

2.0 Instructional Program

2.9 Academic Degrees. If the program also offers curricula for graduate academic degrees, students pursuing them shall obtain a broad introduction to public health, as well as an understanding about how their discipline-based specialization contributes to achieving the goals of public health.

***Interpretation.** Because public health programs must provide an interdisciplinary learning environment, students pursuing academic health degrees should acquire a broad public health orientation, as well as depth of education in a specific discipline. Given that these degree programs prepare students who may become public health faculty, as well as prepare researchers who will be expected to work in multidisciplinary settings, the curricula should facilitate a broad public health perspective. Opportunities for cross-disciplinary work should be afforded to all academic students.*

Students in academic curricula should be familiar with the basic principles and application of epidemiology and should develop competence in other areas of public health knowledge that are particularly relevant to their own disciplines. Ensuring that students are familiar with and competent in public health areas outside the concentration will require at least the equivalent of three semester-credit hours of instruction that introduces students to the breadth of public health and at least the equivalent of three semester-credit hours of instruction in epidemiology. If the program can document that an academic degree student has completed these two requirements for a previous graduate degree, then the program may waive the requirement for the student.

While opportunities to engage in research activities are important for all students, they are essential for students in academic or research curricula. Such opportunities are possible only when faculty themselves are actively engaged in research.

All academic degrees, at the master's or doctoral level, should culminate in an integrative activity that permits the student to demonstrate the ability to successfully undertake research or to demonstrate analytical skills appropriate for the pursuit of further education or scholarship.

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

- a. Identification of all academic degree programs, by degree and area of specialization. The instructional matrix in Criterion 2.1.a may be referenced for this purpose.
- b. Identification of the means by which the program assures that students in academic curricula acquire a public health orientation. If this means is common across the program, it need be described only once. If it varies by degree or specialty area, sufficient information must be provided to assess compliance by each.
- c. Identification of the culminating experience required for each academic degree program. If this is common across the program's academic 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.
- d. 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.