

Health Coaching Graduate Certificate Proposal

Overview

As our nation becomes more health conscious and concerned with disease prevention, health coaching is growing in popularity. Health coaching has been defined as, "...the practice of health education and health promotion within a coaching context, to enhance the wellbeing of individuals and to facilitate the achievement of their health-related goals" (Palmer et al., 2003). Health coaches help clients identify their goals, develop an action plan, and help put the plan into action while giving support and helping to motivate clients toward success.

To be a successful health coach, one must have a foundation in current behavior change theories/models, motivational interviewing, as well as an understanding of current health issues. A certificate in health coaching will enable individuals to showcase their qualifications from a reputable program and university. There are no current standards for being a health coach, thus people calling themselves a 'health coach' range from credentialed health professionals to untrained individuals sharing their own personal philosophies. One only needs to seek out health coaching online to find a plethora of profit-based health coaching 'programs' offered, with varying ranges of credibility. There is a dire need for those touting the credentials of health coach to be adequately trained. Certification greatly enhances the hiring potential when individuals are looking for employment in the field. Beyond those in health education and health promotion, healthcare professionals entering the field of health coaching include counselors, social workers, nutritionists, psychologists, nurses, respiratory therapists, physical therapists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. With an increase in health coaching positions through insurance companies, worksite wellness programs and universities, the growth of this field will continue to expand.

The Department of Kinesiology & Health Promotion at the University of Kentucky proposes a new 15-credit Graduate Certificate in Health Coaching designed to meet the supplemental education needs of current health promotion professionals and those training to become health promotion professionals. The Graduate Certificate would be open to any students who are already are or will be enrolled in a degree program, or those who simply apply for post-baccalaureate (non-degree) status in order to complete the certificate, are eligible to apply for admission. In addition, all applicants will be required to submit a one-page personal statement outlining why the Graduate Certificate in Health Coaching is of interest to them for review by the Director of the Graduate Certificate. For students applying for post-baccalaureate graduate student status, an application for admission to the Graduate School as a post-baccalaureate graduate student should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the term in which the student plans to enroll. An original or photocopy of a transcript showing an awarded bachelors degree must accompany the application. An overall undergraduate grade point average of 2.5 or better and 2.75 on all previous graduate work (both on a 4.0 scale) is required by the Graduate School for admission. GRE scores are not required. As Health Coaching is a rapidly growing area in the field, this Graduate Certificate is timely and we anticipate we will attract 10 students the first year of offering and hope to grow to 30 students as resources allow.

In order to accommodate working adults and be more attractive to current health promotion professionals looking to expand their skill set with a Health Coaching Graduate Certificate, we intend to offer all of the courses required for the Certificate through distance learning. It may take some time to shift all of the face-to-face courses to distance learning, in which case we anticipate offering the certificate face-to-face for the first year or two of the program until all of the courses have been adapted to an online format.

Certificate Standards

Dedicated to the University of Kentucky's mission of providing excellence in teaching, research, and service, and developing innovative partnerships, the Graduate Certificate in Health Coaching promotes a broad array of values, knowledge, and skills essential to health promotion leaders. As such, the proposed Graduate Certificate has the potential to attract students nationally and internationally through online delivery and collaborative efforts with health promotion professionals connected to University of Kentucky.

In order to remain in good standing, the Graduate School requires that a student must have a minimum GPA of 2.75 in the set of courses required for completion of the graduate certificate in order to be awarded the certificate. Students are required to take four core KHP classes as requirements for the certificate program, as well as one program elective.

- Courses taken within two years prior to admission to the certificate can be used in the certificate.
- Certificates will only be awarded to students who have completed a four-year bachelors degree.
- The Director approves the individual certificate curriculum for each student and informs the Registrar when the certificate is complete and may be awarded.

Administrative Structure

The Faculty Director for the Health Coaching Graduate Certificate will be Dr. Kristen Mark, Assistant Professor of Health Promotion, Director of the Sexual Health Promotion Lab, and an instructor in the program. Dr. Mark will work with the affiliated faculty on any and all curricular components.

Certificate Program

The certificate students undertake a curriculum outlined below which is designed to enrich their professional goals and experiences. The courses focus on building health education and health behavior change skills, specific health coaching skills, and help students understand the role and importance of health promotion on an individual and community level. Students will learn the process of enabling people to increase control over the determinants of health in order to improve their health.

This program also requires students to engage in internship opportunities where the student must apply their skills learned in the program to the field of health coaching.

Certificate Learning Outcomes

- The certificate requires that the students identify and apply theories and models specific to health education, health promotion, and health behavior change.
- Students completing the certificate will be able to apply their health promotion philosophical principles to their health-coaching career.
- Students completing the certificate will have the skills required to be an effective health coach with a basis in health education and health promotion behavior change.
- The certificate will provide students with practical application skills that will culminate in an internship experience in the field of health coaching.

