

MPH Culminating Project Manual

2021-2022 Criteria

The Master of Public Health (MPH) Culminating Project

The MPH degree plans of study require a culminating project to be completed in the final semester of study. The student provides evidence of competency mastery by partnering with a public health related agency, identifying a community problem, proposing an evidence-based solution, and developing an evaluation plan. The final product is in the form of a grant proposal. Guidance for proposal development is achieved through completion of a grant-writing workshop and feedback from a faculty advisor.

*Updates to the student manual and culminating project may occur after review of the previous year's project. Students will still be required to adhere to those changes.

The Purpose of the Culminating Project

MPH graduates are expected to translate public health science into practice. Students should be able to properly assess the needs of a community, identify the proper data and statistical analysis to use, design a research or evidence-based intervention approach, implement programming, and evaluate public health activities or outcomes.

As a Master of Public Health Graduate you will be able to:

Core Competencies	
Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health	1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of 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 societal 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 or implementation 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 multiple dimensions of 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 principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making
	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 public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
	20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content
Inter-prof. Practice	21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams
Systems Thinking	22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

Health Statistics Students will be able to:

- Evaluate the limitations of statistical evidence (e.g., validity, reliability, sample size, bias, generalizability)
- Demonstrate the ability to use statistical software commonly used to assess public health issues
- Identify and use the most appropriate statistical approaches to address public health issues
- Identify and critically evaluate commonly used sampling and survey techniques for public health issues
- Communicate data and quantitative information to professionals and the public using a variety of approaches

Environmental Health Students will be able to:

- Identify and critically evaluate environmental conditions impacting the health of populations.
- Identify and critically evaluate the social, political and economic factors affecting the health quality of environments.
- Critically evaluate environmental health risk assessment methods.
- Develop approaches to prevent, mitigate or correct environmental health hazards.
- Identify and critically evaluate the factors that create, perpetuate and ultimately eliminate health disparities.
- Demonstrate communication skills and strategies to prevent, mitigate and ultimately eliminate environmental health problems.

Family and Community Health Students will be able to:

- Identify and critically evaluate the social, biological, political, legal, economic and environmental factors affecting the health of families and communities.
- Apply health promotion theories, models and best practices to address challenges to the health of families and communities.
- Develop approaches to prevent, mitigate or correct challenges to the health of families and communities.
- Identify and critically evaluate the factors that create, perpetuate and ultimately eliminate health disparities.
- Demonstrate communication skills and strategies for promotion of family and community health.

Culminating Project Course

Students will register for PUBH 608 Culminating Project in their final semester. The following steps must be completed prior to approval for registration:

- A community partner is identified and agreed to allow the student to complete a grant on their behalf.
- The student and community partner have collaboratively identified 1-3 potential problems or issues that need to be addressed.
- The student has attended the culminating preparation workshop.
- The student has submitted the culminating project form to the program coordinator, confirming all of the above, before the start of the final semester.

After the above steps are completed, the CRN will be sent to the appropriate student to facilitate registration.

Competencies

Students must identify 10 competencies to address during their culminating project. These must be a mixture of concentration (at least two) and foundational competencies (at least three). Students will provide a short description on how their project will meet these competencies on the culminating project form prior to course approval.

Identifying a Community Partner

Students should begin the process of identifying a community partner early in their MPH career. Students can approach prior internship preceptors, network with agencies at orientation and other events, and search for area agencies that focus on areas of interest that match the student's interest. Students may review the internship spreadsheet for a list of area agencies, but are encouraged to find additional sites that may fit their interests. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor to discuss potential partners as well.

Faculty Mentor

MPH students enrolled in the in-person version of the culminating project will work with the Director of Experiential Learning, Dr. Jim Amell. Students taking the online version of the culminating project will work with the assigned instructor for that course.

In the initial meetings with the faculty mentor or instructor, the student should ask how often (weekly/biweekly) and through which mechanisms (in-person, email, etc.) the faculty mentor prefers to communicate. Students will be expected to submit written section drafts of their grant weekly or biweekly.

Grant Proposal Grading

Students are expected to attend all four scheduled grant-writing workshops. Attendance is worth 10 points per session out of 100 points. Students will receive up to 50 points on their final grant as assigned by their faculty mentor and up to 10 points on their final presentation. Students must earn 80 or more points to successfully pass PUBH 608. The faculty mentor will review the materials for professionalism and for demonstration of mastery of the core and concentration competencies.

