

Policy number: 305

Subject/Title: MPH Students and the Core Requirement

Effective Date: January 1, 2005

Policy Statement: A minimum base of knowledge and skills is required by The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) for all MPH students in each of the five public health core disciplines: biostatistics; social and behavioral sciences; epidemiology; environmental health; and health administration. This knowledge is typically acquired through the successful completion of the core curriculum. However, in some cases an advanced course in one or more core discipline may be substituted for the core requirement.

MPH Competencies and Core Curriculum

The core curriculum consists of a set of learning objectives and courses designed to address the MPH competencies that have been established by the UTSPH faculty.

- The vast majority of MPH students are expected to complete the core curriculum (as designated in specific courses listed in the UTSPH catalog) and any additional courses deemed necessary by the student's advisory committee.
- All MPH competencies must be mastered by students prior to graduation, and faculty advisors must verify in writing (Graduation Check List) that these competencies have been adequately addressed.

Reason for Policy: The proposed system allows for students to achieve competencies in the five core public health disciplines. In the exceptional case, a student may be proficient in the requirement if there is evidence of prior mastery of the competency(ies) from a previous educational/degree program. If so, a student must request a waiver of the core requirement or a substitution for the requirement.

Definitions: N/A

Scope and Audience: All MPH students

Responsibilities and Procedures: Students may request a waiver or substitution of the core requirement.

Waiver of a Core Requirement

On rare occasions an MPH student may have advanced education in one of the core public health disciplines. In such a case, a core requirement may be waived if the student has mastered all of the competencies related to the particular core discipline. The role of the MPH student's advisor is central in the process of assessing a student's core competencies. The advisor and academic dean should carefully review the student's academic and professional record, clearly delineating what specific feature of the student's experience support the student's exemption from the core requirement. The student must document the evidence that the previous experience meets or exceeds the competency. The mastery of the competencies must be documented in the student file via the completion of a "Waiver for an MPH Core Competency" form, including signatures of the academic advisor, Division director and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Please note that the Division director signature is from the Division in which the course is being offered.

Substitution of a UTSPH Core Course with an Advanced UTSPH Course

Occasionally an MPH student will have mastered some, but not all, of the competencies in a particular discipline prior to admission. In such a case, an advanced course can be taken in order to master the remaining competency(ies). This course may be one of the permanent courses, special topics courses, or independent study courses offered by a full time UTSPH faculty member. As with the core course waiver, the substitution of the core course with an advanced course requires the attention of the student's advisor. The student must document in detail the prior experience which singles that student out for exemption. If the advisor supports a course substitution, the substituting course must be a course approved by the Division Director from the substituting course's division.

Related Policies, Forms and Information: [Waiver for an MPH Core Competency](#)

History: MPH Core Competencies are evaluated periodically according to ASPH and CEPH mandates. This is Version 4, 1/27/05, based on curriculum evaluation.

Approved by Executive Council, 12/16/04
Amendment endorsed by Executive Council 01/27/05

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