

## *Criterion V.D*

**There shall be procedures for assessing and documenting the extent to which each student has attained these specified learning objectives and determining readiness for a public health practice or research career, as appropriate to the particular degree.**

### Expected Documentation

1. Description of the procedures used for monitoring and evaluating student progress in meeting stated learning objectives.
2. Identification of outcomes which serve as measures by which the school will evaluate student achievement in each program, and presentation of data assessing the school's performance against those measures over the last three years.
3. Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met.

## Criterion V.D – Assessment and Documentation

### 1. Procedures for Monitoring and Evaluating Student Progress

The school has several means by which it monitors and evaluates student progress in meeting stated learning objectives.

- ***Assigned Course Grades***

Each course has its own learning objectives prepared by the instructor and given to the students at the beginning of the course. Students are evaluated to the extent that they have successfully achieved these objectives through a combination of mechanisms including class participation, individual and group presentations, examinations and written reports. Each student's progress in meeting the learning objectives is reflected in the assigned course grade.

- ***The Program Proposal***

Each student is required to develop a program of study during his or her first semester in residence (MPH students) or by the end of his or her first year of study (MS, DrPH and PhD students). The program of study is developed in consultation with the student's advisor, and requires the approval of the division director and the associate dean for academic affairs. To obtain approval of the study program, the student's plan must include course work and thesis preparation, where relevant, which encompass division and schoolwide learning objectives. As a requirement for graduation, the student must submit a final program of study identifying any approved revisions to the study plan, which then is matched with course work to ensure the program was completed.

- ***Academic Advising Document***

Faculty advisors are provided an Academic Advising Document at the end of each semester. This document identifies the courses which the student has taken and the grades received. The advisor can use this document to evaluate the student's academic performance and progress toward degree completion.

- ***MPH Capstone Requirement***

Each MPH student must complete successfully a capstone requirement that demonstrates the student's ability to integrate, synthesize and apply broad public health concepts and theories to a public health issue relevant to his or her major discipline. Refer to Response V.B.4 for further description of this requirement.

- ***MS Thesis and Examination***

With the exception of biostatistics students, a student in the MS degree program must complete a thesis, based upon a minimum of 16 semester hours of research. The MS student selects three faculty members to serve on his or her thesis examining committee. The selected faculty officially are appointed to the examining committee by the dean of the Graduate College. The committee works closely with the student in selecting the

research topic and supervising the ensuing research. The thesis research may emphasize theoretical, laboratory, field or computer investigations. The student must pass a final oral examination upon completion of the research. The master's of science program in biostatistics substitutes a comprehensive examination for the thesis.

- ***DrPH Preliminary Examination and Dissertation***

The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree is a professional degree awarded by the School of Public Health. Throughout the student's tenure in the DrPH program, his or her knowledge base and progress are rigorously tested. Upon completion of course work, the DrPH student must pass a comprehensive preliminary examination. The examination tests the student's knowledge and understanding of the core public health principles in all six core subject areas and the ability to apply them to the field generally and to the student's area(s) of interest. The preliminary examination committee consists of the student's major advisor, who serves as chair of the committee, and at least one member from each of the following areas: biostatistics, epidemiology, health policy and administration, community health sciences, and environmental and occupational health sciences. Upon successfully passing the preliminary examination, the DrPH student selects a dissertation examining committee and, with the advice and support of his/her committee members, develops the dissertation proposal. The DrPH student must pass the Dissertation Proposal Defense (General Examination) and Final Oral Examination in which she or he defends the completed dissertation.

- ***PhD Preliminary Examination and Dissertation***

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in public health sciences is an academic degree awarded by the Graduate College of the University of Illinois. The student's program of study is individually designed to meet the student's interests and goals. To be admitted to candidacy for the PhD, a student must pass a rigorous preliminary examination. The Preliminary Examining Committee must consist of a minimum of five members appointed by the dean of the Graduate College who have interest and expertise in the student's major (and, where relevant, collateral) areas of study. Of the five members, at least three must be UIC Graduate College faculty and two must be full-time tenured faculty. The student is tested on his or her knowledge and understanding of the chosen field of specialization. Upon successfully passing the preliminary examination, the PhD student selects a dissertation examining committee comprised of at least five members, at least two of whom must be tenured faculty members, and one of whom is outside of the student's division. The dissertation advisor serves as chair of the committee and must be a member of the Graduate College faculty. The dissertation examining committee is appointed by the dean of the Graduate College. With the advice and supervision of his or her committee members, the student develops the dissertation proposal. The PhD student must pass the Dissertation Proposal Defense and Final Oral Examination in which she or he defends the completed dissertation.