Remember that the timely completion of your project is YOUR responsibility. Stay in touch with your advisor and be persistent in completing the grant proposal

Grant-writing Workshop Attendance:

Workshop # 1	_____ (10)
Workshop # 2	_____ (10)
Workshop # 3	_____ (10)
Workshop # 4	_____ (10)

Culminating Project Deliverables:

Grant Application Report	_____ (50)
Poster Presentation	_____ (10)
Total Points	_____ (100)

Grading System:

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

Guidelines:

Students must receive ≥ 80 points to pass their culminating project.

MPH Culminating Project Poster Presentation (students enrolled in-person only)

The presentation date is announced early in the semester and is well ahead of Graduate School graduation deadlines. All MPH candidates must participate on presentation day.

MPH Candidates will submit their poster file to the Director of Experiential Learning no later than one week prior to the presentation deadline for printing purposes. Students will use the MPH culminating project Powerpoint template provided by the Director of Experiential Learning.

This is an open event to all community members, faculty, staff, and students. MPH students should invite their partnering agency to the event as soon as the date is announced. Students should arrive 30 minutes early to prepare for their presentation. This will run like a typical poster session with attendees asking students questions about their projects. Students should prepare a 1-2 minute overview of their project and be prepared to answer follow-up questions.

MPH students not completing the culminating project are encouraged to attend the poster session.

Tips for Writing the Grant

Here are some strategies for completing your project:

- Writing should be succinct, direct, and free of jargon.
- Students are encouraged to utilize resources, skills, and knowledge from core and concentration courses. The project is an integration of this training.
- Always leave time for review and editing of your writing.
- Incorporate all feedback from your agency and faculty mentor.
- Send weekly/biweekly section drafts to your advisor and agency with a short description of current activities. Keep everyone updated. Communication is key to any partnership.
- Remember this is a professional piece that potential employers and faculty will view. Work on it over the course of the semester and don't procrastinate.

Major Grant Sections

Descriptions for each section are provided in the grant-writing workshop manual. These include organization introduction, need statement, outcomes or goals, plan of work or narrative, timeline, budget, and evaluation. Many grants require extra attachments or sections and these should also be included. Students should also speak to faculty mentors for additional expectations on grant sections. Here is a helpful resource for writing grant proposals http://www.hotwinds.com/Grant_Prop.html.

MPH Culminating Project Checklist

Each student is responsible for coordinating with their faculty mentor on a weekly/biweekly basis to ensure course objectives are being met.

Preliminary Work (prior to final semester)

- Identify Community Partner
- Submit Culminating Project Form
- Register for PUBH 608 Culminating Project

Grant –Writing Workshop #1, Steps of the Grant Process

At this session, the student will learn the timeline for the grant process, the different types of grants, the important components of a grant, and how to start tailoring a big idea into a proposal.

Homework/Classwork

- Create rough draft of agency description and to send to faculty mentor and agency for review
- Complete agency overview form
- Complete big idea brainstorming exercise
- Write a draft need statement
- Gather statistical data from public databases and begin analysis for community health assessment of public health problem
- Update faculty mentor and agency on activities

Grant-Writing Workshop #2, Write a Draft Proposal

At this session, the student will learn how to draft a grant proposal and the importance of building relationships with funders.

Homework/Classwork

- Create draft outcomes and goals (send to faculty mentor and agency for review)
- Review the literature for evidence-based practices
- Incorporate public health sciences into intervention/project
- Identify community partners and staff capabilities
- Write draft work plan timeline (send to faculty mentor and agency for review)
- Write draft budget (send to faculty mentor and agency for review)
- Design draft evaluation plan (send to faculty mentor and agency for review)
- Write draft plan of work narrative (send to faculty mentor and agency for review)

Grant-Writing Workshop #3, Expert Panel Discussion and Finding Funders

At this session, experienced grant-writers and funders will visit to provide expert feedback on the grant process and answer student questions. Students will also dive more in-depth on how to identify funders.

Homework/Classwork

- Revise proposal and incorporate feedback (send updated draft to faculty mentor)
- Identify potential funders (send list to faculty mentor and agency for feedback)
- Be prepared to ask guest speakers questions

Grant-Writing Workshop #4, Proposal Review and Making a Pitch

At this session, students will finalize the draft proposal for submission to their faculty mentor and partnering agency. Students will also learn the steps after a grant has been submitted.

Homework/Classwork

- Complete final draft proposal for submission to faculty mentor and the partnering agency.
- Create draft poster file (send to faculty mentor for review)