

## **Including Undergraduate Public Health Degree Programs in Your Self-Study Document\***

### **Introduction**

When CEPH's *Accreditation Criteria* were revised in 2005, undergraduate public health degrees (UGPHD) associated with accredited public health programs (PHP) became eligible for inclusion in programs' unit of accreditation, though UGPHD in accredited schools of public health (SPH) had always been included in the accreditation process. At this time, CEPH is not developing a process to accredit UGPHD outside accredited SPH or PHP. Rather, CEPH will use the framework established by the existing accreditation standards to review UGPHD. We recognize that the existing accreditation criteria represent one approach among many in a currently robust discussion on public health education and training at the undergraduate level. Nonetheless, the adopted accreditation criteria constitute CEPH's approach to review of all SPH and PHP and all degree levels.

A single self-study document should incorporate all educational programs that constitute the unit of accreditation, graduate and undergraduate. Both undergraduate and graduate programs should be addressed throughout the document, in the context of each relevant standard. This paper provides guidance on how to include this information in the self-study document.

### **Presenting undergraduate degrees for review: SPH and PHP**

CEPH accredits SPH as a unit and includes all degrees offered by the SPH in the accreditation review. Thus, undergraduate degrees offered by SPH must be included in the self-study and accreditation review.

PHP, however, are not required to submit undergraduate public health degrees for review. PHP may choose to present undergraduate degrees for review if 1) they meet the basic characteristics of a public health undergraduate degree; 2) they are located in the same unit of accreditation as a professional public health program that confers the MPH or an equivalent professional degree.

Both SPH and PHP must include any combined undergraduate and graduate programs, such as BS/MPH or other "five-year" programs. These must be documented as joint degrees and discussed under all criteria relevant to joint degrees.

### **Types of undergraduate degrees**

An undergraduate degree may be *professional* or *academic*. The SPH or PHP must classify each degree presented for review, including undergraduate degrees, using one of these two categories. An undergraduate degree should be considered *professional* if it is designed to train students at the baccalaureate level to enter the public health workforce. An undergraduate program would be considered *academic* if it were designed to provide students with a core of knowledge of public health such that upon graduation they are prepared for further study and scholarship.

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\* This is a technical assistance document, intended to be helpful to institutions seeking accreditation and to site visit teams in evaluating schools and programs. It is not a policy paper and does not supplant formally adopted criteria that guide the decision-making process of the Council on Education for Public Health. Interested parties should refer to *Accreditation Criteria for Schools of Public Health, June 2005*, or *Accreditation Criteria for Public Health Programs, June 2005*, for the accreditation criteria.

## **Characteristics of undergraduate degrees in PHP and SPH**

In order to be eligible for review, an undergraduate program must be 1) part of an accreditable professional public health program that includes an MPH or equivalent professional masters degree or 2) part of an accreditable school of public health.

Like all public health degree programs accredited by CEPH, the undergraduate program should function as a collaboration of disciplines, addressing the health of populations and the community through instruction, service, and with introductory instruction in community-based research. The undergraduate public health program should emphasize competency development in health issues that affect society as a whole, as well as those that affect vulnerable populations. It should also emphasize a multidisciplinary and ecological understanding of enhancing health and preventing disease.

UGPHD, like all degree programs reviewed by CEPH, function as part of an organizational culture that embraces the vision, goals and values common to public health. The organizational culture of the parent PHP or SPH provides structure to infuse public health values and goals into all aspects of the program's activities.

The undergraduate public health program must have sufficient resources. Such resources would include faculty and other human, physical, financial and learning resources to provide both breadth and depth of educational opportunity in the areas of knowledge basic to public health. As a minimum, an undergraduate degree program presented for review should offer an appropriate baccalaureate degree with a major in public health or a relevant public health sub-discipline.

The UGPHD shall plan, develop and evaluate its instructional, research and service activities in ways that assure sensitivity to the perceptions and needs of its students and that combine educational excellence with an understanding of the world of public health disciplines and public health practice. Based on this understanding, the undergraduate public health program shall have a clear definition of its educational goals. In general, undergraduate degrees prepare students to take part in society as educated citizens.

