

2026

Online Master of Science Curriculum Guide

60-credit • Online

Full-Time/Part-time (two years), Part-time (three years)

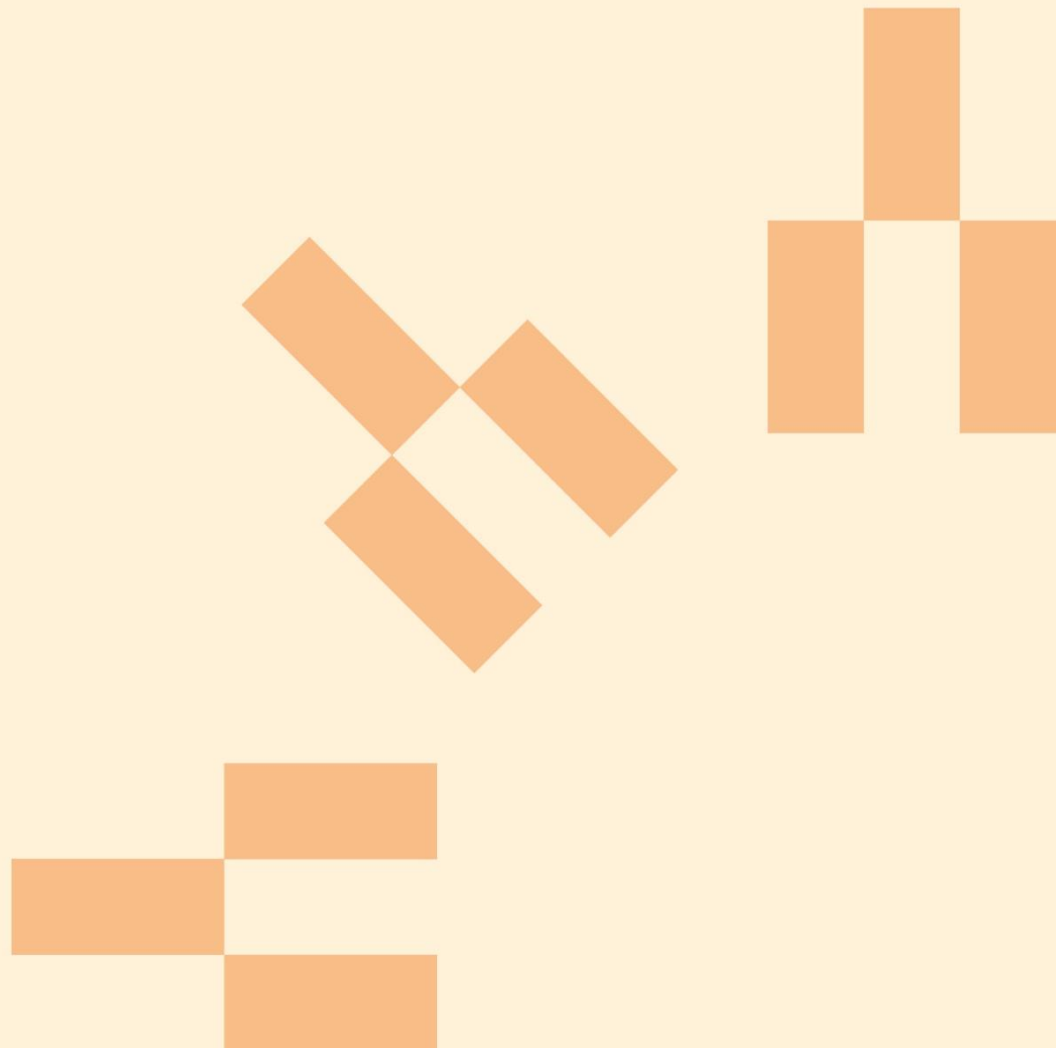


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Every effort is made to ensure the information contained in this guide is accurate at the time of posting. However, the curriculum, including degree requirements, courses, faculty, and program policies are subject to modification as deemed necessary by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to provide students with the most meaningful educational experience and to remain current with professional standards and guidelines.

This version of the Online SM Curriculum Guide pertains only to students matriculating in Fall 2026..

