

College of Health and Human Sciences

School of Health Studies

Public Health

Master of Public Health

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Arlene Keddie, Ph.D., Program Coordinator and Associate Professor

Part 1: Assessment Plan

1. Introduction

In fall 2013, the previous program coordinator wrote the assessment plan and status report for the M.P.H. program, based on 8 student learning outcomes that had been developed in 2006-07. These were as follows:

1. Identify, measure and prioritize the specific health needs of populations.
2. Plan, implement and evaluate public health programs.
3. Synthesize and critique the findings of public health research.
4. Analyze the cultural, social, economic, political, and professional forces that shape the delivery of public and community health services.
5. Identify the principle factors contributing to health and disease and the appropriate public health interventions.
6. Demonstrate a mastery of information technology, which underpins the planning, monitoring, and evaluation responsibilities of those in public health positions.
7. Identify the principles of effective implementation and management of health-related programs and services.
8. Demonstrate the values and ethical behaviors associated with the practice of public health.

During their site visit on October 12th and 13th, 2015, the Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH), accrediting agency for the program, noted concern about the limited participation of the primary faculty in the creation and/or updating of the existing competencies. (The prior cohort of primary faculty, many of whom have since retired, developed the competencies during an earlier stage of the program.) In spring 2016 the process of reviewing the student learning outcomes and revising them was begun in the Public Health Curriculum and Assessment Committee, which developed a new set of student learning outcomes. These were approved by the entire faculty the following summer. However, in December 2016, new CEPH criteria, with 22 mandated competencies were unveiled. The Public Health Curriculum and Assessment Committee then decided to adapt a subset of these competencies to use as student learning outcomes for assessment. During 2017, 10 of the 22 were chosen, modified slightly and was approved by faculty vote at a general meeting of all program faculty. Beginning in fall 2017, and continuing in spring 2018, the committee had meetings with faculty teaching classes related to the proposed student learning outcomes to develop appropriate assessments. The resulting plan is shown below. This change will align the program's new student learning outcomes with foundational competencies required for accreditation. It will also result in a variety of formative assessments, which had been scarce in the previous assessment plan, and involve nearly all of the program faculty.

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

All graduates of the Master of Public Health program shall achieve the following outcomes. They are designed to prepare public health professionals who are able to:

1. Apply epidemiological methods or research to a public health problem.
2. Analyze quantitative data using biostatistics.
3. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice.
4. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health.
5. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention.
6. Develop a budget for a health or human services program or organization.
7. Select methods to evaluate public health programs.

8. Design an evidence-based health policy brief.
9. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.
10. Perform effectively on inter-professional teams.

4. Curriculum Map

Course	Master of Public Health Student Learning Outcomes									
	Apply epidemiological methods or research to a public health problem.	Analyze quantitative data using biostatistics.	Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice.	Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health.	Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention.	Develop a budget for a health or human service program or organization.	Select methods to evaluate public health programs.	Design an evidence-based health policy brief.	Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.	Perform effectively on inter-professional teams
PHHE 601									B, D	
PHHE 603				B	B				D	
PHHE 605		B	B							
PHHE 607						B				
PHHE 609									D	B
PHHE 611		D	D				B			
PHHE 613	B		D							
PHHE 661					D			B, D		
PHHE 669	D		P	D	P	D	D		P	
PHHE 698	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	
PHHE 695 ¹	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Note: Course supports the outcome at the B=beginning, D=developing, or P=proficient level

¹ Since all internships are individualized to meet the interests of the student and the needs of the agency, the particular student learning outcomes assessed by the internship vary from student to student.

