Public Health Program Accreditation
Criteria and Process:
The United States and Beyond

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An Overview of Credentialing in the United States

Credentialing

Institutions

Accreditation
- Hospitals
- Health Departments
- Academic Programs (CEPH)

Individuals

Certification
- Health Education Specialists (CHES)
- Public Health (CPH)

Licensure
- Nurses
- Physicians
- Social Workers

Registration
- Sanitarians/Environmental Health Specialists
- Dietitians
Who is CEPH?

- Established in 1974 as independent not-for-profit organization. Governed by a Board of Directors (Councilors). 5 person staff.

- Headquartered in Washington, DC - space leased in the American Public Health Association (APHA) building

- Funding-90% accreditation fees, 10% APHA

- Services: Accreditation reviews, consultation, training, technical assistance papers, representing public health in higher education dialogue
Who is CEPH?

- 2 “corporate members”
  - American Public Health Association (APHA)
  - Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH)
- Scope of relationship with corporate members is limited
- Both corporate members have roles in Councilor appointments
- APHA makes annual financial contribution
- No official relationship with NBPHE
- No official relationship with PHAB
CEPH Accredits

- 40 Schools of Public Health
  - 39 in the US, 1 in Mexico
- 74 Public Health Programs
  - 72 in the US, 1 in Canada, 1 in Lebanon
- 28 schools and programs are applicants for accreditation
  - 26 in US, 1 in Canada, 1 in Grenada
- Currently working with schools in France and South Africa
The Council
CEPH Councilors

- 3 represent schools of public health
  - Appointed by ASPH
- 2 represent public health programs
  - Approved by ASPH and APHA
- 3 represent public health practice
  - Appointed by APHA
- 2 represent the general public
  - Jointly appointed by ASPH and APHA
Council responsibilities

- Fiduciary responsibility for organization
- Adopt criteria
- Establish policies and procedures
- Make accreditation decisions
- Staff/individuals may not make any decision on accreditation—Council, acting in official role, has sole authority
Council activities

- 2 decision-making meetings per year: “spring” and “fall”
  - Fall (Sept/Oct) and Spring (May/June)

- 1 business meeting/board retreat: Winter (January/February)

- 1 Administrative Committee meeting: summer

- Full Council discusses/votes: parliamentary procedure
CEPH Staff
CEPH Staff

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Criteria Overview
Mission, Goals, & Objectives

- Must have clearly formulated, publicly available mission, goals and objectives related to education, research and service.
- Objectives must be measurable
- Defined public health values, concepts and ethics.
Evaluation & Planning

- Must have explicit processes for ongoing self-evaluation and monitoring
- Must conduct an analytical self-study involving significant constituencies

See Technical Assistance Papers on Linking Evaluation to MGO and Establishing & Using Outcome Measures
Institutional Environment

- Part of regionally-accredited institution – non-US applicants must demonstrate comparable external evaluation processes
- Schools must demonstrate independence and status comparable to other professional schools at that institution
- Schools must be at highest level of organizational stature available in the institution
- Must have environment that supports interdisciplinary collaboration & development of public health values, concepts and ethics
Governance

- Administration and faculty must have clearly defined roles, rights, and responsibilities with regard to academic policies/governance
- Students must have active roles in policy and decision-making
Resources

- Must have adequate resources (includes budget, faculty, space, library, computer, and practice placement sites) to fulfill mission, goals and objectives.
- Required minimum faculty levels: these faculty must be trained & experienced in public health.
- For programs – 3 full-time faculty per area of concentration.

For schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Numbers</th>
<th>Schools of public health</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPH core areas</td>
<td>5 full-time at university: 3 full-time in school + 2 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral core areas</td>
<td>5 full-time in school</td>
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More on faculty resource requirements

- Council looks at the mission, goals, objectives and competencies. Determination of adequate resources, beyond the minimum requirements, must be made in context.

- Council looks at the student-faculty ratio (SFR). For graduate education, the SFR should typically be less than 10:1.

- Both the student headcount (HC) and the student FTE are significant. Programs and schools that enroll only full-time students may have different resource profiles than programs and schools that enroll many part-time students. All must meet minimum requirements.
Curriculum

- All public health programs must offer the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree or an equivalent professional degree (EPD) to be considered for accreditation. EPDs may be MSc, MSPH, MS or others, but all must meet MPH criteria.