Certificate Core Courses

Students must enroll in each of the following courses:

KHP 674: Foundations of Health Promotion (3cr.)

This is an introductory course to the foundations of health promotion and health education with a focus on the background of the field, ethics of the profession, and the major responsibilities of a health educator. Outlines the goals and objectives of health education, differentiates between levels of prevention and determinants of health, and identifies and explains the predominate philosophies of health promotion and health education. Additionally, students learn about the various theories and models of implementation and change process theories in health education and health promotion.

KHP 673: Health Promotion & Behavior Change (3cr.)

This course focuses on health promotion and behavior change. Many acute and chronic diseases can be prevented or at least have their impact lessened by increased attention to the adoption and maintenance of behaviors for optimal health. The issue of behavior change is however complex and necessitates an understanding of the socio-ecological model which includes individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and public policy as factors that can inhibit or promote behavior change.

KHP 577: Health Promotion Internship (specific to health coaching) (3cr.)

This course focuses on gaining practical experience in the professions of health education, health promotion, and health coaching. It provides an opportunity for health promotion students to apply the theories, knowledge, and experiences gained from their coursework to real life situations.

KHP 609: Health Coaching (3cr.)

This course focuses on the translation of research into practice combining didactic and experiential learning through application of content learned in core health promotion courses to the field of health coaching. The course will prepare students with skills in client care, health care knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism, and systems-based practice. These skills will be learned through practice-based learning and self-improvement. Approximately half of the course will be dedicated to application of the health coaching skills students are learning via peer-coaching and comprehensive instructor feedback.

Certificate Elective Courses

Students may choose from one of the following electives:

KHP 590: Advanced Health Concepts

This is a content class that examines current and significant health issues to increase knowledge, skills, and health literacy. Specifically, the course addresses major personal and community health issues such as non-communicable diseases, communicable diseases, intentional injury (homicide and suicide), unintentional injury (accidents), stress, and others. This course will be especially encouraged to students without a strong health content background and will be required for students who do not have any health content background (e.g., a student with a bachelor in business or psychology).

KHP 677: Planning Health Promotion Programs (3cr.)

This course presents basic principles of planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating health promotion programs. Individual planning projects are incorporated into the course and students are required to plan a program related to their area of interest. This course will be encouraged for students who already have a health content background and have career aspirations in settings focusing on program development for groups and communities (e.g., worksite wellness or community health settings).

COM 571: Interpersonal Communication in Health Contexts (3cr.)

This course examines theory and research relevant to the role of interpersonal communication in managing mental and physical health. Topics related to interaction in health contexts include: communicating identity in health and illness, health and personal relationships, health care provider/patient communication, medical decision-making, and interpersonal health education and prevention efforts. This course is currently offered in distance learning format during a semester each summer and we have received approval from the Department Chair Dr. Elisia Cohen to offer this as an elective for our graduate certificate.

Total required certificate hours: 15 hours

The curriculum for this certificate in Health Coaching was developed in consultation with the health promotion faculty at University of Kentucky, the curriculum for similar certificate programs at other accredited institutions in the United States (University of Minnesota and University of Delaware), and health-coaching professionals currently practicing in the field. We anticipate that this 15-hour certificate program will draw students initially entering the health promotion master's program and other health-related graduate programs across campus.

Core Faculty Affiliated with the Health Coaching Certificate:

Kristen Mark, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Associate Graduate Faculty
Melinda Ickes, PhD, Assistant Professor, Associate Graduate Faculty
Melody Noland, PhD, Department Chair, Professor, Full Graduate Faculty
Carol Donnelly, CHES, President, KC Wellness, Certified Health Coach, Adjunct Assistant Professor, application pending

Selected References Related to Health Coaching

Hart, V., Blattner, J., & Leipsic, S. (2001). Coaching versus therapy: A perspective. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 53(4), 229-237.

Terry, P.E., Seaverson, E.L.D., Stauffer, M.J. & Tanaka, A. (2011). The effectiveness of a telephone-based tobacco cessation program offered as part of a worksite health promotion program. *Population Health Management*, 14, 117-125.

Vale, M.J., Jelinek, M.V., Best, J.D. Dart, A.M., Grigg, L.E., Hare, D.L., et al. (2003). Coaching patients on achieving cardiovascular health (COACH). *Archives Internal Medicine*, 163, 2775-2783.

Wolever, R.Q., Dreusicke, J., Fikkan, T.V., Hawkins, S., Yeung, J. Wakefield, L., et al. (2010). Integrative health coaching for patients with Type 2 Diabetes: A randomized clinical trial. *The Diabetes Educator*, 36, 629-639.