5. Assessment Methods

EXPLANATION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS TABLE

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement	Program-Level Target	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
1) Final Epidemiological Article Review	In PHHE 613: Principles and Methods of Epidemiology, 3-4 published articles are reviewed. This assessment concerns the final article review, which includes the following components: identification of study purposes, identification of unit of analysis, identification of study design with justification, identification of source population and sample characteristics, identification of exposure and outcome variables, and covariates, evaluation of possible sources of bias and potential confounding, correct interpretation of statistical results from tables including the role of chance, identification of study strengths with justification, assessment of whether the evidence supports the conclusion, and implications for other aspects of public health.	“Acceptable” or higher (score of 80% or 40/50 points).	90% of students will attain the level of “acceptable”.	Data collected every third fall and spring. Reviewed every three years.	Course instructor for PHHE 613: Principles and Methods of Epidemiology collects the data. Program Coordinator reports the results to the faculty, who then make decisions about appropriate changes to the curriculum, if necessary.	1, 3
2) End of Term Biostatistics Data Analysis Project	In PHHE 605: Biostatistics in Public Health there is an end of term project, which involves the analysis and interpretation of statistical data to answer a public health question. The students develop their own hypothesis, and analyze and interpret statistical data to test it. The resulting paper is organized like a publishable article, and contains an abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusion, references and tables and figures. It is presented orally and also in written form.	Score 80% or higher on the Introduction and Methods and Results and Discussion sections graded by the instructor. (Does not include Presentation Evaluation, which is unrelated to SLOs 2 and 3.) This consists of 35/70 points for the total project, but focuses on the research and data analysis, itself. Eighty percent is equal to 28/these 35 points.	90% of students will score at 80% or higher on the Introduction and Methods and Results and Discussion sections graded by the instructor.	Data collected every third fall and spring. Reviewed every three years.	Course instructor for PHHE 605: Biostatistics in Public Health collects data. Program Coordinator reports the results to the faculty, when then make decisions about appropriate changes to the curriculum, if necessary.	2, 3

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement	Program-Level Target	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
3) Needs Assessment	This assessment involves completion of a needs assessment for a student-selected health topic in PHHE 603: Behavioral and Social Aspects of Public Health. Needs assessment options include survey (at least 30 responses), interview (at least 3), Photo Voice (at least 10 photos, plus captions). These data will be collected via at least 5 hours of community service.	“Average” or higher for part 2 (Needs Assessment) of the final project.	85% of students will attain the level of “average” in part 2 (Needs Assessment) of the term project.	Data collected every third fall and spring (the year after data collection from assessments 1 and 2). Reviewed every three years.	Course instructor for PHHE 603: Behavioral and Social Aspects of Public Health collects data. The results are reported by the Program Coordinator to the faculty, who then make decisions about appropriate changes to the curriculum, if necessary.	4
4) Design of Project Intervention	The entire term project in PHHE 603: Behavioral and Social Aspects of Public Health involves development and description of 3 strategies for programming or policy used to address a health topic based on a literature review and needs assessment. Individual, social, cultural, economic and political aspects of health should be recognizable in the strategies developed (collectively across all strategies).	“Adequate” or higher in all three major areas of the intervention. (SLO 5) “Adequate” or higher in General Writing and Formatting and Presentation sections of rubric (SLO 9)	85% of students will attain the level of “adequate” or higher in all three major areas of the intervention (SLO 5). 85% of students will attain the level of “adequate” or higher in General Writing and Formatting and Presentation sections (SLO 9).	Data collected every third fall and spring the same year as data collection from assessment 3). Reviewed every three years.	Course instructor for PHHE 603: Behavioral and Social Aspects of Public Health collects data. The results are reported by the Program Coordinator to the faculty, who then make decisions about appropriate changes to the curriculum, if necessary.	5, 9

