



SCHOOL OF  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**

MPH CULMINATING EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

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# MPH CULMINATING EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

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## INTRODUCTION

Students in all six Master of Public Health programs must complete a culminating experience (CE) that builds on the 6-credit field experience and requires students to address all of the MPH and program-specific competencies. The CE integrative paper is evaluated as part of the field experience grade.

A separate guide is available for the field experience. More information about the culminating experience can be found at the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health website: <https://ohsu-psu-sph.org/graduate-fieldandculminating-experience/>

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## OVERVIEW & REQUIREMENTS

### 1. WHAT IS THE CULMINATING EXPERIENCE?

The culminating experience is the summative experience at the end of the program in which students show they have mastered the skills and knowledge acquired during the course of study. It builds on the field experience, and requires the student to synthesize, integrate, and apply skills and competencies acquired through the classroom and their public health experiences.

Program	Culminating Experience Component(s)
Biostatistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrative paper</li><li>• Comprehensive exam</li></ul>
Environmental Systems & Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrative paper</li></ul>
Epidemiology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrative paper</li></ul>
Health Management & Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrative paper</li></ul>
Health Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrative paper</li><li>• Oral presentation and defense</li></ul>
Primary Health Care & Health Disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrative paper</li></ul>

### 2. WHO MUST COMPLETE THE CULMINATING EXPERIENCE?

All students in the MPH degree program who matriculated Fall 2016 or after must complete the culminating experience. Students in **Biostatistics** must also pass the comprehensive exam, and students in **Health Promotion** must also pass an oral presentation and defense.

### 3. HOW DO I REGISTER FOR THE CULMINATING EXPERIENCE?

Registration for the field experience includes registration for the culminating experience. Students must be registered for field experience and/or other credits to be registered for the culminating experience. **Biostatistics** students may take the comprehensive exam outside of the CE term and do not have to register for exam credits. Students must see their program's coordinator to learn about registration for these credits.

For students in the Health Promotion and Health Management & Policy programs, students can not complete their culminating experience summer term. Thus, they must register for 1 final credit of PHE 504 or HSMP 509 respectively during fall term.

### 4. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEETING COMPETENCIES THROUGH THE FIELD EXPERIENCE AND CULMINATING EXPERIENCE?

Successful completion of the field experience requires demonstrated mastery of stated learning competencies that are a *subset* of the program competencies, completion of all placement deliverables, and other program-specific requirements noted in each program's field experience guidelines. Successful completion of the

culminating experience requires students to address *all* program learning competencies as well as the overall MPH competencies. Students may find that program-specific competencies are a higher level or more detailed variation of MPH competencies and so can address these together.

## 5. HOW IS THE CE EVALUATED?

Assessment of a student's performance is based on the quality of materials submitted and meeting all the learning competencies. The integrative paper is evaluated by the student's faculty adviser.

Students who do not meet expectations may fail the CE. Students will be allowed at least one additional opportunity to meet CE expectations for each component of their program's CE. In this situation, students must work closely with their faculty advisers to pass the CE. For students in Biostatistics, details about the evaluation of the comprehensive exam are provided in the MPH student handbook

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## CULMINATING EXPERIENCE INTEGRATIVE PAPER REQUIREMENTS

The **integrative paper** is a 7-8 page single-spaced document in which students must:

1. Describe and evaluate the degree to which they have demonstrated mastery of all program-specific and MPH learning competencies during their MPH experience. Students must cite specific examples of how these competencies were met through coursework, field experience, and/or other experiences during the MPH program.
2. Give three examples of work in courses and/or field experience that synthesized many of these competencies. For example, a project in a course may have required students to create an evaluation plan of a public health program. Another example may be to help build and implement a research protocol during the field experience. Students should describe how such work is a synthesis of competencies.
3. Reflect on the lessons learned and key take-aways from their MPH experience, and share future career directions based on coursework, the field experience, and other experiences during the MPH program.

Culminating experience papers are due to the program's field experience coordinator. Specific deadlines will be given for each term.

It may be helpful to organize the paper by competencies, examples of synthesis, and then the reflective elements.

An assessment rubric is available on Page 8.

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## MPH DEGREE COMPETENCIES

1. Apply evidence-based knowledge of health determinants to public health issues.
2. Select and use appropriate methods for the design, analysis, and synthesis to address population-based health problems.
3. Integrate understanding of the interrelationship among the organization, delivery, and financing of health-related services.
4. Communicate public health principles and concepts using various strategies across multiple sectors of the community.
5. Employ ethical principles and behaviors in practice settings.
6. Enact cultural competence and promote diversity in public health research and practice.
7. Apply public health knowledge and skills in practice settings.

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## PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES

The culminating experience requires students to address ALL program-specific competencies and share how these have been met. Please find here a list of each program's competencies.

### **Biostatistics:**

1. Apply appropriate principles of research design and population-based concepts to assess health problems.
2. Apply appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyze risk determinants of disease and health conditions.
3. Apply descriptive and inferential statistical methods that are appropriate to the different study designs used in public health research.
4. Interpret and summarize results and communicate them to lay and professional audiences, in the context of proper public health principles and concepts.
5. Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of alternative designs and analytic methods, and critically review and assess statistical analyses presented in public health literature.
6. Apply basic ethical principles pertaining to the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of public health data.
7. Identify cultural dimensions of conducting research, including culturally sensitive recruitment of study participants, and develop strategies for interpretation of data in the larger cultural context.

### **Environmental Systems and Human Health:**

1. Communicate the relationship between environmental systems and human health.
2. Analyze how environmental hazards (chemical, physical, and biological) interact with natural and built systems, including the mechanisms of their adverse effects on humans.