Online SM Leadership, Administration, and Resources

The Online SM program is supported by the [Office of Educational Programs](#).

Name	Title	Contact
Online SM Leadership and Administration		
Jeffrey Miller	Online SM Faculty Director	jwmiller@hsph.harvard.edu
Stephanie Lemoine	Assistant Director, MPH-EPI Program	slemoine@hsph.harvard.edu
Ellie Meredith	Educational Programs Coordinator	elliemeredith@hsph.harvard.edu
Online SM Contact Info		onlinesm@hsph.harvard.edu +1 617-432-0090

Registrar's Office

hsph.me/registrar • registrar@hsph.harvard.edu • 617-432-1032

677 Huntington Avenue, Kresge G4 Suite, Boston, MA 02115

[Academic Calendar](#) [Harvard Course Catalog](#) [Student Handbook](#)

[Student Knowledge Center](#) — information about course enrollment, cross-registration, etc.

Office of Career and Professional Development

hsph.me/careers • careers@hsph.harvard.edu • Kresge G4 Suite

Office of Community and Belonging

hsph.me/ocb • ocb@hsph.harvard.edu • Kresge G4 Suite

Office of Financial Aid

hsph.me/fin-aid-office • financialaid@hsph.harvard.edu • Kresge G4 Suite

Office for Student Affairs

hsph.me/student-affairs • studentaffairs@hsph.harvard.edu • Kresge G4 Suite

[Housing Resources](#) [Student Support Services](#)

Program Description and Overview

The Online Master of Science (SM) is a 60-credit, fully online degree designed to build research skills that culminate in a research project. Students begin with foundational coursework in epidemiology, biostatistics, and data science, along with required courses in emerging areas such as study design and artificial intelligence. Beginning in the second semester, students choose electives to tailor the curriculum to their academic and professional interests while developing practical research skills, including responsible conduct of research, academic writing, and scientific publishing.

The program can be completed in two years (four semesters), with full-time study in the first year and part-time study in the second, or over three years (six semesters) on a part-time schedule. Asynchronous courses provide flexibility to learn from anywhere in the world, while optional synchronous sessions offer opportunities to engage with faculty and peers in real time.

Program Options

TWO-YEAR PATHWAY:

Students complete their 60-credit Master of Science degree over four semesters (two academic years), with full-time study in Year One and a part-time schedule in Year Two. Students who want to pursue the two-year program should not have any work obligations during the first year of the program.

THREE-YEAR PATHWAY:

Students complete their 60-credit Master of Science degree over six semesters (three academic years), on a part-time basis, allowing them to balance academic and professional commitments.

Program Competencies

1. Design research studies in medicine and public health (e.g., study design and population selection, sample size justification, data analysis plans, methods of data acquisition and organization, data management methods, and protocol development).
2. Analyze and interpret quantitative data for scientific inference (e.g., graphical and tabular displays and visuals, descriptive statistics, statistical inference, and choice of appropriate statistical software for the data analysis).
3. Critically evaluate and apply principles of epidemiologic methods, including exposure and outcome measures, measures of association, bias and confounding, and study design options.
4. Collaborate and communicate effectively with research scientists in related disciplines.
5. Disseminate new knowledge in a research discipline through the preparation of a written report, comparison of different methodologies, and oral presentation of results.

Degree Requirements and Program Policies

Degree Requirements

In addition to meeting course load requirements and distributions, Online SM students must remain in good academic standing, complete program requirements within the designated time to degree, and meet the following academic conditions:

- 60 credits minimum
- Cumulative grade point average of at least 2.7
- Successful completion of all required courses
- Master's Culminating Experience

Pass/Fail Grading Policies

Students enrolled in the Online SM program **may not count more than 15 pass/fail credits** during the degree program.

1	Minimum of 60 credits	2	Cumulative GPA of at least 2.7
3	No more than 15 pass/fail credits	4	Master's Culminating Experience

Some required courses may only offer an ordinal option for grading. In addition, some electives may only offer pass/fail grading. In planning the use of your pass/fail credits, please keep in mind the grading options as you enroll in courses.

Academic Deadlines

Online SM students should follow the same drop/add/course change deadlines as other Harvard Chan School students. The deadlines for each term can be found in the [Academic Calendar Summary](#) on the [Registrar's Office website](#).