## **Documentation of undergraduate programs in the self-study**

CEPH's accreditation standards list a set of required documentation for each criterion that must be presented in the self-study document. The items contained in the table below are not new or different criteria, nor are they specific to UGPHD; rather the required documentation applies to all degrees presented for accreditation review, including UGPHD and all masters and doctoral degrees. The table that follows is intended to assist SPH and PHP in self-study preparation by highlighting components of the adopted standards, indicating ways in which the required documentation should be presented to facilitate review of UGPHD.

| <b>Criterion</b>  | <b>Include in Documentation</b>   |
|---|---|
| Mission<br>SPH 1.1, PHP 1.1   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptions of the role undergraduate degrees play in supporting the programmatic mission, goals and objectives of the SPH/PHP.</li> <li>• An explanation of how undergraduate degrees conform to the overarching mission, goals and objectives of the SPH/PHP.</li> <li>• An explanation of how undergraduate degrees reflect appropriate levels of commitment to the academic, service and research efforts of graduate degrees.</li> <li>• A description of procedures for developing and monitoring goals for undergraduate degree programs.</li> </ul> |
| Evaluation and Planning<br>SPH 1.2, PHP 1.2   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An identification of planning processes that function within SPH/PHP planning strategies.</li> <li>• An explanation of processes for setting targets and tracking data relevant to undergraduates.</li> <li>• A description of the roles specific constituent groups play in evaluation and planning.</li> <li>• An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of undergraduate programs.</li> </ul>   |
| Institutional Environment<br>SPH 1.3, PHP 1.3<br>Organization &<br>Administration<br>SPH 1.4, PHP 1.4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An organizational chart that illustrates the location of undergraduate programs.</li> <li>• An explanation of how undergraduate programs may differ, if at all, in terms of accountability, the recruitment of faculty and students, practices and responsibility for ensuring academic standards, and grievance procedures for students.</li> </ul>   |
| Governance<br>SPH 1.5, PHP 1.5  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An identification of undergraduate committees, their composition, and the roles of teaching faculty, advisors and students on these committees.</li> </ul>   |
| Resources<br>SPH 1.6, PHP 1.6   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of how faculty FTE and budget support the undergraduate program.</li> <li>• A definition of current faculty and student headcounts.</li> <li>• An identification of resources, if any, allocated specifically for undergraduate students.</li> </ul>  |
| Instructional Programs<br>SPH 2.1, PHP 2.1  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of how undergraduate programs share in the philosophy, perspective, and orientation of the graduate health program.</li> <li>• A list of all undergraduate programs that are part of the SPH or PHP unit of accreditation in the SPH/PHP degree matrix. The matrix should indicate whether each degree is academic or professional.</li> </ul>  |
| Public Health Core<br>SPH 2.3, PHP 2.3  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of how, if applicable, professional undergraduate degree curricula prepare students to apply skills at an appropriate level in the five core areas of public health and to contribute to public health problem solving.</li> </ul>  |
| Practical Skills<br>SPH 2.4, PHP 2.4  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An identification of appropriate practice experiences in those programs designed to prepare professional degree students, if applicable, directly for public health practice.</li> </ul>   |
| Competencies<br>SPH 2.6, PHP 2.6  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A definition of competencies for the undergraduate degree and of specific competencies for tracks and concentrations.</li> </ul>   |

| Criterion  | Include in Documentation  |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of processes for developing, using, monitoring and reviewing undergraduate competencies that reflect the mission, goals and objectives of the SPH/PHP.</li> <li>• An explanation of how coursework enables students to attain competencies.</li> </ul>  |
| Assessment<br>SPH 2.7, PHP 2.7                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A definition of strategies used to assess undergraduate attainment of learning objectives and competencies.</li> <li>• An analysis of graduation rates, employment, and graduate school admissions for students in undergraduate programs.</li> </ul>  |
| Academic Degrees<br>SPH 2.9, PHP 2.8             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of how undergraduate academic degree programs, if applicable, provide a broad introduction to public health, including an appropriate level of familiarity with the principles and application of epidemiology.</li> </ul>  |
| Research<br>SPH 3.1, PHP 3.1                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of how students are involved in research, particularly community-based research, where appropriate and at the appropriate level.</li> <li>• An explanation of the extent to which faculty teaching undergraduates are involved in research, particularly community-based research.</li> </ul>                               |
| Service<br>SPH 3.2, PHP 3.2                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An identification of policies and procedures for undergraduate participation in service.</li> <li>• An explanation of the relationship between undergraduate and graduate student service.</li> <li>• An explanation of the extent to which faculty teaching undergraduates are involved in service.</li> </ul>                            |
| Faculty Qualifications<br>SPH 4.1, PHP 4.1       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An identification of the public health-specific and/or discipline-specific training and experience of faculty teaching undergraduates.</li> <li>• An identification of teaching faculty sufficient to support specialties at the undergraduate level, particularly those that may differ from specialties in graduate programs.</li> </ul> |
| Recruitment and Admissions<br>SPH 4.4, PHP 4.4   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of processes used to recruit and admit undergraduates.</li> </ul>   |
| Student Diversity<br>SPH 4.5, PHP 4.5            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A presentation of data to distinguish undergraduate and graduate student diversity.</li> </ul>   |
| Advising & Career Counseling<br>SPH 4.6, PHP 4.6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of advising and career counseling services for undergraduates that may differ from services available to graduate students.</li> </ul>  |

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