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# Master of Public Health, Public Health Practice

# Academic Assessment Plan

**Adopted by**

**The MPH Program faculty: 12/01/2022**

Reviewed with curriculum by the college committee: 10/16/23

Reviewed with curriculum by the dean: 10/17/23

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Reviewed by the Faculty Senate as an information item: 4/7/23

## Mission Statement

The mission of the University of Alaska Anchorage Master of Public Health (MPH) Program is to promote equity, health, and well-being through excellence in the education of public health practice leaders, scientific investigation of public health issues, and community engagement in an organized effort to identify, assess, prevent, and mitigate community health challenges.

## Program Student Learning Outcomes

Based on national accreditation criteria (Council on Education for Public Health [CEPH], www.ceph.org) and quality standards, the overall MPH Program student goal is to prepare public health professionals who can demonstrate attainment of 12 foundational public health knowledge learning objectives, 22 MPH program competencies, and 5 program-specific competencies related to its public health practice generalist track. This Assessment Plan reflects the assessment of this updated curriculum.

***MPH Program Public Health Foundational Knowledge Learning Objectives (12)***

Profession and Science of Public Health

1. Explain public health history, philosophy, and values.
2. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services.
3. Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population’s health.
4. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the U.S. or other community relevant to the school or program.
5. Discuss the science of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.
6. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge.

Factors Related to Human Health

1. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population’s health.
2. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population’s health.
3. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population’s health.
4. Explain the social, political, and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities.
5. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease.
6. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health, and ecosystem health (e.g., One Health).

***MPH Program Competencies (22)***

Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health

1. Apply epidemiological methods to settings and situations in public health practice.

2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context.

3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate.

4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice.

Public Health & Health Care Systems

5. Compare the organization, structure, and function of health care, public health, and regulatory systems across national and international settings.

6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities, and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and systemic levels.

Planning & Management to Promote Health

7. Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities’ health.

8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs.

9. Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention.

10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management.

11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs.

Policy in Public Health

12. Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence.

13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes.

14. Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations.

15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity.

Leadership

16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue.

17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges.

Communication

18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.

19. Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.

20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content.

Interprofessional Practice

21. Integrate perspectives from sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health.

Systems Thinking

22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative.

***MPH in Public Health Practice Generalist Track Specific Competencies (5)***

Public Health Response

1. Address public health emergencies and/or disasters with a focus on preparedness, impact, response, and/or recovery.

Community Engagement

1. Engage community partner(s) in identifying and/or addressing public health issues.

Professionalism and Ethics

1. Demonstrate ethical decision-making in public health practice.

Diversity and Cultural Humility

1. Apply concepts of social justice, equity, and/or cultural humility in addressing public health problems.

Circumpolar Health

1. Analyze the unique social, cultural, and/or environmental conditions affecting population health in the arctic.

Collectively, the MPH core courses address all of the required CEPH learning objectives and competencies. The MPH core courses with course numbers and titles are as follows:

* HS A605: Public Health and Society
* HS A610: Environmental and Occupational Health
* HS A615: Health Services Administration
* HS A624: Circumpolar Health Issues
* HS A625: Biostatistics for Health Professionals
* HS A626: Principles of Epidemiology
* HS/SWK A628: Program Evaluation
* HS A629: Public Health Research Tools and Methods
* HS A630: Public Health Emergencies and Disasters

After the completion of the core courses, students must take HS A695: Applied Practice Experience (APE). The APE focuses on the development and implementation of a student-initiated practicum with a public-health-related community partner, in consultation with the student’s academic advisor. In the APE, students must demonstrate at least five MPH Program competencies, of which at least three must be foundational competencies. Additionally, in the final week of their APE, students present their practicum experience with a focus on how they applied their chosen competencies in their community project. At the completion of APE, students must take HS A696: Integrative Learning Experience (ILE). In the ILE, students work with their academic advisor to select foundational and generalist track-specific competencies appropriate to the students’ educational and professional goals, which they will then integrate into developing a final written capstone deliverable. Additionally, ILE students complete their program ePortfolio.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 below show what specific MPH core courses address the specific CEPH learning objectives and competencies.

Table 1. Alignment of CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives and MPH Core Courses

| **CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Profession & Science of Public Health* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Explain public health history, philosophy and values. | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services. |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population’s health. |  | X1 |  |  | X1 | X1 | X | X |  |
| 4. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the U.S. or other community relevant to the school or program. |  |  |  | X |  | X1 |  | X1 | X1 |
| 5. Discuss the science of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc. |  | X1 |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |

1Partial coverage in the course.

