

**2.5 Culminating Experience. All graduate professional degree programs, both professional public health and other professional degree programs, identified in the instructional matrix shall assure that each student demonstrates skills and integration of knowledge through a culminating experience.**

**Required Documentation.**

**2.5.a Identification of the culminating experience required for each professional public health and other professional degree program. If this is common across the school's professional degree programs, it need be described only once. If it varies by degree or program area, sufficient information must be provided to assess compliance by each.**

All graduate professional degree programs in the College require a culminating experience. While the experiences differ, all of them are designed to assure that students about to graduate can demonstrate mastery of critical content in their chosen disciplines.

**MPH**

The culminating experience for MPH students is development and presentation of a major report on a special project conducted during the internship experience. Thus, students select their special project topics in conjunction with selection of internship sites. Students are expected to use the special project presentation to demonstrate mastery of the broad field of public health and to articulate how MPH competencies and concentration competencies are strengthened by the project. When the written report of the special project has been approved by the faculty advisor, an oral or poster presentation based on the paper is scheduled for "Public Health Day" near the end of the student's final semester in the program. Faculty members assess whether the student has successfully demonstrated broad-based knowledge in the field of public health and in the concentration area.

The option of presenting a poster instead of an oral report was introduced in 2012-13, after a full year of discussion by the Public Health Executive Committee. In spring 2013, 60% of the 45 student presenters selected the poster option, while the remaining 40% chose to remain with an oral presentation. In exit surveys, 87% of the students indicated they were "satisfied" or "extremely satisfied" with their chosen presentation experience with regard to preparation, relevance to their coursework, and as a culminating experience for the MPH program. Exit survey data also suggested specific improvements for the poster sessions in 2013-2014. Many of the suggestions relate to logistical arrangements, such as such as holding oral and poster sessions on the same day, more space between posters, and longer poster sessions (1.5 hours instead of 1 hour). In addition, the Public Health Executive Committee recognized that students would benefit from targeted training on development of posters and skills involved in describing their work in a poster setting. This content is included in the MPH seminar series (PHC 6601) in 2013-14. The committee also recognized that the presentation assessment instrument and procedures should be re-examined and revised to accommodate two forms of presentation. A new form with more specific guidance for students and faculty reviewers was completed in December 2013 for use in spring 2014.

## 2.5 Culminating Experience

Specific guidelines for developing the paper and presentation are included in the *MPH Student Handbook*. These guidelines are discussed with students during a special seminar the semester before they begin their internships. The culminating experience provides opportunities for content integration and honing of communication skills, both of which are valued highly by UF faculty and students alike.

Successful completion of the culminating experience is the basis for receiving a letter grade in PHC 6601 Seminar in Contemporary Public Health Issues. To complete this course successfully, students are also required to attend 16 one-hour seminar sessions during their course of study. The sessions focus on interdisciplinary public health topics, professional skills and guidance regarding conduct of the internship and special project.

Beginning in October 2012, campus MPH students receive seminar credit for participation in the UF Health Science Center Interprofessional Learning in Health (IPLH) series, which consists of three sessions that use team-based learning as a pedagogical method. Students complete preparatory readings upon which they are tested, and then participate in group solutions for problems related to specific content areas. Students' application of teamwork skills and content knowledge were assessed in the IPLH series. The teamwork skills were assessed by students' completion of a peer teamwork assessment instrument at the conclusion of the series. Content knowledge acquired during each session was assessed through students' completion of an individual readiness assurance test and then a team readiness assurance test, both a component of team-based learning. Additionally, student satisfaction with the experience was obtained for purposes to improve the learning experience. Similar assessments will be collected during the 2013-2014 year.

Faculty from PHHP were involved in development of the content and delivery of the IPLH sessions in 2012-13. However, faculty from all Health Science Center colleges were challenged by the need to achieve relevance to a disparate group of health students. Integrating public health, the only non-clinical field, into the mix was particularly challenging. Dr. Amy Blue, the new PHHP Associate Dean for Educational Affairs, has also been named the HSC Associate Vice President for Interprofessional Education. In that capacity, she will lead the IPLH initiative and will represent the interests of the MPH students in this effort.

The PHC 6601 course syllabus, IPLH requirements, and the seminar schedule for fall 2013 are in the Resource File.

### **Other Graduate Professional Programs**

Each of the other graduate professional programs in the College requires a culminating experience, as summarized in Table 2.5.a.1.

**Table 2.5.a.1 Culminating Experiences of Other Professional Programs**

<b>Professional Program</b>	<b>Culminating Experience</b>
MA Communication Sciences and Disorders	Comprehensive examination or thesis
MHA	HSA 6939 Capstone Seminar and Consultancy Project

Professional Program	Culminating Experience
MHS in Environmental and Global Health: One Health concentration	Poster presentation at a UF research day, One Health Field Research Experience
MOT	12-credit internship
Doctor of Audiology Distance Learning	Comprehensive examination
Doctor of Audiology Campus	One year externship
Doctor of Physical Therapy	18 weeks full-time clinical internship

**2.5.b Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met and an analysis of the school’s strengths, weaknesses and plans relating to this criterion.**

This criterion is met.

**Strengths:**

1. All students in the MPH program must demonstrate skill and integration of knowledge through a culminating experience, consisting of a written report of a special project and an oral or poster presentation of the same material.
2. The opportunity to select either an oral presentation or a poster presentation was implemented in 2012-2013 and was well-received by students and faculty.
3. The MPH special project report and presentation are part of a course, PHC 6601 Seminar in Contemporary Public Health Issues, which requires 16 hours of seminar participation during the course of the MPH program. Seminars focus on cross-cutting issues in public health, professional development, and interprofessional issues in health.
4. Students in all other graduate professional degree programs in the College must also complete a culminating experience.

**Weaknesses:**

1. Implementation of the poster option identified opportunities for improvement related to logistics, poster development, and poster presentation skills.
2. Development of content for the interprofessional sessions was challenging, especially with regard to the role of public health, in 2012-13.

**Plans:**

1. Continue to offer the option of a poster or an oral presentation of the special project, in addition to the written report, for the MPH culminating experience.
2. Address logistical issues related to the new poster sessions.
3. Provide content on poster development and presentation skills.
4. Develop and implement a more specific assessment tool for poster and oral presentations.
5. Develop IPLH content with clear relevance to public health.