

Criterion 2

Instructional Programs

2.2 Program Length

CEPH Criterion

An MPH degree program or equivalent professional master's degree must be at least 42 semester credit units in length.

CEPH Required Documentation

- a. Definition of a credit with regard to classroom/contact hours.
- b. Information about the minimum degree requirements for all professional degree curricula shown in the instructional matrix. If the school or university uses a unit of academic credit or an academic term different than the standard semester or quarter, this should be explained and an equivalency presented in a table or narrative.
- c. Information about the number of MPH degrees awarded for less than 42 semester credit units, or equivalent, over each of the last three years. A summary of the reasons should be included.
- d. Assessment of the extent to which the criterion is met.

2.2.a. Credit Definition

Required Documentation: *Definition of a credit with regard to classroom/contact hours.*

Following university policy, the school considers one semester credit to be the value of each in-class hour or two to three laboratory-hours per week, for 17 weeks.

2.2.b. Professional Degree Program Minimum Requirements

Required Documentation: *Information about the minimum degree requirements for all professional degree curricula shown in the instructional matrix. If the school or university uses a unit of academic credit or an academic term differently than the standard semester or quarter, this should be explained and an equivalency presented in a table or narrative.*

The school has three categories of curricula requirements: requirements in the five core areas of public health; required core curricula in the departments; and specific degree requirements. The *School Bulletin* is a compendium of degree program curricula, along with a list of all SPH courses, and provides the minimum requirements for the school's professional degree programs.

BSPH

For the BSPH degree, the school requires that students earn a C (not C-) or better in prerequisite, core public health, and department-required courses. (Nutrition requires at least a B- in BIOL 252, CHEM 102, CHEM 261, and NUTR 240.) A first-year and sophomore load (taken in the College of Arts and Sciences) is approximately 60 semester hours of courses; requirements for these two years of "General College" are defined at the university level and must include all Foundations and Approaches requirements and at least five Connections courses, including courses in global issues, experiential education, and US diversity (<http://tinyurl.com/ugradcurr>). One of the two physical and life science Approaches courses must be BIOL 101 or 101L. The junior and senior load of approximately 60 semester hours includes BIOS 600, ENVR 600, EPID 600, and a minimum of three electives (seven credit hours) outside the School of Public Health. BSPH students must take the last 30 hours of degree credit in residence in Chapel Hill. The *School Bulletin* indicates the specific requirements of the four departments that offer the BSPH.

Master's Degrees

For all master's degrees, the Graduate School requires a minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate course credit, 24 of which must be taken in residence. The School of Public Health, in compliance with recent changes to CEPH criteria, requires a minimum of 42 credit hours (two full semesters of which must be completed in residence, either by full-time registration or by part-time registration over several semesters). For students with limited time available for full-time study—such as physicians prior to a residency—this has meant

that a program that was previously completed relatively easily within a year now either takes longer to complete or requires a heavier work load/semester. Credit hour requirements for individual programs within the school may be higher than the school's 42-credit-hour minimum.

Students are expected to complete a program of study that provides mastery of their major field within the parameters of course requirements specified by each academic program. At least 18 course credit hours should be in the major field, and at least half the courses taken for a graduate degree should be numbered 700 and above. All professional master's students (MPH, MSPH, MHA) must complete a supervised practicum requirement in the field of public health and the school's core courses (BIOS 600, ENVR 600, EPID 600, HPM 600, and HBHE 600) or approved alternatives. Major courses must also include a minimum of three credit hours of thesis substitute (992) or thesis (993) registration. All master's degree programs require a written or oral examination (or both), or an approved substitute, for degree completion. A master's student has five calendar years from the date of first registration in the master's program to complete the degree. The *School Bulletin* provides the specific master's degree requirements defined by each department.

DrPH

The Graduate School stipulates that individual academic programs establish credit hour requirements for doctoral degree students. At a minimum, doctoral students must complete a program residence credit of four full semesters, either by full-time registration or by part-time registration over several semesters. At least two of the required four semesters of residence must be earned in contiguous registration of no fewer than six credit hours at UNC-Chapel Hill.

As with master's degree programs, doctoral students are expected to complete a program of study that provides mastery of their major field in accordance with course requirements specified by the academic program; (see departments' academic manuals in Resource File). Major courses must also include a minimum of six credit hours of dissertation (994) registration. Degree completion requires a doctoral written examination, doctoral oral examination, and a final oral examination covering the dissertation and other topics (as determined by the examining committee). A doctoral student has eight calendar years from the date of first registration in the doctoral program to complete the degree.

2.2.c. MPH Degrees Awarded with Fewer than 42 Semester Credits

<p>Required Documentation: Information about the number of MPH degrees awarded for less than 42 semester credit units, or equivalent, over each of the last three years. A summary of the reasons should be included.</p>
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No degrees were awarded for fewer than 42 semester hours over the past three years.

2.2.d. Assessment of Program Length

<i>Required Documentation: Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met.</i>

Strengths

- A minimum of 42 semester credits now is required for all professional degrees

Challenges

- Completing 42 credits in one year, for those who have only 12 months (one calendar year) available for study

Future Directions

- Develop flexible course offerings year round and via the web to enable master's students to complete 42 credits in a one-year period

This Criterion is met.