Table 1. Alignment of CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives and MPH Core Courses, Continued…

| **CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge. | X1 | X1 | X1 | X1 | X1 | X1 | X | X1 |  |
| *Factors Related to Human Health* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population’s health. | X1 | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population’s health. | X | X1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population’s health. | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. Explain the social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities. | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1Partial coverage in the course.

Table 1. Alignment of CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives and MPH Core Courses, Continued…

| **CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 11. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease. | X | X1 |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |
| 12. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health, and ecosystem health (e.g., One Health). |  | X |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |

1Partial coverage in the course.

Table 2. Alignment of CEPH Core Competencies and MPH Core Courses

| **New CEPH Core Competencies** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Apply epidemiological methods to settings and situations in public health practice. |  |  | X1 |  |  | X | X1 | X1 |  |
| 2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context. |  |  |   |   |  |  | X1 | X |   |

1Partial coverage in the course.

Table 2. Alignment of CEPH Public Health Core Competencies and MPH Core Courses, Continued

|  **New CEPH Core Competencies** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate. |   |  |   |   |  X1 |  |   | X |   |
| 4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice. |   |  X1 |   |   |  X1 | X1  | X1 | X |   |
| *Public Health & Health Care Systems* |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Compare the organization, structure, and function of health care, public health, and regulatory systems across national and international settings. |   |   | X |  X1 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities, and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and systemic levels. | X |   |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |

1Partial coverage in the course.

Table 2. Alignment of CEPH Core Competencies and MPH Core Courses, Continued

|  **New CEPH Core Competencies** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Planning & Management to Promote Health* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7. Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities’ health. |   |  |  |   |   |  | X |  |  |
| 8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs. | X |   |   | X |   |   |   |   |  X |
| 9. Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention. |   |   | X | X1  |   |  |   |   |   |
| 10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management. |   |   | X |   |   |   | X1 |  |   |
| 11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs. |   |   |  |   |   |  | X |   |   |
| *Policy in Public Health* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 12. Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence. |   | X | X1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |

1Partial coverage in the course.

Table 2. Alignment of CEPH Core Competencies and MPH Core Courses, Continued

| **New CEPH Core Competencies** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes. |  |  | X |   |   |   | X |   |  X1 |
| 14. Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations. | X | X1 | X1 | X1 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity. |  |  | X |   |   |  | X1  |   |   |
| *Leadership* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue. |   | X |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges. |   |   | X |   |   |   |   |   |   |

1Partial coverage in the course.

Table 2. Alignment of CEPH Core Competencies and MPH Core Courses, Continued

|  **New CEPH Core Competencies** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Communication* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors. | X | X  |   |   |   |   |   |   |  X |
| 19. Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation. | X | X  | X | X1 | X1 |   |   |   |   |
| 20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content. | X |  |   | X |   |   |   |   |   |
| *Interprofessional Practice* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 21. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health. |  X1 |  |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |
| *Systems Thinking* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative. |   |  X |  |   |   |  |   |   |   |

1Partial coverage in the course.

Table 3. Alignment of Generalist Public Health Practice Track Specific Competencies and MPH Core Courses

| **Track-Specific Competencies** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Public Health Response* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Address public health emergencies and/or disasters with a focus on preparedness, impact, response, and/or recovery. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |
| *Community Engagement* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Engage community partner(s) in identifying and/or addressing public health issues. | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1Partial coverage in the course.

Table 3. Alignment of Generalist Public Health Practice Track Specific Competencies and MPH Core Courses

| **Track-Specific Competencies** | **605** | **610** | **615** | **624** | **625** | **626** | **628** | **629** | **630** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Professionalism & Ethics* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Demonstrate ethical decision-making in public health practice. |  |  | X1 |  |  |  |  | X1 |  |
| *Diversity & Cultural Humility*  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Apply concepts of social justice, equity, and/or cultural humility in addressing public health problems. | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Circumpolar Health* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Analyze the unique, social, cultural, and/or environmental conditions affecting population health in the arctic. |  |  |  | X |  |  |  | X1 |  |

1Partial coverage in the course.

## Measures

Each of the MPH core courses has a unique set of student learning objectives that address the specific CEPH learning objectives and competencies and MPH in Public Health Practice generalist track-specific competencies. The student learning objectives of each of the core courses are assessed in various ways. Table 4 below shows an example of how the core course, HS A629: Public Health Research Tools & Methods, align with the CEPH learning objectives and competencies, as well as the public health practice generalist track-specific competencies.