- ***Committee on Academic Progress***

The schoolwide Committee on Academic Progress (CAP) is responsible for developing and implementing overall guidance for student academic progress at the school. Among its responsibilities, CAP develops policies and procedures covering the following:

academic progress monitoring, academic advising, matters pertaining to time-to-degree requirements for MPH and DrPH students, academic retention and graduation, and student probation and dismissal for unsatisfactory academic performance. CAP also is responsible for implementing policies relating to such things as: waiver of core course requirements, approval of transfer credits, and approval of students for graduation (students must have a minimum 4.0 (out of a 5.0) GPA to graduate). While CAP monitors the progress of MS and PhD students, the Graduate College retains overall responsibility for the academic performance of these students.

CAP's policies and procedures reflect the school's philosophy that faculty, students, their advisors and the administration share responsibility to work diligently toward successful completion of the program by all students. One critical aspect of this philosophy is represented by CAP's early warning and probationary system, which provides for identification and counseling of students at "academic risk." The process is described in detail in Appendix V.D.1.1. On occasion students are unable to meet the academic requirements and then CAP implements its academic dismissal procedures, as described in Appendix V.D.1.2.

### **Division-Specific Procedures:**

#### **Community Health Sciences**

The CHS Graduate Studies Committee, in addition to the faculty advisor, reviews and approves all program proposals and revisions for compliance with CHS and school requirements.

#### **Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences**

There are no specific divisional procedures in addition to the schoolwide procedures for evaluating student progress.

#### **Epidemiology and Biostatistics**

As an early warning system within the division, the student coordinator alerts advisors to all grades of "C" or below in divisional courses since one divisional requirement is that students perform at a "B" level for all work in division courses. The student coordinator relays this information prior to sending grades to the dean's office.

#### **Health Policy and Administration**

There are no specific divisional procedures in addition to the schoolwide procedures for evaluating student progress.

## **2. Documentation of Students' Achievements - Outcome Measures**

### **Schoolwide measures:**

- **Integration and synthesis of knowledge**

Through their culminating experiences, students in all degree programs are expected to demonstrate their ability to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their pursuit of the degree to the study or practice of an important public health problem. For students in the MPH degree program, evaluation of the capstone requirement (See response to Criterion V.B.4) determines how well the student can integrate and synthesize what they have learned. For students in the MS, DrPH, and PhD programs, the thesis or dissertation provides evidence of the students ability to integrate and synthesize knowledge gained (See responses to Criterion V.B.4 and V.E.3). Appendix VI.5.2 provides a list of thesis or dissertation titles for the last three years. Much of this work by the student's has been published.

- **Alumni Success**

The Accreditation Evaluation Survey of Alumni (See Appendix IX.C.2.3) asked alumni about the relevance of their respective capstone experiences and the overall degree program to their professional development and careers. With respect to the capstone experience, the MS alumni were least satisfied with the relevance of their experience to their professional development (3.6 out of 5.0, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied). Doctoral level students were most satisfied (4.0, DrPH 3.8 and PhD 4.3) with the relevance of their experience to their professional development and MPH students rated their satisfaction as a 3.8 out of 5.0.

**Divisional Measures:**

In addition to the schoolwide measures above, each division has specific measures:

- **Community Health Sciences**

CHS measures student achievement by the number of graduates inducted into the public health honor society Delta Omega. In 1996 four (of 38) CHS graduates were inducted into the Lambda Chapter of the Delta Omega Society. In 1997 there were five (of 33) CHS graduates named to the Lambda Chapter of the Delta Omega Society.

- **Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Division**

Student achievement primarily is measured by grade point average and overall academic standing. Students are required to present the results of their thesis research or capstone experiences in a public forum. A significant portion of EOHS students are involved in presenting their work related to their theses at professional conferences.

- **Epidemiology and Biostatistics Division**

Student achievement is measured primarily by grade point average and overall academic standing. The division of epidemiology and biostatistics also provides an

annual "Haenszel Research Award" to a student who has conducted outstanding research in her/his discipline. This competition is announced at the beginning of the year, involves an application process, and culminates in a special awards presentation during the end of the year graduation celebration (see Appendix V.D.2). A modest monetary award is given, a plaque in the conference room honors current and past winners, and announcements are sent to specialty journals. This is an effort to acknowledge the high-quality research efforts of students, develop a culture of achievement, and set a standard of excellence for incoming students.

- **Health Policy and Administration Division**

Student achievement is primarily measured by grade point average and overall academic standing. In addition, the capstone experience required of all MPH students, and the thesis for MS students, allows for further evaluation of the student's achievements. For DrPH and PhD students, the written and oral preliminary examinations, as well as the dissertation, represent a comprehensive, integrated and "culminating" means of evaluation.

### **3. Assessment**

This criterion is met.

