



School of Public Health

Instructions for Completing the Required Master of Public Health (MPH) Culminating Experience

(2 credits)

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Introduction

Every student must complete a satisfactory Culminating Experience to earn the MPH degree. The Culminating Experience builds upon the practical Field Experience and requires a student to integrate knowledge acquired in the classroom and in the field.

The student must write an analytic paper on a public health topic or a topic related to the student's Field Experience, and deliver an oral presentation for faculty and other attendees.

The student must apply skills from across the curriculum and demonstrate integration of knowledge in the five core areas of public health (Biostatistics, Community Health Sciences, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology, and, Health Policy and Management). After acceptance of the final paper by the departmental faculty, the student makes an oral presentation on his or her work during which Faculty question him or her to assess mastery of core MPH competencies.

NOTE: If a student does not complete the CE by the end of a semester, s/he must continue to register for the CE (and pay) each semester until successful completion of the CE.

Meeting the CE Requirement

Students fulfill the CE requirement through submission of an analytical paper, usually related to the completed Field Experience, and an oral presentation. The paper is a professional document similar to a review article in the public health press. The topic chosen should provide a comprehensive discussion of the key aspects of the issue. The content of the paper must demonstrate integration and application of principles in Biostatistics, Community Health Sciences, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology, and, Health Policy and Management. There are specific deadlines in the semester for submission of work products:

Fall or Spring Semester	Summer Semester	Work Product
End of 2 nd week	End of 1 st week	1-page proposal with outline approved by Faculty Advisor
End of 4 th week	End of 2 nd week	Submission of extensive bibliography
End of 8 th week	End of 4 th week	Submission of first full draft of paper to Faculty Advisor

End of 12 th week	End of 6 th week	Submission of complete final version to Faculty Advisor. After approval of Faculty Advisor, the Departmental Chair must approve the paper.
In 14 th week	In 7 th week	Oral Presentation

The writing should be clear, concise, and compelling at a level intelligible by an educated layperson rather than by a specialist in the given topic. The Faculty Advisor is not responsible for text-editing drafts or for correcting errors in spelling, syntax, or grammar. Many students benefit from studying Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* before and during the time they are writing their papers. Many find this brief on-line module developed by the NIH helpful: <http://plainlanguage.nih.gov/CBTs/PlainLanguage/login.asp>.

Most students need to make several revisions in their work before the Faculty Advisor and Departmental Chair accept the paper. It is vital, therefore, that the student maintain rigorous self-discipline and maintain a weekly schedule with sufficient time for work on the paper.

The typical length of the paper is about 3000-5000 words double-spaced, including complete references. Use a size-12 font, page numbers, one-inch margins on all sides, and a header with your name and the title of the paper. The final document must be printed on single-sided letter-sized paper and submitted with an electronic copy in Microsoft Word. While each department may have more specific guidelines, in general the format is as follows:

A. Title page, including the following:

- Name of the student/author
- Name of the Faculty Advisor
- Concentration Name
- Department Name (if different than concentration name)
- Date

B. A structured abstract, not exceeding 180 words, not including headings.

C. It is suggested to use up to four headings following the AMA Manual of Style, 10th edition (<http://www.amamanualofstyle.com//oso/public/index.html>). Headings, in a consistent pattern, using no more than three outline levels, brief sentences, and no acronyms or question marks.

D. References, in the suggested AMA style, verified with PubMed.

E. Tables, figures, and images, of professional quality with titles and content that are fully comprehensible without reference to the main text.

F. Reproduced material must be identified as such with an appropriate reference. The student must secure permission to use copyrighted material.

G. All acronyms must be written out with the acronym directly after in parentheses.

The outline of the content of paper will vary with topic. A typical outline would be:

- A. Title and abstract
- B. Public health significance of topic
- C. Critical review of the literature
 - 1. Predictive factors (risk and protective)
 - 2. Intervention methods
 - 3. Unresolved issues
- D. Discussion including recommendations
- E. References

Grading of the Paper

This is a two-step process. 1) The student submits the paper to the Faculty Advisor. The Faculty Advisor reviews the paper and recommends any changes to the student. The student makes the necessary revisions and returns it to his/her Faculty Advisor. 2) If the Faculty Advisor or designee deems the paper acceptable, then s/he submits it to the Departmental Chair for review and final approval. The Departmental Chair, upon reading the paper, may either determine the paper to be acceptable or that it requires revisions. If revisions are required, then the paper is returned to the Faculty Advisor, who then returns it to the student with comments on the needed revisions. Note that the paper will be graded on a pass/fail basis. (See below for the sheet used to record the evaluation of the paper.) Once the paper is deemed acceptable by the Departmental Chair, the oral presentation may be scheduled.