Table 4. HS A629 Student Learning Objectives Linked to CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives, CEPH Public Health Core Competencies, and Generalist Public Health Practice Track Specific Competencies with Assessment Measures

| Student Learning Objectives: The students will be able to… | CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives | CEPH Public Health Core Competencies | Generalist Public Health Practice Track Specific Competencies | Assessment Measures |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Examine public health problems in the U.S., Alaska, and the surrounding Northern regions.
 | * List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the U.S. or other community relevant to the school or program.
 |  | * Analyze the unique, social, cultural, and/or environmental conditions affecting population health in the arctic.
 | Background literature review assignment (Assignment 1 and 3) |
| 1. Formulate research questions and hypotheses based on review of scientific literature and social science/public health theories or frameworks to advance public health knowledge.
 | * Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge.
 |  |  | Weekly Unit Assignment, (Assignment 1 and 3) |
| 1. Distinguish ethical issues and concerns in public health research.
 |  |  | * Demonstrate ethical decision-making in public health practice.
 | Completion of CITI Human Subjects Research Education Course (Lab Exercise 1); completion of research IRB application (Assignment 4) |

Table 4. HS A629 Student Learning Objectives Linked to CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives, CEPH Public Health Core Competencies, and Generalist Public Health Practice Track Specific Competencies with Assessment Measures, Continued

| Student Learning Objectives: The students will be able to… | CEPH Foundational Public Health Learning Objectives | CEPH Public Health Core Competencies | Generalist Public Health Practice Track Specific Competencies | Assessment Measures |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Evaluate appropriate methods, study design, data collection procedures, analysis, timeline, and budget in addressing research questions.
 |  | * Apply epidemiological methods to settings and situations in public health practice. (CEPH D2-1)
 |  | Weekly Unit Assignment, (Assignment 2 and 3) |
| 1. Assess the reliability and validity of quantitative and qualitative research methods.
 | * Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population’s health.
 | * Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context. (CEPH D2-2)
 |  | Lab Exercise 2, Weekly Unit Assignment (Week 8) |
| 1. Perform basic analysis using quantitative and/or qualitative analytical software and interpret results of data analysis in terms of public health research, policy, or practice.
 |  | * Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate. (CEPH D2-3)
* Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice. (CEPH D2-4)
 |  | Weekly Unit Assignment, Lab Exercises (Lab Exercise 2 and 3) |

In order for the students to understand the connection between the program course learning outcomes with the CEPH public health foundational knowledge, core competencies, and track-specific competencies, all of the course syllabi in the MPH Program include some reiteration of Table 4 above.

In addition to assessing student learning outcomes and competencies in individual courses, the MPH Program also assesses the attainment of its student learning outcomes and competencies via student surveys, which are conducted upon the students’ entrance into the program, prior to starting their Applied Practice Experience, and at the completion of the program. Moreover, the MPH Program also requires its students to create individual program ePortfolio where they can upload artifacts that show they have achieved certain learning outcomes and/or competencies from their courses.

## Process

The MPH Program conducts its program assessment throughout each year in a variety of ways. Every October, the program submits its annual assessment report to UAA. This report details the program’s self-assessment of how well it has prepared its students in achieving the foundational public health learning outcomes, public health core competencies, and track specific competencies in the previous academic year. This report also discusses areas of challenges, opportunities, and growth in the program, and reflects on ways the program can better meet our students’ needs and support our faculty and staff.

Besides the annual assessment report submitted to UAA, the program also provides an annual report to CEPH every December. This report provides information on the program’s current faculty-to-student ratio, admission information, and graduation rates from the previous academic year. If the CEPH minimum standards are not met, the program would be required to submit interim reports to explain reasons for not achieving the accreditation standards and the process and timeline on how the program can meet these standards. If, at any point in the year, the program decides to have substantive changes in our program, a short report would be submitted to CEPH to describe these changes.

Note that all program assessment reports are reviewed, edited, and approved by the MPH faculty, as well as the Division Director prior to submission to the appropriate body. Additionally, the contents of the assessment reports are thoroughly discussed during the fall and spring MPH faculty retreats. Highlights of program assessment reports are shared with the program’s external advisory committee and our Student Advisory Council. These advisory committees provide guidance in terms of how the program can be improved and maintain or meet its accreditation standards.