It is strongly recommended that students not join courses after they have begun, to avoid missing any assignments during the first two weeks of the course.

Harvard Email

Online SM students must check their Harvard email regularly for all communications from the School. The School will not communicate with students via their personal or work email accounts.

Leave of Absence

Students in the Online SM have the option of taking a leave of absence from the program; however, leave of absence request should be discussed with program staff prior to the official request being sent.

Cross Registration and On Campus Courses

Online SM Students enrolled in the Online SM are not permitted to take on campus. They are also not allowed to cross-register for other on-campus courses within Harvard University due to their non-resident student status.

Cross-Registration into Online Electives at Other Harvard Schools

Online SM students may cross-register into online courses offered at Harvard Medical School. Details on the cross-registration process can be found in the [Registrar's Office Student Knowledge Center](#). Please be aware that the online courses at Harvard Medical School may only be offered synchronously. To find HMS online courses, visit the [course search](#) website and sort by Harvard Medical School – Online (Instruction Mode) – Available for Harvard Cross Registration (Cross Registration). Below is a sample list of courses that may be available for Online SM students.

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits	Time (EST)
All courses below are offered at Harvard Medical School				
BETH 743	Pharmaceutical Ethics	Fall 1 2026	2	TBD
HO 705	Climate Change, Justice, and Beneficence	Spring 2027	4	3:00 pm-5:00 pm
HQS 707	Bioinformatics and Clinical Quality	Fall 2026	3	TBD
NCE 512	Big Data and Machine Learning in Healthcare Applicants	Spring 1 2027	2	5:00 pm-6:30 pm
NCE 520	Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine: Innovation in Research, Policy, and Clinical Care	Spring 2027	2	6:30 pm-8:00 pm
NCE 526	Healthcare for Patients with Disabilities: Current Landscape, Innovations, and Opportunities	Fall 2026	1	6:30 pm-8:00 pm
RA 702	Basic and Clinical Radiation Biology	Spring 2027	1	8:00 am-9:00 am

Course Descriptions and Syllabi

Students can view course descriptions by visiting the [Course Catalog](#). Course syllabi can be found on [Syllabus Explorer](#).

Field of Study and Program Changes

Students in the Online SM program are not eligible to switch into an on-campus degree program once admitted to the Online SM. Students who want to change to an on-campus degree program would need to reapply for that specific program.

Transfer Credits and Course Waivers

The Online SM program does not accept transfer credits or course waivers from institutions outside of Harvard Chan. Up to 20 non-degree credits previously completed at Harvard Chan may be transferred into the Online SM program and applied toward elective requirements, subject to approval by program faculty and staff; however, transfer credits do not reduce the program's tuition. Credits counted towards another degree cannot be counted towards the Online SM. Requests for waivers of required field of study courses based on prior Harvard Chan coursework will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are subject to approval by program faculty and staff. Waiving a course does not necessarily imply credit transfer.

Billing And Enrollment

Students are billed a flat rate at the beginning of each semester (fall and spring) until the full program cost has been met. Course enrollment and pre-paying your tuition bill are closely connected at the Harvard Chan School. For questions about tuition or student billing, visit the [Student Billing website](#) or contact the [Registrar's Office](#).

A continuation fee may be charged for any student who has paid their financial requirements but still has academic requirements to finish.

Online Programs at Harvard University

Harvard is authorized to offer distance education under the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), an agreement that allows institutions of higher education in Massachusetts to offer distance education to students residing in other states that participate in SARA. For information about SARA-related student complaint processes for distance education students, please see <https://vpal.harvard.edu/nc-sara>.

