

Public Health Assessment Apprenticeship Requirement – DrPH Program

PFRH requires DrPH students to undertake one or more public health assessment apprenticeship activities with one or more faculty members. The goal of this requirement is to ensure that DrPH students have a structured opportunity to master a specific set of competencies that will: a) ensure their utility as a public health practitioner following graduation; and b) represent skills that are best learned outside a conventional classroom setting in the context of an ongoing program or research project.

DrPH students may begin activities aimed at fulfilling these competences as early in their program of study as they wish. Typically, DrPH students plan for this requirement during the second half of their first year and begin the activities after passing the first year comprehensive exam.

DrPH students may proceed to their departmental oral exam without having completed this requirement, although PFRH encourages DrPH students to have completed the public health assessment apprenticeship and competency fulfillment requirement before the departmental oral whenever possible. If a DrPH student has not completed this requirement at the time of his or her departmental oral exam, he or she will be expected at that time to: a) have demonstrated substantial progress toward that goal; and b) have a concrete plan for completion soon thereafter.

Progress towards completion of this requirement should be a major component of the discussion at the DrPH students' annual reviews (see next section).

There are six competencies that DrPH students must demonstrate by means of an assessment apprenticeship. They are:

1. Critical Review of the Literature

DrPH students must demonstrate the ability to synthesize and critically review a body of literature that is more comprehensive than what is expected for a standard term paper for a course.

2. Public Health Problem Identification and analysis

DrPH students must demonstrate the ability to correctly identify a specific public health problem and analyze its potential determinants.

3. Data Collection

DrPH students must demonstrate the ability to design and carry out the tasks required for primary data collection that bears on a public health problem.

4. Data Analysis/Evaluation

DrPH students must demonstrate the ability to analyze data in order to illuminate some aspect of a public health problem or to evaluate a policy or program put in place to address a public health problem.

5. Communication/Dissemination

DrPH students must demonstrate the ability to plan and carry out the dissemination of assessment findings to the appropriate audience.

6. Program Planning/Management

DrPH students must demonstrate the ability to plan, implement, or manage public health programs.

DrPH students may demonstrate several or even all the competencies by means of one assessment apprenticeship if the activities that were involved in that apprenticeship are comprehensive. Alternatively, DrPH students may undertake several assessment apprenticeships over their program of study each of which results in mastery of one or more competencies.

When a DrPH student masters one or more competencies, he or she should document it on the appropriate form with the signature of both the faculty member who was the preceptor for the apprenticeship and the student's advisor. A sample form is attached. The original form should be submitted to the PFRH academic coordinator who will place it in the student's file. Students who master the competencies one-by-one will typically turn in one form per apprenticeship.

DrPH students may petition the doctoral committee of PFHS to certify that they have mastered a competency before they began the program. In such a case, students should attach to their petition documentation of their mastery (e.g. a letter testifying to the student's work as project manager of a data collection effort) and a letter from their advisor expressing support for the request.

DrPH students may arrange their assessment apprenticeships with any faculty of JHU, or, with the approval of their advisor, with a qualified practitioner outside JHU.