Global Health (Complex Adaptive Systems Science), PhD

No human health issue exists in isolation; these challenges are the result of past and ongoing sociocultural factors. A global health PhD with an emphasis on complex adaptive systems science equips modern problem solvers to identify, understand and leverage the interconnections between complex issues that defy traditional solutions.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Global Health (Complex Adaptive Systems Science)

The PhD program in global health draws on the premise that sustainable and satisfying solutions to the most pressing global health challenges require a sophisticated understanding of how cultural context, social and ecological processes and disease are really related.

The transdisciplinary graduate program trains students broadly in cutting-edge health social science research theory and methods. While it leverages the strength in medical anthropology at ASU (including the 15 medical anthropologists on campus), it also takes advantage of a much wider set of skills offered by such fields as medical sociology, demography, human geography and epidemiology. It is designed to train those who anticipate working in transdisciplinary academic settings, medical schools or nonacademic health settings, such as the commercial sector, government agencies or nongovernmental organizations.

Some particular thematic foci of the program are:

- biocultural approaches to human coping
- computer-based complexity modeling
- culture and health
- health in the Americas
- indigenous and minority health
- mathematical epidemiology
- nutritional anthropology
- social justice and vulnerable populations
- social networks
- urban and environmental health
The program draws together some 80 faculty members from across the university to consider how cutting-edge social science can be applied not only to understand, but also to substantively improve the health of populations. The program favors community-based research and runs collaborative projects in which students are encouraged to gain experience and conduct research, from large U.S. cities to hunter-gatherer communities. Students generally enter the program with a master's degree in a relevant field.

The complex adaptive systems science doctoral concentration trains the next generation of scientists in advanced concepts and methods needed for approaching diverse phenomena in the social and life sciences. The program is tightly integrated with diverse, ongoing, university-wide research on complex adaptive systems perspective at Arizona State University and emphasizes the value of a complex adaptive systems science perspective to give better insight and a more active role in seeking solutions to a broad array of critical issues facing our society today. Students will be fluent in the common language of complexity while also receiving a solid foundation in the domain knowledge of existing academic disciplines.

At a Glance

- **College/School:** College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- **Location:** Tempe campus

Degree Requirements

84 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation

Students entering with a master's degree in a related field may be granted up to 30 credit hours toward the 84 credit hour total required for the program. This leaves 30 credit hours of coursework, 12 credit hours of research and 12 credit hours of dissertation (54 credit hours total) to be earned postadmission.

Students entering without a master's degree must earn an additional 30 hours of graduate credit, produce a research portfolio that is formally evaluated by a faculty committee and present that research in a public forum before continuing on in the later stage of the doctorate degree program.

All students must maintain a 3.20 average GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in their courses and complete degree requirements per the program's satisfactory progress policy.

For the concentration in complex adaptive systems science, 12 credit hours will be selected from an approved list of applicable courses related to complexity.
Student doctoral dissertations should include the application of complex adaptive systems concepts and methods in their field of study, and students typically will have a member of the complex adaptive systems science graduate faculty as a member of their doctoral supervisory committee.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree from a regionally accredited institution.

Applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of a student's first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. personal statement outlining educational and professional goals
4. current curriculum vitae or resume
5. GRE scores
6. three letters of recommendation
7. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information

An applicant whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must provide proof of English proficiency.

Suitable backgrounds for admission include a master's degree in the social sciences (such as anthropology or sociology), public health, human biology or related fields. Students entering directly from a bachelor's degree program should already have completed at least 15 credit hours of social science and six credit hours of human biology (or equivalent) at the senior level and should also have some background in statistics or epidemiology.

Applicants may submit with their application materials an optional scholarly writing sample of at least 20 but no more than 30 double-spaced pages.
Contact Information

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Admission Deadlines