Policy for Using Generative AI in Courses

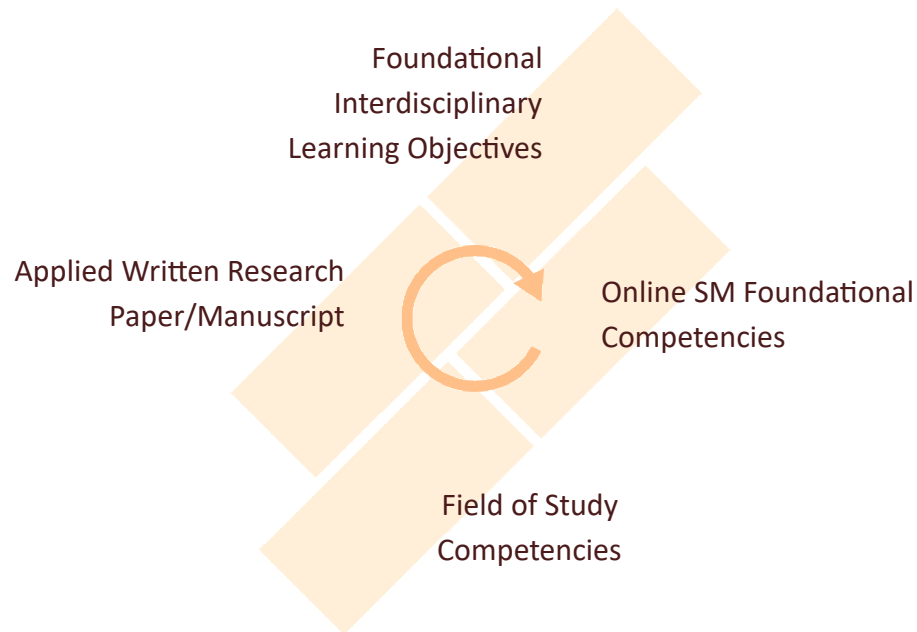
Unless otherwise specified by an instructor, it is a violation of the Harvard Chan School's academic integrity policies for students to use GAI to create all or part of an assignment for a course and submit that work as their own. This rule parallels other rules. Students may not ask another person to complete their assignments for their courses. Students may not copy something someone else has created, or re-write something someone else has written, without proper attribution.

In general, the School sees permissible uses of GAI in coursework to include seeking clarification on concepts, brainstorming ideas, or generating scenarios that help to contextualize what a student is learning. This may include, for example, using AI-powered web searches, having "conversations" with tools like ChatGPT to help explore ideas, refine thinking, identify examples, and better understand course material. It is also considered acceptable to use GAI to draft emails to instructors, students, and others in the community that are not being submitted as coursework.

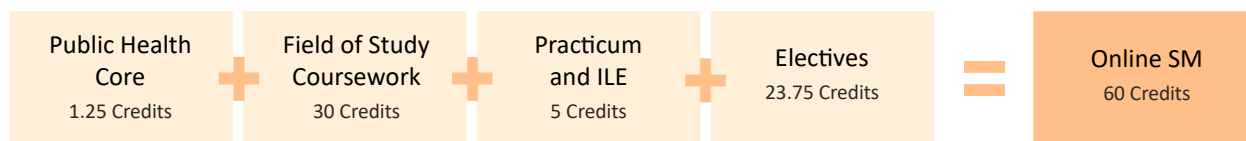
Online Master of Science: Program Curriculum

Harvard Chan's Competency and Application-Based SM Curriculum

Foundational Public Health Knowledge learning objectives and Foundational Competencies are primarily met through the Harvard Chan Online SM interdisciplinary core curriculum and the Master's Culminating Experience which is an applied written research paper/manuscript.



Two-Year Pathway Curriculum



YEAR 1 - FALL 2026

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 100	Foundations for Public Health for SM	Summer/Fall 2026	1.25
ID 570	Introduction to Statistical Methods	Fall 2026	5.0
ID 571	Core Principals of Data Science I	Fall 2026	2.5
ID 572	Introductions to Epidemiology Methods I	Fall 2026	2.5
ID 576	Scientific Integrity and Good Research Practices	Fall 2026	2.5
ID 578	Writing and Publishing Scientific Literature	Fall 2026	2.5
TOTAL CREDITS FALL 2026:			16.75

YEAR 1 - SPRING 2027

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 573	Applied Regression Analysis	Spring 2027	5.0
ID 574	Core Principles of Data Science II	Spring 2027	2.5
ID 575	Epidemiology Methods II	Spring 2027	2.5
EPI 525	Study Design for Epidemiologists	Spring 2 2027	2.5
Electives: see page 12 for list of online electives		Spring 2027	5.0
TOTAL CREDITS SPRING 2027:			17.50