3. Evaluate the risk of environmental exposures to human populations through the incorporation of exposure, toxicological, and other relevant data into risk assessment methodology.
4. Specify approaches for assessing, preventing, and controlling environmental and occupational hazards that pose risks to human health and safety.
5. Assess and interpret relevant literature in the area of public health and environmental hazards.
6. Explain the general mechanisms of toxicity in eliciting a human health effect in response to various environmental and occupational exposures.
7. Describe federal and state regulatory programs, guidelines, and authorities that control environmental and occupational health issues.
8. Integrate, synthesize, and apply theory to practice in the context of a research study, policy development, or environmental exposure.
9. Demonstrate understanding of cultural competency in community settings.
10. Apply ethical principles that govern the practice of environmental risk assessment, management, and communication.

#### **Epidemiology:**

1. Apply population-based concepts of epidemiology and risk determination to the assessment of health problems.
2. Apply evidence-based knowledge of health determinants to public health issues.
3. Apply and interpret a variety of statistical methods commonly used in medical and public health research.
4. Propose and test a research hypothesis.
5. Identify ethical considerations that arise in public health policy decisions.
6. Identify cultural dimensions in conducting research, including culturally sensitive recruitment of study participants, and develop strategies for interpretation of data in a larger cultural context.
7. Integrate and apply relevant literature in epidemiology to public health issues and policy.
8. Communicate public health principles and concepts through various strategies across multiple sectors of the community.

#### **Health Management and Policy:**

1. Articulate and exemplify the ethics, values, responsibilities, obligations, and social roles of a member of the health services administration profession.
2. Identify and apply relevant theories and frameworks to the practice of health services leadership, management, and policy.
3. Respond to and engage collaboratively with diverse local and global cultures and communities to address challenges in the interests of population health.
4. Identify and engage with the key elements of the health policy process.
5. Employ appropriate qualitative and quantitative techniques to investigate, monitor, and manage resource use.
6. Create and manage systems and processes to assess and improve organizational performance.

7. Conceptualize, analyze, and develop creative and collaborative solutions to challenges in health services leadership, management, and policy.
8. Assess challenges and explore solutions to advance cross-sectoral and inter-jurisdictional cooperation in health programs and services.
9. Demonstrate verbal and written communication skills as a health services professional and through interpersonal interactions in groups and in society.
10. Think critically and self-reflectively about emerging issues concerning health services leadership, management, and policy.

**Health Promotion:**

1. Apply theory in the development, implementation, and evaluation of health promotion interventions, programs, and policies.
2. Develop interventions and programs to effect change at multiple levels, including individual, community, organization, and policy.
3. Design and implement strategies to promote health.
4. Solicit and integrate input from community and organization stakeholders.
5. Design and deliver health communication messages.
6. Evaluate and interpret results from program evaluations and other research.
7. Define research problems, frame research questions, design research procedures, and outline methods of analysis.
8. Apply ethical principles that govern the practice of public health.
9. Enact cultural competency in diverse social and cultural communities.
10. Develop a substantive area of emphasis.

**Primary Health Care and Health Disparities:**

*The following competencies apply to students enrolling in the PHCHD program Fall 2014 or later:*

1. Assess, analyze, and synthesize the health status of vulnerable populations.
2. Identify, develop and manage interventions to promote and protect the health of populations at risk.
3. Lead and participate in inter-professional efforts to address health inequities with community partners.
4. Conduct, participate in or apply research which improves the health of a population.
5. Assess and integrate cultural beliefs and practices into public health interventions.
6. Understand the principles of public health ethics and apply them to public health practice.\*
7. Develop and apply effective communication strategies across multiple sectors of the community.\*
8. Develop and plan interventions utilizing principles of health systems organization and health care finance to address health disparities.
9. Apply program planning and quality improvement principles in the development, management, and/or evaluation of population health services.
10. Demonstrate basic skills in the development of a grant proposal.
11. Employ techniques to manage human, fiscal, and other public health resources.

\*Applies to students who matriculated Fall 2015 and Fall 2016

*The following competencies apply to students enrolling in the PHCHD program prior to Fall 2014:*

1. Assess the health status of vulnerable populations.
2. Plan, specify, and manage interventions to promote and protect the health of populations at risk.
3. Lead and participate in interdisciplinary efforts to address health disparities.
4. Collaborate with community partners to create, maintain, and modify health promotion and risk reduction programs.
5. Conduct, participate in or apply relevant research with vulnerable populations.
6. Enact cultural competency in diverse communities.
7. Communicate policy options for the health of populations at risk.
8. Articulate how ethics affect the practice of public health.

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APPENDIX: CULMINATING EXPERIENCE INTEGRATIVE PAPER SUGGESTED RUBRIC

**1=Not met/developing**

**2=met/proficient**

**3=met/exemplary**

	Score	Comments
<p><b>Program Competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses all program-specific and MPH competencies</li> <li>• Thoughtfully self-evaluates the degree to which each competency has been met</li> <li>• Provides specific examples as to how each competency has been met</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Synthesis of Competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides three examples of work during the MPH program that exemplify synthesis of program and/or MPH competencies</li> <li>• Explains clearly how competencies were addressed</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughtfully reflects on personal learning throughout the entire MPH experiences</li> <li>• Thoughtfully reflects on personal areas of growth and development</li> <li>• Explores potential careers and gives specific reasons as to why these careers will be pursued</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Professionalism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing is presented using standard conventions and in a professional manner and voice</li> <li>• Citations, where needed, are given correctly</li> </ul>		