

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER WASHINGTON DC	School of Public Health and Health Services Department of Prevention and Community Health PubH 215.18, Prevention and Community Health
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Course Description

MPH students are required to demonstrate proficiency in the application of the skills they acquire during their academic programs through the **Practicum** (PubH 214.18) and the **Culminating Experience** (PubH 215.18). The two courses can be taken simultaneously or sequentially, in which case the Practicum would come first.

The **Culminating Experience (CE)** is a graded course which consists of four elements that focus on a practice activity: (a) Concept Paper, (b) Proposal, (c) Final Report, and (d) Oral Presentation. These elements are fully described in the Appendix – Guidelines for Culminating Experience Elements.

The **Culminating Experience** is a planned experience that requires a student to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and to apply theory and principles in an experience that approximates some aspect of professional practice. The Culminating Experience will demonstrate the student's mastery of the body of knowledge and proficiency in the program competencies. Many different models are possible, including a major written paper such as a thesis or applied research project, development of case studies, completion of a needs assessment, development and pilot testing of an intervention program, or evaluation of programs or policies.

Course Prerequisites

- PubH 202 Biostatistical Applications for Public Health
- PubH 203 Principles and Practice of Epidemiology
- PubH 205 Policy Approaches to Public Health
- PubH 207 Social & Behavioral Approaches to Public Health
- See advisor for other program-specific requirements

Other Prerequisites

- Students must take the online training courses relating to research with human subjects (CITI) and personal health information (HIPAA). (See Practicum Handbook for details)
- Students must have participated in the SPHHS professional skills seminar, designed to assist students with preparing for their professional endeavors. (See Practicum Handbook for details)
- Students must have attended a Culminating Experience Information Session.
- If applicable, students must have submitted IRB paperwork before participating in the Culminating Experience.

Course Objectives – Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and assess public health issues that affect communities. This information will be synthesized and used to postulate hypotheses and/or to identify appropriate strategies in order to evaluate the impact of health problems/ programs or policies.
2. Enumerate and apply underlying principles and methods of Prevention and Community Health to design, plan, and conduct research or applications including observational and experimental designs, screening programs, public health surveillance, program design, implementation or evaluation.
3. Apply concepts in identifying and describing the determinants and the distribution of health and illness
4. Synthesize data and relevant literature to interpret findings in a theoretical framework, write manuscripts, and make oral presentations.

Required Texts

None. Students will conduct research to support their research project or public health practice activity.

Method of Instruction

Students are actively involved in the integration of knowledge and skills gained in their MPH program under the supervision of the Culminating Experience Advisor. The student's progress in accomplishing the four basic elements of the course is tracked with the use of the Culminating Experience Tracking Form, which identifies the student, the activity, the preceptor (if applicable) and the GW Advisor and serves as a form of certification that each activity has been completed and certified by the GW Advisor.

Methods of Evaluation

Students will be assessed on how well they accomplish the objectives for the Culminating Experience through the evaluation of their (a) Concept Paper, (b) Proposal, (c) Final Report, and (d) Oral Presentation. The GW Culminating Experience Advisor and PCH faculty will complete evaluations of the student's performance.

Grading Scale

The Culminating Experience will be graded as follows:

- Concept Paper – 10%
- Proposal – 20%
- Final Report – 50%
- Oral Presentation – 20%

Class Policy: Attendance/Participation

This is not a classroom experience but one where students work semi-independently, under the supervision of their preceptor (if applicable) and GW Advisor.

Academic Integrity

Please review the University's policy on academic integrity, located at www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html. All graded work must be completed in accordance with The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity.

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. Common examples of academically dishonest behavior include, but are not limited to, the following: cheating; fabrication; plagiarism; falsification and forgery of University academic documents, submitting the same work in more than one course without prior permission of both instructors, and facilitating academic dishonesty.

Students with Disabilities

If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Disability Support Services Office at 202.994.8250, Suite 242 Marvin Center, <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss>, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Student responsibilities

- 1) The student may begin to meet the requirements for the CE when starting her/his Practicum and identify and prepare for the Practice Activity that will be the focus of their Practicum and Culminating Experience courses. The practicum and the CE can be completed in tandem. However, the student may choose to have separate activities for the practicum and culminating experience. If the practicum and culminating experience activities are unconnected, the student will work with the CE Advisor to develop a plan of action, and depending on the CE chosen, may not have a separate practicum director participating in the completion of the CE.
- 2) Before beginning the CE, students must fulfill certain requirements. The student **must** attend a Culminating Experience Information Session in a semester preceding the semester in which s/he

