



**INTEGRATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE
BEHAVIORAL & COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES MPH
ESSAY/THESIS AGREEMENT**

MPH students are required to complete an essay or thesis that demonstrates synthesis of foundational and program-specific competencies. Students must submit this agreement approved by their faculty or essay/thesis advisor prior to beginning their essay/thesis.

Student Name: _____

Department: Behavioral & Community Health Sciences

Pitt Email: _____

Advisor Name: _____

Advisor Email: _____

Are you working with data owned by an organization outside of Pitt Public Health?

If yes, please provide the following information.

Organization Name: _____

Organization Contact: _____

Will the organization contact be a member of your essay/thesis committee?

Essay Main Reader/Thesis Chair

Name & Degree: _____

Department: _____

Second Reader/Thesis Committee Member

Name & Degree: _____

Department: _____

Required for Thesis – Third Committee Member

Name & Degree: _____

Department: _____

Optional – Fourth Committee Member

Name & Degree: _____

Department: _____

Essay/Thesis Title: Identify the title or topic of your essay/thesis.

Competencies: Identify three competencies that will be attained through essay/thesis activities. Two competencies must be selected from the [CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies](#) and one competency from the [BCHS MPH Competencies](#).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

BCHS MPH Competencies

BCHS 1	Describe strategies for engaging communities and systems in advancing research and improving health through collaboration, partnerships and strengths-based approaches
BCHS 2	Synthesize and apply established and novel social and behavioral science methods and tools to advance research and improve population health
BCHS 3	Apply health education and health promotion theories to the development of programs that take into account the context in which they will be implemented
BCHS 4	Develop a mechanism-based causal framework that applies a systems science approach and integrates relative theory
BCHS 5	Apply modeling and simulation to social processes
BCHS 6	Apply ethical principles to the collection of social and behavioral health data

CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies

MPH 1	Apply epidemiological methods to settings and situations in public health practice
MPH 2	Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context
MPH 3	Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming, and software, as appropriate
MPH 4	Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice
MPH 5	Compare the organization, structure, and function of health care, public health, and regulatory systems across national and international settings
MPH 6	Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and systemic levels
MPH 7	Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health
MPH 8	Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs
MPH 9	Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention
MPH 10	Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management
MPH 11	Select methods to evaluate public health programs
MPH 12	Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
MPH 13	Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes
MPH 14	Advocate for political, social, or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations
MPH 15	Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity
MPH 16	Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue
MPH 17	Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges
MPH 18	Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
MPH 19	Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
MPH 20	Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content
MPH 21	Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health
MPH 22	Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative

Master's Essay/Thesis Proposal

While we expect variations in internal design of the final paper, all manuscripts must address an issue of public health significance. The proposal must address the following elements:

1. The purpose of the study or research, description of the agency or environment of data collection (if relevant), public health significance, and scope or focus of the study or research, including, when appropriate, the hypothesis to be tested;
2. Background; an introduction to the literature on the topic and where relevant, theoretical foundation;
3. Methods: how information will be collected and analyzed, and limitations or problems;
4. Implications of the findings; why this topic is important;
5. Potential uses for the findings.

ALSO include scheduling/timeline of tasks/anticipated graduate date (as agreed to by the student and readers/committee). Please work with your advisor to complete the following timeline. Experience has taught us that students are much more likely to graduate on time if they adhere to the agreed upon timeline.

Essay/Thesis Timeline

Proposal to readers/committee:

Initial committee meeting (at least 1 sem. before graduation):

First draft to readers/committee:

Readers/committee comments to student:

Second draft to readers/committee:

Readers/committee comments to student:

Third draft to readers/committee*:

Readers comments to student:

Defense scheduled (thesis only):

Final version upload into to ETD:

Approvals: Please send via DocuSign at my.pitt.edu.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Essay Main Reader/Thesis Chair: _____ Date: _____

2nd Reader/Thesis Committee Member: _____ Date: _____

3rd Committee Member (*required for thesis*): _____ Date: _____

4th Committee Member (*optional*): _____ Date: _____