behavioural Science* (HBS) and *Social Science and Health* (SSH) specializations each has a slightly different orientation. Included is some information about the program to help you navigate your early days with us.

The Program

The Social and Behavioural Health Sciences Program within the Dalla Lana School of Public Health (DLSPH) draws upon many social science disciplines - primarily sociological, psychological, and a range of methodological approaches, both qualitative and quantitative. The Dalla Lana School of Public Health shares many faculty and resources throughout the larger public health and hospital system, along with faculty in other departments and faculties within the University. Researchers and practitioners working with the SBHS program seek to understand public health issues, systems and interventions; as well as to address and understand the broader social determinants of health, and health behaviours of individuals and populations.

The variation within the SBHS program enables the student to pursue a unique learning and research experience tailored to his/her topic of interest, using either a qualitative or quantitative approach. The course of study for each specialization includes a set of distinct requirements which reflect some differences in the “parent” disciplines. Students in the HBS area, generally have a psychological, multi-disciplinary or systems-based orientation. The SSH area is more sociologically based and has an emphasis on critical theory. Students in both specializations are expected to think critically and contribute to the development of public health knowledge and theory.

When do things start?

All students beginning a graduate program in DLSPH are required to take **CHL 5004H *Introduction to Public Health Sciences***, a course that is designed to provide a common introduction to the field of public health. This course will run from **August 29<sup>th</sup> to September 9<sup>th</sup> (with no classes on September 5<sup>th</sup> for the Labour Day holiday)**. Preliminary information has been mailed to you.

All other DLSPH courses start the week of **September 12<sup>th</sup>**. Please refer to the timetable (<http://www.phs.utoronto.ca/courses.asp>) for any exceptions. **Courses in other departments**

across the university may start the week of September 6<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in exploring courses outside DLSPH, please consult relevant websites.  
Orientation Sessions

**1. Graduate Office Orientation for all students** in the various Public Health Sciences graduate programs, (see other materials in this package).

**Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 11:40-12:30 pm**  
155 College Street  
Room 610 Health Sciences Auditorium

**2. Social and Behavioural Health Sciences Program Orientation:** During this orientation session you will have the opportunity to meet the Program Director, Faculty and Supervisors. Other students in the Program will also be at this orientation, including your “buddy” -- a senior student who has volunteered to offer information and support to incoming students.

**Monday August 29<sup>th</sup>, 3:30-5:00 pm**  
Room 618 Health Sciences Bldg  
155 College Street

There are a number of social events planned over the first two weeks. Take advantage of these opportunities to meet other students and faculty.

### Supervisors

In early September, you should contact your Supervisor to discuss your course selection for the fall term.

Information regarding the SBHS Division: [http://www.phs.utoronto.ca/DIV\\_SBS.asp](http://www.phs.utoronto.ca/DIV_SBS.asp)

Please refer to the DLSPH Website for course requirements. In the fall term SSH students should be taking CHL5101H: Social Theory and Health, which is one of the two required core courses. . In order to fulfill the core theory requirement, HBS students are required to take CHL5804H: Health Behaviour Change, in the fall term

In the first couple of weeks, students typically ‘shop’ widely for courses, sitting in on the opening session of several courses to see what they are like and to help make decisions about course selection. Typically, students take electives in the DLSPH, in other health science faculties (e.g., Nursing), and in a broad range of other departments around the University (e.g., OISE, Sociology, Psychology, Physical Education, Criminology, Political Science, Social Work, Women’s Studies). Students also exchange information about, and experiences with, various courses during the first couple of weeks, and senior HBS and SSH students are very good sources of information about courses outside the school. Some courses are not offered every year, have limited enrolment or have other restrictions, so check carefully, especially those courses offered outside of our own school. Be sure to discuss your course planning with your

Supervisor in terms of your longer term aspirations and research interests, tentative as these might be initially.

Plan your program thoughtfully and strategically

Read carefully through the PhD Program Guidelines [http://www.phs.utoronto.ca/DIV\\_SBS.asp](http://www.phs.utoronto.ca/DIV_SBS.asp) sense of the overall program objectives, organization and timeframe. Although there are some program requirements, each student has different experiences, background and circumstances that lead them to construct their programs differently, and to move along at different rates. However, don't worry if you aren't entirely clear about what you are going to do or where you are heading. Your sense of direction will become clearer as you proceed in the Program.

Need help?

Sandra Lang ([s.lang@utoronto.ca](mailto:s.lang@utoronto.ca) - 416-978-7086) in Room 508 provides administrative support to the SHBS program. In addition, the administrative staff of the Graduate Office in Room 620 ([dlsph.grad@utoronto.ca](mailto:dlsph.grad@utoronto.ca)) will be pleased to help you with routine administrative matters such as registration, enrolment, grades and awards. More procedural questions can be addressed to the Associate Director, Education, Dr. Andrea Sass-Kortsak ([a.sass@utoronto.ca](mailto:a.sass@utoronto.ca)) or Rachel Zulla, Graduate Affairs Assistant ([rachel.zulla@utoronto.ca](mailto:rachel.zulla@utoronto.ca))

Communication: Keep us informed of your whereabouts

Some of you will be moving, so please be sure to keep Sandra and Graduate Office staff informed of your current address. Also be sure to update ROSI as needed. Once you register, apply for a U of T e-mail address: all students **are required** to have a U of T e-mail address. This essential since all communication is done by this route and an UTORid is needed to access course materials posted on Blackboard ([www.portal.utoronto.ca](http://www.portal.utoronto.ca)).

This should be enough information to get you started. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Sandra Lang ([s.lang@utoronto.ca](mailto:s.lang@utoronto.ca) 416-978-7086), your supervisor, or me ([ted.myers@utoronto.ca](mailto:ted.myers@utoronto.ca)).

I look forward to meeting you in September.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Sincerely,



Ted Myers, PhD  
Professor  
Divisional Head, Social and Behavioural Health Sciences