

Majoring in

Community Health Education

Description of Community Health Education

What is community health education?

Community health education is a social science that draws from the biological, environmental, psychological, physical and medical sciences to promote health and prevent disease, disability and premature death through the development and implementation of educational programs to improve health status, knowledge, attitudes, skills and behavior.

What do community health education students study?

Students who choose community health education are prepared to assist in the development and maintenance of healthy communities through the implementation of dynamic and ongoing health education/health promotion programs across the life span.

Competencies developed include:

- Assessing individual and community health education needs
- Planning and implementing effective health education programs
- Administering health education programs
- Evaluating health education program effectiveness

What skills are important for community health education?

Community health education students should:

- Like people;
- Believe in the ability for individuals and societies to make healthy changes;
- Be committed to advocating for the provision of resources needed to promote and maintain healthy behaviors; and

- Be skilled at group process and communication.

Course Requirements

General education: Thirty-seven credit hours of general education courses are required. These courses give a broad range of knowledge in, math, writing, arts, history, literature, and human behavior.

Allied professional core: This core includes human anatomy and human physiology.

Professional core: Students complete 46 credit hours in courses such as:

- Introduction to health professions
- Medical terminology
- Trends in modern diseases
- Medical sociology
- Chronic disease and exercise management
- Organization and administration in health professions
- Community health education: theory and practice
- Health psychology
- Nutrition
- Ethics in health care

Community health education electives: Students choose 18 credit hours from courses such as:

- Personal health
- Issues in sexuality
- Substance abuse
- Coping and adaptation
- Assessment and exercise intervention in health and disease

Clinical experiences: Students complete 15 credit hours of clinical experiences. This translates to 700 hours of hands-on field experience directly related to the program.

Entrance Requirements

Incoming freshmen students may declare this program upon acceptance to the university. A 2.0 GPA is required for students who want to change majors to the community health education program.

Careers in Community Health Education

The community health education program prepares students for entry to any number of career opportunities in public health departments, hospitals and clinics, non-profit agencies, schools and private industry. Some of these careers include:

- Community health educator
- Public health specialist
- Health and wellness coordinator
- Health promotion specialist
- Health education consultant
- Community health program specialist
- Community health outreach worker
- Coordinator of training and support activities
- Education and prevention director
- Pharmaceutical representative
- Professor

Health Educators work with people across the age span, including children, adolescents, adults and elders.

Graduate Study with a Degree in Community Health Education

Students who pursue this program often pursue further study in the following areas.

- MPH (Master of Public Health)
- Epidemiology
- Nursing
- Research

Next Steps

If you are interested in learning more about the community health education program at VCU, consider doing each of the following things. Check them off as you complete each step.

- Check out the VCU School of Education webpage for information related to programs in the Department of Health and Human Performance.

- Read about the community health education program in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*.
- Review the community health education graduation worksheet with an academic advisor.
- Talk to one or more upper-level community health education students about their major.
- Go to the Career Center to read about careers in community health education.
- Go to the VCU bookstore and browse the health education textbooks.
- Shadow professionals who work in varied health education settings.
- Check out the <http://www.aahperd.org/aahe> to learn more about what health educators do.

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