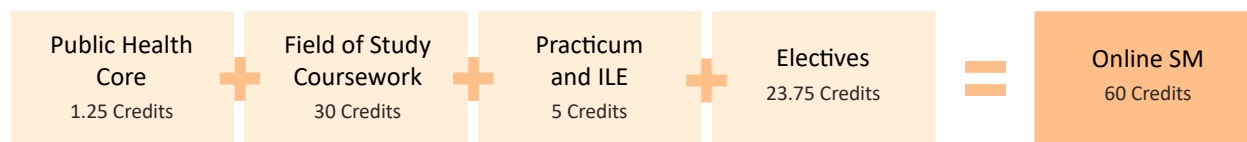
YEAR 2 - FALL 2027

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 577	AI & Research	Fall 2027	2.5
ID 579	Masters Culminating Experience I	Fall 2027	2.5
Electives: Electives: see page 12 for list of online electives		Fall 2027	8.75
TOTAL CREDITS FALL 2027:			13.75

YEAR 2 - SPRING 2028

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 580	Masters Culminating Experience II	Spring 2028	2.5
Electives: Electives: see page 12 for list of online electives		Spring 2028	10.0
TOTAL CREDITS SPRING 2028:			12.50

Three-Year Pathway Curriculum



YEAR 1 - FALL 2026

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 100	Foundations for Public Health for SM	Summer/Fall 2026	1.25
ID 570	Introduction to Statistical Methods	Fall 2026	5.0
ID 571	Core Principals of Data Science I	Fall 2026	2.5
ID 572	Introductions to Epidemiology Methods I	Fall 2026	2.5
TOTAL CREDITS FALL 2026:			11.25

YEAR 1 - SPRING 2027

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 573	Applied Regression Analysis	Spring 2027	5.0
ID 574	Core Principles of Data Science II	Spring 2027	2.5
ID 575	Epidemiology Methods II	Spring 2027	2.5
TOTAL CREDITS SPRING 2027:			10.00

YEAR 2 - FALL 2027

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 276	Scientific Integrity and Good Research Practices	Fall 2027	2.5
ID 577	AI & Research	Fall 2027	2.5
Electives: see page 12 for list of online electives		Fall 2027	5.0
TOTAL CREDITS FALL 2027:			10.00

YEAR 2 - SPRING 2028

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 580	Writing and Publishing Scientific Literature	Spring 2028	2.5
EPI 525	Study Design for Epidemiologists	Spring 2028	2.5
Electives: Electives: see page 12 for list of online electives		Spring 2028	5.0
TOTAL CREDITS SPRING 2028:			10.00

YEAR 3 - FALL 2028

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 579	Masters Culminating Experience I	Fall 2028	2.5
Electives: Electives: see page 12 for list of online electives		Fall 2028	7.5
TOTAL CREDITS FALL 2028:			10.00

YEAR 3 -SPRING 2029

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 580	Masters Culminating Experience II	Spring 2029	2.5
Electives: Electives: see page 12 for list of online electives		Spring 2029	6.25
TOTAL CREDITS SPRING 2029:			8.75

Online SM Master's Culminating Experience

Online SM Culminating Experience Purpose and Description

Online SM students will complete two courses during their final year in the program applying skills and knowledge already learned during previous SM coursework. The focus of the courses is on writing a research paper / manuscript detailing culminating research work of the student's choice. The paper must be original and individual writing, although the research around which the report is based can be either individual or collaborative work.

Online SM Possible Electives

Priority Enrollment Waves

Some electives may give priority to students in Harvard Chan's online or hybrid MPH programs; however Online SM students may enroll in those electives during Wave 2 or 3. [Priority enrollment waves](#) are used in my.harvard to manage elective enrollment. Online SM students should view the course description in my.harvard to view any priority waves.

