

## 2.0 Instructional Program

**2.5 Culminating Experience.** All graduate professional degree programs identified in the instructional matrix shall assure that each student demonstrates skills and integration of knowledge through a culminating experience.

***Interpretation.** A culminating experience is one that requires a student to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and other learning experiences and to apply theory and principles in a situation that approximates some aspect of professional practice. It must be used as a means by which faculty judge whether the student has mastered the body of knowledge and can demonstrate proficiency in the required competencies. Many different models are possible, including written or oral comprehensive examinations, applied practice projects, a major written paper such as a thesis or an applied research project, development of case studies, capstone seminars and others. Each professional public health degree program, whether at the master's or doctoral level, must require a culminating experience.*

*In those instances when the practice experience is closely linked with the culminating experience, it is essential that these assignments be planned and implemented to assure that the student applies skills from across the curriculum and demonstrates synthesis and integration of knowledge. A major project or analytical paper would, in most cases, be a component of the culminating experience. The evaluation of the practice experience takes on special significance when it is linked to the culminating experience.*

**Required Documentation.** The self-study document should include the following:

- a. Identification of the culminating experience required for each professional public health degree program. If this is common across the program's professional degree programs, it need be described only once. If it varies by degree or specialty area, sufficient information must be provided to assess compliance by each.
- b. Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met and an analysis of the program's strengths, weaknesses and plans relating to this criterion.