The Oral Presentation

Each student will present his or her Culminating Experience to the faculty, peers, and invited guests usually in the last week of the semester, after the paper has been accepted. The student takes the first fifteen minutes to present the work, usually with a slide presentation of no more than twelve slides that have been previously reviewed by the Faculty Advisor. The standard recommendations for slides are:

- No more than five (5) lines per slide
- No more than five (5) words per line
- All text clearly legible to all audience members

Detailed data tables are usually best distributed as handouts rather than displayed in slides.

The student should face the audience throughout the presentation and should not read the slides aloud, but rather elaborate on each point after the audience has had time to view the slide. The faculty members attending then question the student to assess whether the student has successfully integrated and applied the core disciplines of public health in the Culminating Experience. (See below for the sheet used to record evaluation of the oral presentation.) The decision of the faculty takes place in a closed meeting immediately after the presentation. Students who are deemed to require additional work to demonstrate integration and application of the core disciplines receive a written statement from their Departmental Chair within a week on what deficiencies need correction for receiving a passing grade on the oral presentation.

**SUNY Downstate School of Public Health Culminating Experience Final Paper
Evaluation Form**

Student Name _____ **Concentration** _____

The Culminating Experience provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to integrate and apply information from each of the five core public health disciplines.

Biostatistics:

Does the paper

- | | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| 1. Correctly interpret the results of statistical analyses found in public health studies? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 2. Apply descriptive techniques commonly used to summarize public health data? | YES | NO | N/A |

Environmental and Occupational Health:

Does the paper

- | | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| 1. Does the paper identify and/or analyze environmental influences on risk factors and disease including the magnitude and distribution of exposure and adverse health outcomes, and the role of contributing factors? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 2. Specify approaches for assessing, preventing and controlling environmental hazards that pose risks to human health and safety? | YES | NO | N/A |

Epidemiology:

Does the paper

- | | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| 1. human health and safety Describe a public health problem in terms of magnitude, person, place and time? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 2. and controlling Apply the basic terminology and definitions of epidemiology? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 3. Review and critically evaluate epidemiologic literature relevant To the topic of the integrative project? | YES | NO | N/A |

Health Behavior:

Does the paper

- | | | | |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| 1. Describe if and how social and/or behavioral factors influence the topic being explored? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 2. Incorporate relevant theories, concepts and models of social and behavioral sciences? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 3. Discuss evidence based strategies as appropriate? | YES | NO | N/A |

Health Policy and Management:

Does the paper



- | | | | |
|--|------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Address the organizing, financing and delivery of healthcare services or public health systems? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 2. Address any policy concerns relevant to the topic? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 3. Discuss program planning or evaluation as relevant to this topic? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 4. Discuss relevant partnerships? | YES | NO | N/A |
| 5. Discuss relevant partnerships? The student's overall level of integration: | Inadequate | Adequate | Excellent |

If inadequate, corrective action recommended:

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Department)

(Date)

SUNY Downstate School of Public Health

Evaluation Form
CE Oral Presentation

Student _____ Date _____

The Faculty Advisor will record the consensus of the attending faculty present (attach sign-in sheet).

Content

Were the goals, objectives (or aims), and methods clearly stated?	YES	NO	N/A
Was the public health significance clearly and accurately articulated?	YES	NO	N/A
Was the existing body of knowledge summed up accurately?	YES	NO	N/A
Were the implications and limitations of the work summed up well?	YES	NO	N/A
Was the presenter knowledgeable and fluent in discussing the topic?	YES	NO	N/A
Did the presenter respond effectively to questions posed?	YES	NO	N/A
Was the relevance to urban and immigrant health clearly articulated?	YES	NO	N/A

Form

Was the presenter audible and comprehensible?	YES	NO	N/A
Were any visual aids used well and appropriately?	YES	NO	N/A

Comments:

Summary: Has the student met the requirement for a CE Oral Presentation? YES NO

If NO, corrective action indicated:

Name of Faculty Advisor _____ Signature of Faculty Advisor _____ Date _____