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
EPI 526	Analysis of Publicly Available Databases for Epidemiologic and Health Services Research	Fall 2027	2.5**
EPI 527	Design and Conduct of Trials in Preventive Medicine	Fall 2027	2.5
EPI 528	Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis	Fall 2027	2.5**
EPI 529	Applications of Epidemiology	Fall 2027	1.25*
HPM 559	Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods for Public Health	Fall 2027	2.5
ID 224	Survey Research Methods for Public Health	Fall 2027	2.5
ID 226	Interventions for Global Health: Concepts and Methods	Fall 2027	2.5
ID 262	Emerging Issues in Humanitarian Response	Fall 2027	2.5
ID 514	Organizational Behavior	Fall 1 2027	2.5
ID 290	Emergency Response, Disasters and Public Health	Fall 2 2027	2.5
BST 215	Linear and Longitudinal Regression	Spring 2028	2.5
EPI 288	Introduction to Machine Learning and Risk Prediction	Spring 2028	2.5
EPI 529	Applications of Epidemiology	Spring 2028	1.25*
HPM 506	Practical Scientific Methods for Improving Health and Health Care	Spring 2028	2.5
ID 232	Communication Strategies and Tactics for Public Health Advocacy	Spring 2028	2.5
ID 276	Introduction to Nutrition Science	Spring 2028	2.5
RDS 202	Decision Science for Public Health	Spring 2028	2.5
ID 273	Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Healthcare	Spring 1 2028	2.5
ID 218	Financial Transactions and Analysis	Spring 1 2028	2.5

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
EPI 530	Infectious Disease Epidemiology	Spring 2 2028	1.25
ID 237	Resilient Health Systems in Low- and Middle-Income Countries	Spring 2 2028	2.5
ID 241	Dynamic Leadership: Navigating Through Crisis and Complexity	Spring 2 2028	2.5
ID 255	Public Health Leadership: Personal Mastery	Spring 2 2028	1.25*
ID 257	An Introduction to Implementation Science	Spring 2 2028	2.5
ID 523	Investigating Outbreaks	Spring 2 2028	1.25*
ID XXX	Humanitarian Methods	Spring 2028	2.5

*May only be taken for a Pass/Fail grade

**May only be taken for an Ordinal grade

Certificate and Concentration Programs

Overview

Online SM students are eligible to complete the **Healthcare Management, Applied Data Analysis, or Humanitarian Studies** online certificate programs, as well as apply for the School's concentration in **Public Health Leadership (PHL)**. The online certificate programs are managed by the Online SM team and the Public Health Leadership concentration is managed by the PHL program and staff.

Eligibility and Information

Students pursuing the Healthcare Management Certificate, Applied Data Analysis Certificate, or Humanitarian Studies Certificate may begin taking certificate courses during the second year of their program. Applications are not required. Each certificate requires intentional planning and rigorous coursework. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to pay attention to certificate requirements, course offerings, and pre-requisites.

Please note: Some courses within each certificate may have priority enrollment meaning seats are limited and enrollment is not guaranteed.

Please visit the [Public Health Leadership](#) website for more information on how to apply for the concentration. There are virtual and in-person options for students. Applications will be available in late August and there are two virtual information sessions about the concentration in early September.

Healthcare Management Certificate

Objective

The Healthcare Management Certificate offers students the opportunity to gain selected practical management skills that will improve their understanding of the management of healthcare systems and healthcare organizations, complement their public health training, and enhance their career opportunities.

Curriculum

Students must complete three of the four courses listed below, for a total of 7.5 credits. Students must take these courses for an ordinal grade and receive a B- or higher in all courses to receive the certificate

Healthcare Management Certificate Course List

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 218	Financial Transaction and Analysis	Spring 1	2.5
ID 273	Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Healthcare	Spring 1	2.5
ID 514	Organizational Behavior	Fall 2	2.5
HPM 506	Practical Scientific Methods for Improving Health and Healthcare	Spring	2.5

Applied Data Analysis Certificate

Objective

The Applied Data Analysis Certificate offers students the opportunity to gain skills for analyzing and interpreting public health data using a variety of statistical techniques.

Curriculum

Students must complete a total of 7.5 credits from the courses below. Students must take these courses for an ordinal grade and receive a B- or higher in all courses to receive the certificate.