- plans to complete the CE. Culminating Experience Information Sessions will be held once per month during Fall and Spring semesters.
- 3) The student should register for the Culminating Experience during her/his last planned semester at GWU SPHHS.
 - 4) The student will develop a concept paper, **due by the start of the semester** in which the student plans to complete the CE, describing the work that will be done for the CE as well as how the work will be carried out. (See Appendix for Concept Paper template.)
 - 5) The Concept Paper will be reviewed by Department of Prevention and Community Health faculty to assess the appropriateness of its scope, its feasibility, and the appropriate departmental faculty who will serve as advisors to the student.
 - 6) Once the Concept Paper is approved by Program and Departmental faculty, the student will expand the Concept Paper into a Proposal which requires the approval of the GW Advisor and Site Preceptor (if applicable). (See Appendix for Proposal guidelines).
 - 7) The student will work with her/his GW Advisor and Site Preceptor (if applicable) to determine whether IRB review is required. If it is, an IRB submission must be assembled. (See Appendix for guidance).
 - 8) After completing the CE, students will produce a Final Report, which will expand upon her/his Proposal by including the results of the program and discussion of the CE. (See Appendix for guidelines for the Final Report). The GW Advisor must receive an advanced draft of the report **four weeks** before the student intends to make the Oral Presentation.
 - 9) Once the GW Advisor gives authorization, the student will work with her/his GW Advisor and/or CE Director to schedule the Oral Presentation. Students are encouraged to invite their Site Preceptors to their Oral Presentations.
 - 10) The student must provide the GW Advisor with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation **two weeks** before the scheduled date of the Oral Presentation. (See Appendix).

Guidelines for Culminating Experience Elements

1. Title Page

A Title Page must be included with each of the written documents (Concept Paper, Proposal, and Final Report) submitted to your GW Advisor, Site Preceptor, and through Blackboard. The proper format of the Title Page should be:

TITLE

DATE

Protocol Approved by
The George Washington University
Institutional Review Board IRB #
(if applicable)

Submitted by:
Student Name
Contact Information

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Public Health Degree
Department of Prevention and Community Health
School of Public Health and Health Services
The George Washington University

2. Concept Paper: 1- 3 pages double-spaced (including references)

Please follow this template by maintaining the headings of each section. The concept paper should emphasize the public health issue, objectives and methods to be implemented in the CE.

- a. Title Page: as above
- b. Background: brief review of the literature, public health significance, and justification of need for the activity to be carried out (gaps in research area).
- c. Specific Aims: Clear statement of the specific aims of your project/practice activity.
- d. Objectives: Clear statements of the principle health objective(s) and behavioral objective(s) your program/project will be assessing
- e. Methods: outline of the proposed program activity methods, which may include depending on your project:
 - 1.) Project design: Type of study or activity to be conducted (e.g. case-control study or surveillance project).
 - 2.) Types and Sources of data: Present the types of data you will be gathering as well as how data will be gathered (interviews, focus groups, surveys)
 - 3.) human subjects protection issues
- f. Public Health Courses completed thus far that have served as preparation for completion of the CE methods.
- g. Discussion: of the public health significance of the proposed project.
- h. Timeline: for the CE project or activity.
- i. References

3. Proposal: 5 – 10 double-spaced pages

The proposal represents an expansion of the approved Concept Paper. In addition to the above elements which should be described in greater detail, a scientific abstract using standard *American Journal of Public Health* format should be included after the Title Page.

4. Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review

Students must work with their GW Advisor to decide whether the topic for a proposed Practice Activity must be submitted for IRB approval. If IRB Review is required, students must work with their GW Advisor, the Practicum Director, and the Office of Human Research (OHR) to obtain access to the appropriate forms; OHR has a Blackboard course which has forms and worksheets to assist students. Once an IRB submission has been prepared, the GW Advisor should review it, sign it if needed, and the package should then be submitted to the Office of Human Research for review and signature.

The IRB is a committee mandated by federal law to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in research activities. The IRB achieves its primary function, protecting the rights and welfare of subjects participating in research, by educating researchers.

For Human Subject Research course requirements, please consult the SPHHS Practicum Handbook.

Other institutions with their own IRBs: Students will sometimes work with institutions other than GWU that have their own IRB. The general rule is that students still have to complete an IRB submission for GW once the IRB used by the site has approved the project. Students should include the other IRB's documentation of project approval.

For students conducting research at Children's National Medical Center (CNMC), submissions are made directly to the CNMC IRB. There is no need for a submission to the GW IRB because there is an agreement between the two institutions and the CNMC IRB will notify the GW IRB of any submissions.

5. Final Report Guidelines – approximately 25 double-spaced pages

The Final Report follows the outline of a published research paper, and represents an expansion of the Proposal. It should include the following elements:

- 1.) Title Page
- 2.) Abstract
- 3.) Background
- 4.) Scope
- 5.) Specific Aims
- 6.) Health and Behavioral Objectives
- 7.) Methods: including project design, methods used to collect the data, the type of data, data sources, variables, statistical analysis methods, and human subjects protection issues
- 8.) Results: a description of the data and the principal findings
- 9.) Discussion: of the public health significance of the proposed project
- 10.) Conclusions and recommendations
- 11.) Tables and Figures
- 12.) References
- 13.) Appendices: e.g., data collection instruments, curriculum developed, communication materials

At least **four weeks** prior to the scheduled presentation date, the student must provide an advanced draft of the final report to her/his GW Advisor.

6. Oral Presentation Guidelines

Students are expected to prepare a concise, **10-minute** oral presentation using PowerPoint slides. The basic outline of the talk should include a Title Slide, Background, Hypotheses or Objectives, Methods, Results, Summary and/or Conclusions, Recommendations, and Acknowledgments. The number of slides presented should be limited to about 10 to 15, as each slide takes about one minute to present. Each presentation will be followed by a 10-minute question and answer session with Department faculty and other students.

At least **two weeks** prior to the scheduled presentation date, the student must provide a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and review it with her/his GW Advisor. The student must also provide an abstract of the written report to the GW Advisor one week before the scheduled presentation so announcements can be made to Department faculty and students.