

TIPS FOR YOUR APPLICATION

Are you considering applying to the Master of Public Health (MPH) program in Health Promotion and Behavioral Science (HPBS), San Diego State University School of Public Health (SDSU SPH)? If so, we want you to be successful.

Assembling a solid application is critical. In addition to submitting your test scores (e.g., GRE) and grade point average details, you will be asked to provide a detailed personal statement and strong letters of recommendation. The following tips will be helpful for you in preparing your personal statement and letters of recommendation.

For your letter writers:

- Ask letter writers/recommenders to speak to your abilities, not just your metrics (like grades in a class).
- Ask your letter writers/recommenders to speak to your strengths and weaknesses.
- Who should you ask to write a letter for you? Individuals who have been your teacher or supervisor (i.e., those who have some higher level of evaluation of you) should serve as letter writers. Stay away from asking friends, family members, or colleagues who are equals to write letters.

For your personal statement, HPBS recommends that applicants address the following questions and issues:

- Why are you interested in earning an MPH in HBPS? What will this degree do for you?
- Why are you choosing SDSU, the SPH, and HPBS?
- How do you think the HPBS and SPH (compared with other programs) can help you achieve your goals in the short and long-term?
- In the personal statement, please address your deficiencies/potential weaknesses in your application (e.g., low GRE scores, poor grades in a class).
- Be explicit about health topics that interest you and SPH/HPBS faculty who you identify with (and who you might want to work with).
- Explain how you see yourself completing the program in a timely fashion (i.e., “working part-time will enable me to enroll in classes full-time”), or acknowledge whether you’re applying to take classes full- or part-time.
- Provide concrete examples for the elements above (e.g., how you managed your time on previous projects, balanced multiple demands).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Guadalupe X. Ayala, Division Head for Health Promotion and Behavioral Science, at ayala@sdsu.edu.