Applied Data Analysis Course List

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
BST 215	Linear and Longitudinal Regression	Spring	2.5
EPI 271	Propensity Score Analysis: Theoretical & Practical Considerations	Winter or June	1.25
EPI 288	Introduction to Machine Learning and Risk Prediction	Spring	2.5
EPI 526	Analysis of Publicly Available Databases for Epidemiologic and Health Services Research	Spring	2.5
EPI 527	Design and Conduct of Trials in Preventative Medicine	Fall	2.5
EPI 528	Systematic Review and Meta-analysis	Fall	2.5
EPI 530	Introduction to Infectious Disease	Spring 2	1.25

Humanitarian Studies Certificate

Objective

The Humanitarian Studies certificate offers students the opportunity to complete an organized program of study that focuses on the normative underpinnings and practice of humanitarian response. Humanitarian Studies is a multi-disciplinary academic field that studies the challenges and needs of affected populations during crises. The curriculum covers a broad range of areas including civilian protection, international humanitarian law, human rights, disaster response, coordinated response, and crisis dynamics leadership.

Curriculum

Students must complete a total of 7.5 credits from the courses below. Students must take these courses for an ordinal grade and receive a B- or higher in all courses to receive the certificate.

Humanitarian Studies Course List

Course Number	Title	Semester	Credits
ID 290	Emergency Response, Disasters, and Public Health	Fall 2	2.5
ID 262	Emerging Issues in Humanitarian Response and Human Rights	Fall	2.5
ID 241	Dynamic Leadership: Navigation Through Crisis and Complexity	Spring 2	2.5
ID XXX	Humanitarian Methods	Spring	2.5

For course descriptions, enrollment priority, and prerequisites, please refer to the [my.harvard Course Catalog](#).

Online SM Sample Schedules

Sample Schedule #1 (Full-Time, Two-Year)

Year One

FALL 2026			SPRING 2027		
ID 100	Foundations of Public Health	1.25	ID 573	Applied Regression Analysis	5.0
ID 570	Introduction to Statistical Methods	5.0	ID 574	Core Principles of Data Science II	2.5
ID 571	Core Principles of Data Science I	2.5	ID 575	Epidemiology Methods II	2.5
ID 572	Introduction to Epidemiology Methods I	2.5	EPI 525	Study Designs	2.5
ID 576	Scientific Integrity and Good Research Practices	2.5	Spring Electives (Choose 5.0 credits of electives)		5.0
ID 578	Writing & Publishing Scientific Literature	2.5			
TOTAL	16.25 credits		TOTAL	17.5 credits	

Year Two

FALL 2027			SPRING 2028			END OF PROGRAM = 60 credits
ID 577	AI & Research	2.5	ID 580	Master's Culminating Experience II	2.5	
ID 579	Master's Culminating Experience I	2.5	Spring Electives (Choose 5.0 credits of electives)		5.0	
Fall Electives (Choose 8.75 credits of electives)		8.75				
TOTAL	13.75 credits		TOTAL	12.5 credits		

Sample Schedule #2 (Part-Time, Three-Year)

Year One

FALL 2026			SPRING 2027		
ID 100	Foundations of Public Health	1.25	ID 573	Applied Regression Analysis	5.0
ID 570	Introduction to Statistical Methods	5.0	ID 574	Core Principles of Data Science II	2.5
ID 571	Core Principles of Data Science I	2.5	ID 575	Epidemiology Methods II	2.5
ID 572	Introduction to Epidemiology Methods I	2.5			
TOTAL	11.25 credits		TOTAL	10.0 credits	

Year Two

FALL 2027			SPRING 2028		
ID 576	Scientific Integrity and Good Research Practices	2.5	ID 578	Writing & Publishing Scientific Literature	2.5
ID 577	AI & Research	2.5	EPI 525	Study Design	2.5
Fall Electives (Choose 5.0 credits of electives)		5.0	Spring Electives (Choose 5.0 credits of electives)		5.0
TOTAL	10.0 credits		TOTAL	10.0 credits	

Year Three

FALL 2028			SPRING 2029			END OF PROGRAM = 60 credits
ID 579	Master's Culminating Experience I	2.5	ID 580	Master's Culminating Experience II	2.5	
Fall Electives (Choose 7.5 credits of electives)		7.5	Spring Electives (Choose 7.5 credits of electives)		7.5	
TOTAL	10.0 credits		TOTAL	10.0 credits		