- MPH & EPD must require for all students:
  - 1) instruction in 5 core areas,
  - 2) practice experience/internship &
  - 3) culminating experience (eg, capstone, thesis, comprehensive examination).
5 Core Areas of PH Knowledge

- Epidemiology
- Biostatistics
- Environmental Health Sciences
- Health Services Administration
- Social & Behavioral Sciences

Definitions appear in interpretive language for Criterion 2.1

NOTE: Schools of Public Health must offer professional masters degree concentrations in each of these core areas, along with doctoral degrees in 3 of the 5 areas.
Curriculum

- MPH & EPD must require at least 42 semester credits or 56 quarter credits (based on US system)

**DEFINITION:**
- No set formula for hours established in criteria. Requirements typically established by regional accrediting agencies in the US. Here are examples.
- Semester systems: built on “3 credit classes”. A 3-credit class = 45 contact hours in the classroom + 135 hours of homework/work outside the classroom.
- Quarter systems: built on “4 credit classes”: conversion between quarter and semester is $3/4 \times$ quarter credits = equivalent semester credits
Competencies

- All degrees, all concentrations
- Must specify competencies for each degree and each area of specialization and map relationship between LO's and competencies
- Clear learning objectives (LO’s) stated in terms of expected student outcomes for all courses
- See CEPH TA Paper on Competencies & Learning Objectives
Assessment of Student Learning

- Must be tied to competencies
- Grades alone-not enough – usually involved observation of student competency
- Must discuss student assessment methods for all degrees/programs
- Must include graduation & job placement rates
- Must explain graduation or job placement rates below 80%
Research

- Program faculty must pursue active research agenda
- Research must be public health focused
- Students should have the opportunity to be involved
- Research should be supported and rewarded by the university
Service

- Must provide service to profession and community
- This criterion does not include faculty service to the university – includes service on editorial boards, professional boards, grant review as well as volunteering expertise to NGOs or other community organizations (e.g., schools, hospitals, etc.)
Workforce Development

- Must have programs that serve (local) public health workforce & community
- Must periodically conduct needs assessment of professionals to assure appropriate program delivery
- Certificate programs must have appropriate oversight & regular evaluation
Faculty/Staff

- Must have clearly defined, multidisciplinary, qualified (in public health) faculty
- Must have sufficient depth to support concentrations offered
- Must have policies governing tenure/promotion and supporting professional development
- Must recruit, retain & promote a diverse faculty and staff
Students

- Must have sound recruitment and admissions policies
- Must recruit and admit a diverse student body
- Must provide academic advisement & career counseling
Accreditation Process
Accreditation process: timeline

- For US-based, functioning institutions, 3 years from time application is accepted to time of accreditation decision
- New schools or outside the US, often longer ~ 5 years
- Applications due 6 weeks prior to board meeting
Accreditation Procedures: An Overview

- Request for international consultation/invitation to apply
- Application
- 2nd Consultation
- Selection of dates for site visit: deadlines established
- Preliminary self-study document submitted
- Revision and final self-study document submitted
- Site visit
- Team’s report
- Response from school or program
- Council decision is made
- Decision communicated in letter, accompanied by final report
Important Documents

1. Accreditation Procedures, amended February 2008

Accredit in Two Types of Organizational Settings

1. Accreditation Criteria: Schools of Public Health, amended June 2005
2. Accreditation Criteria: Public Health Programs, amended June 2005
Other Resources

Visit the CEPH website:

www.ceph.org

Policies, procedures, criteria, Technical Assistance Papers, fee schedule
FINANCIAL MATTERS
Applicant Fee

- **AMOUNT**: $2000
- **WHEN**: Submit check (payable in USD) with application

Your program will be invoiced as an applicant annually (January/February) until it becomes accredited. Thus, you will pay the applicant fee of $2000 2 to 4 times depending on your timeline.
2009 Accreditation Review Fee (PHP)

- **AMOUNT**: $2700 (North America); $5400 (Outside North America)

- **WHEN**: Payable only in year of the site visit

- **WHY**: Extra tasks associated with coordinating visit including review of preliminary self-study, logistical arrangements, intensive relationship with school/program

- **EXPENSES**: Program is responsible for all site visit expenses – typically 3 persons

- **EXCEPTIONS**: 
  - Surcharge for additional visit days, if needed
Annual Support Fees (2009)

- **AMOUNT:** PHP $3047
  
  Expect this fee to increase ~3% annually

- **WHEN:** Invoiced annually
  (January/February) the first calendar year after initial accreditation decision
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