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement	Program-Level Target	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
5) Financials Section of the Design of a Business Plan for a Hypothetical Health Services Organization	In PHHE 607: Health Services Management, the students write a business plan for a hypothetical health services organization that he/she would like to develop. The plan includes a financials section. The financials section includes key costs and revenues that need to be considered to get the health services organization off the ground. It also includes the projected operating budget for the first year, indicating key revenues and expenses. The accompanying narration includes assumptions upon which the budget is based.	Score of 80% or higher in the financials section of the business plan (12/15 points)	85% of students will score 80% or higher in the budgeting assignment.	Data collected every third fall and spring. Reviewed every three years.	Course instructor for PHHE 607: Health Services Management collects data. The results are reported by the Program Coordinator to the faculty, who then make .	6
6) Policy Analysis Assignment	In PHHE 661: Public Health Policy and Law, the students write a policy analysis, including problem statement, background, landscape, options and recommendation.	Score of 80% or higher in policy analysis assignment or meet the criteria to be rating of "Good" or higher.	90% of student will score 80% or higher or meet the criteria to be rated "Good" or higher.	Data collected every third fall and spring. Reviewed every three years.	Course instructor for PHHE 661: Public Health Policy and Law collects data. The results are reported by the Program Coordinator to the faculty decisions about appropriate changes to the curriculum, if necessary.	8
7) Capstone Course Program Plan Paper	PHHE 669: Community Health Planning, assists students in developing community health planning skills and helps prepare them for their comprehensive examinations, requiring written reports. As the capstone course, PHHE 669 requires students to apply knowledge and skills learned in all of the other public health core courses. Successful completion of the planning course is required before a student may take the comprehensive exam. The assessment of the capstone course is based upon the written final program plans submitted by students using the Final Paper Score sheet.	Score of 80% in the appropriate section of the program plan: Problem Description (SLO 1 – involves the inclusion of epidemiologic studies for evidence); Needs Assessment (SLO 4); Program Design and Implementation (SLO 5, 6 – includes a budget); Evaluation (SLO 7); and in the plan overall (SLO 3, 5).	90% of students will earn a score of 80% or higher on appropriate sections and on the program plan as a whole.	Data collected every second fall and spring. Reviewed every two years.	Course instructor for PHHE 669: Community Health Planning collects data. The results are reported by the Program Coordinator to the faculty, who then make decisions about appropriate changes to the curriculum, if necessary	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement	Program-Level Target	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
8) Comprehensive Examination	<p>PHHE 698: Master of Public Health Integrative Learning Experience is in the form of a comprehensive examination. This comprehensive examination provides strong evidence of students' ability to synthesize and apply core and specialization course knowledge to an actual public health problem in a real location in the State of Illinois. The exam is divided into eight – nine sections corresponding to the knowledge and skills required to practice as a public health professional. The sections that apply to all MPH students, regardless of specialization, include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) national scope and significance of the problem (SLO 3), 2) relevant epidemiological studies (SLO 1, 3), 3) community level needs assessment (SLO 4), 4) specific approach and plan (SLO 5), 5) general program management (SLO 6) 6) program evaluation (SLO 2, 7), and 7) general (SLO 9) (This category includes review for appropriate citations, clear writing, integration of public health principles and concepts, assessment of problem complexity, and providing a response that is overall thorough, logical, and convincing.) 	<p>To successfully pass the comprehensive exam, 2 out of 3 blind reviewers must agree that the student passes the exam as a whole.</p> <p>After successful completion of the comprehensive examination M.P.H. degree completers will be prepared as public health professionals to:</p> <p>Apply epidemiological research to a public health problem (SLO 1)</p> <p>Analyze quantitative data using biostatistics (SLO 2)</p> <p>Interpret results of data analysis for public health practice (SLO 3)</p> <p>Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health (SLO 4)</p> <p>Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention (SLO 5)</p> <p>Develop a budget for a health or human services program or organization (SLO 6)</p> <p>Select methods to evaluate public health programs, including appropriate statistical methods of analysis (SLO 2, 7)</p> <p>Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, in writing (SLO 9)</p>	<p>100% of M.P.H. degree completers must pass the exam as a whole by the second attempt. It is required for graduation.</p> <p>80% should pass on the first attempt.</p> <p>80% should pass all common core sections listed to the left.</p>	<p>Data collected every fall, spring and summer.</p> <p>Reviewed every two years, on alternate years from assessment 7 .</p>	<p>Program Coordinator, who reports the results to the faculty, who then make decisions about appropriate programmatic changes, if necessary.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9</p>

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement	Program-Level Target	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
9) Internship: Evaluation by Preceptor	<p>PHHE 695: Internship in Public Health, is the equivalent of 300 clock hours of field experience. Internships occur at or near the end of the program and offer the chance to demonstrate skills learned in didactic classes. Per new accreditation criteria, students choose a minimum of 3 to 5 of the 22 Council on Education for Public Health foundational competencies (10 of which are in this assessment plan), and 0-2 of the 5 specialization competencies, for a total of 5 foundational and/or specialization competencies to demonstrate in their internships. Mastery of the chosen competencies is shown through at least 2 products, which are of benefit to the public health or health care related agency where the students choose to intern.</p> <p>During PHHE 695, once a site has been selected, the student and preceptor work together to clarify the student's role and responsibilities and develop a Learning Plan and Contract for review by the student's program adviser. This plan includes the chosen competencies, related internship activities, measurable behavioral objectives for each activity and a description of the final products. When approved, the student, agency preceptor, and program adviser sign the Learning Plan and Contract for the proposed internship. Copies of the final products are turned in to be evaluated by the faculty adviser in portfolio format by the end of the internship.</p> <p>An Evaluation Questionnaire is sent to the preceptor to be filled out and returned to the Internship Coordinator. Although the selection of 5 competencies varies by student interest and agency need, questions about the student's performance on two of the student learning outcomes (SLO 9: Communicate audience appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation; and SLO 10: Perform effectively on inter-professional teams.) is included on every Agency Evaluation Questionnaire.</p>	<p>The preceptor will rate the student at 7 or higher on a 10-point Likert scale for both "Oral Communication" and "Written Communication". (SLO 9)</p> <p>The preceptor will rate the student at 7 or higher on a 10-point Likert scale for "Performs effectively on inter-professional teams." (SLO 10)</p>	100% of students will be rated as 7 or higher on a 10 point Likert scale by their preceptor on their ability to perform effectively on interdisciplinary teams.	Data collected every fall, spring and summer. Reviewed every three years (along with assessments 5 and 6).	Internship Coordinator collects data through Qualtrics survey. The results are reported to the Program Coordinator, who then reports the results to the faculty, who then make decisions about possible programmatic changes, if necessary.	9, 10, others as applicable

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement	Program-Level Target	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
10) Alumni Survey(s) M.P.H. Supplemental Alumni Survey and Program Initiated Alumni Survey	<p>Programs are allowed to add a specific survey relevant to their own alumni to be attached to the official NIU Alumni Survey administered by the Office of Assessment Services.</p> <p>The program also has sent out its own alumni surveys, first in spring 2015 (response rate = 55.8%) and a second one in 2018 (response rate = 30%)</p>	<p>The average rating given by supplemental alumni survey responders regarding level of preparation for each of the 10 SLOs will be 3.5 or higher.</p> <p>In the program initiated survey, the students will rate their preparation in each of the 10 SLOs as “adequately prepared” or better.</p>	<p>30% of M.P.H. alumni will respond to the NIU Alumni Survey and complete the M.P.H. Supplemental Alumni Survey that accompanies the survey.</p> <p>50% will respond to the program generated alumni survey distributed every three years.</p> <p>80% will rate preparation in the 10 SLOs as “adequate” or better.</p>	<p>Every one to three years, depending on the survey used</p>	<p>Program Coordinator, who reports these results to the faculty, who then make decisions about curricular changes, if necessary.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</p>
<p><i>Note:</i> Student-level target is the score or performance an individual student must demonstrate to say the student met the student learning outcome. Program-level target is the percent of all students that must demonstrate they meet the student learning outcome.</p>						

ASSESSMENT METHODS-BY-OUTCOMES MATRIX

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcome									
	Apply epidemiologic al methods or research to a public health problem.	Analyze quantitative data using biostatistics.	Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice.	Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health.	Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention.	Develop a budget for a health or human service program or organization.	Select methods to evaluate public health programs.	Design an evidence-based health policy brief.	Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.	Perform effectively on inter-professional teams.
Final Epidemiological Article Review	F, D		F, D							
End of Term Biostatistics Data Analysis Project		F, D	F, D							
Needs Assessment				F, D						
Design of Project Intervention					F, D				F, D	
Financials Section of Business Plan						F, D				
Policy Analysis Assignment								F, D		
Capstone Course Program Plan Paper	S, D		S, D	S, D	S, D	S, D	S, D			
Comprehensive Examination	S, D	S, D	S, D	S, D	S, D	S, D	S, D		S, D	
Internship: Evaluation by Preceptor										S, D
Alumni Survey	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
<i>Note.</i> F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment. See the paragraph above for an explanation of each type of assessment.										