



AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY

# MPH Capstone Manual

*MPHC 8999 (Capstone) & MPHM 8998 (Extended Capstone)*

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MPHC 8999 (Capstone) and MPHM 8998 (Extended Capstone)

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## **Purpose of the Capstone**

The capstone course serves as the culminating experience of the MPH program. This culminating experience is one that requires students to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and other learning experiences and apply it to analyzing and addressing a public health practice and/or research challenge.

The course takes two concurrent pedagogical approaches to accomplishing this goal: 1) Seminar presentations designed to aid the integration of public health practice and principles by introducing current concepts, theories and practices, and 2) the "Capstone Project" which provides an opportunity to integrate theoretical and professional knowledge and skills with substantial research experience on a public health topic of a student's choice. The completed capstone project must demonstrate the attainment of required professional and educational competencies.

## **Goals of the Capstone**

After successful completion of the Capstone, the student should be able to:

1. Identify and discuss current and emerging topics and advancements related to core disciplinary domains of public health research & practice (including Health Services Administration, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Environmental Health Sciences).
2. Integrate public health theories, concepts, models and practices into specific research problems.
3. Understand and apply disciplinary knowledge and analytical skills to evaluate complex public health problems.
4. Collect, manage, and analyze a wide range of public health data to assess problems and factors affecting population health.
5. Interpret and communicate research outcomes, and apply their relevance to specific public health areas.
6. Demonstrate proficiency in working with the knowledge base and research methods in chosen areas of concentration in public health.

## **MPH Competencies Reinforced**

The Capstone will reinforce the competencies of the MPH program provided in Appendix A: MPH Core Competency Model

## Prerequisites and Requirements

### Capstone Prerequisites (MPHC 8999)

Students must take the Capstone during their final semester in the program. This could be a fall semester or spring semester. The student is expected to contact MPH faculty during the semester preceding the one he/she plans to take the Capstone to develop and submit the initial proposal abstract. In addition to the Capstone advisor (*required*) from the MPH faculty, the student may consider contacting one or more appropriate external Capstone project mentors (*optional*), i.e., field experts in potential Capstone research areas. Under the guidance of the advisor(s), student should integrate and apply their knowledge and skills gained from the coursework and other didactic experiences to develop a research topic. The topic may be a public health issue or problem previously read about, lectured about, or observed during an internship. Students are required to submit their initial proposal abstract approved by the advisor to the Capstone course coordinator, by the middle of the semester preceding the Capstone semester, i.e., by end of November for a spring Capstone and end of July for a fall Capstone. A fuller version of the proposal would be due within two weeks of start of the Capstone (MPHC 8999) semester.

### Capstone Requirements (MPHC 8999)

Students must complete all of the following requirements to be successful in the Capstone course. Key deliverables are explained in more detail in later sections.

- Initial & full project proposals
- MPH Competencies Forms
- Remaining requirements during Capstone semester
  - ✓ Attendance in face-to-face sessions and participation in class discussions
  - ✓ Periodic project progress reports
  - ✓ Timely and ongoing communication with the advisor (and Capstone mentors if applicable)
  - ✓ The Graduate Research Day poster presentation (for students graduating in the spring semester)
  - ✓ The MPH Research Day poster presentation (for students graduating in the fall semester)
  - ✓ Oral presentation and final report of the project

### Notes related to Extended Capstone Elective (MPHM 8998)

The Extended Capstone Course (MPHM 8998) is an elective option available to MPH students in both the fall and spring semesters. Since the MPH program requires completion of 6 elective credits, students have the option of using the Extended Capstone to fulfill 3 of the 6 required elective credits. There is currently no restriction being placed on students to take the Extended Capstone in the semester immediately prior to the required Capstone (MPHC

8999). If this works out for the student, that is well and good, but it is not required.

Students must complete a systematic review of the literature, culminating in a “publishable” literature review paper by the end of their Extended Capstone (MPHM 8998) semester. This comprehensive and practical review, in turn, would serve as a stepping stone towards a data analysis project (in the relevant area of interest) during their required Capstone (MPHC 8999) semester.

If students are interested in primary data collection in their regular Capstone project, they will be encouraged to leverage the Extended Capstone for laying the foundation for their regular Capstone, if in fact they choose to undertake the Extended Capstone in the semester immediately prior to the regular Capstone.

Students interested in completing a project using primary data for their required Capstone course (MPHC 8999) must secure final approvals from the AU IRB and/or HAC (as applicable) for their project proposal by the end of the Extended Capstone (MPHM 8998) semester, so that they can begin data collection by the start of their required Capstone (MPHC 8999) semester.

The project outcome should be comprehensive; and the level of comprehensiveness will be driven by the issues or problems students are addressing relevant to their professional emphasis of the concentration. The MPH Program will remain attuned to student experiences, and also remain open to making additional improvements and enhancements to the Extended Capstone and required Capstone courses based on the assessments of student learning.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Involved Parties**

To ensure successful culminating experience with the Capstone project, the student is expected to take the initiative in identifying his/her research topics and initiating the planning for the Capstone requirements in a timely manner including the selection of the Capstone advisor and external mentor(s). The Capstone faculty advisor (required) and mentor (optional) should be selected based on their areas of expertise and experience related to the Capstone project. The student is expected to interact effectively with the following actors involved in the Capstone process:

- Capstone coordinator is to assist students in identifying appropriate Capstone advisor/mentors and to ensure that students complete all the required Capstone components for successful Capstone experience.
- Capstone advisor (*required*) is a faculty member in the MPH program. The Capstone advisor is to provide guidance and regular advising to the student as he/she makes progress with the Capstone project. The Capstone advisor is also responsible to bridge gaps in communication with student’s Capstone mentor(s) (if available).
- Capstone project mentor (*optional*) is an individual outside of the MPH program

faculty who has proven expertise and extensive experience in the student's project area and is responsible for providing the student with research guidance and advice on the project.

## **Capstone Timeline (MPHC 8999)**

### **Before Registering for the Capstone MPHC 8999**

To be eligible to register for the Capstone, prior to the last semester of your MPH program, the student must attend a 1-hour Required Internship & Capstone Orientation Session, offered on-campus (only) by the MPH program in the spring semester.

### **Beginning First month of the Preceding Semester**

The student should plan the Capstone project; identify a Capstone project advisor (required) Capstone project mentor (optional); communicate with the Capstone coordinator and advisor to discuss plans regarding initial and full project proposals and the timeline of project implementation. Students are required to submit the initial project proposal by the end of the semester preceding the Capstone semester.

Students interested in conducting primary data collection, are strongly encouraged to consider taking the Extended Capstone (MPHC 8998) since the extended timeframe may provide adequate time for the successful completion of key project milestones such as securing appropriate IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval and preparing other necessary documents and materials. Students who do not wish to pursue primary data collection can leverage the Extended Capstone (MPHM 8998) elective to complete a systematic review of the literature culminating in a "publishable" literature review paper.

### **By End of First month of the Capstone Semester**

The student is expected to submit a full proposal; complete the review of relevant literature; complete CITI training and email certificate to the Capstone coordinator; Conduct data collection and preliminary data analysis.

### **During Second Month of the Capstone**

Perform full data analysis; prepare and submit a poster abstract for the Graduate Research Day or the MPH Research Day to the Capstone coordinator.

### **During Third Month of the Capstone**

The student is expected to finalize the project and present its outcome in a poster on the Graduate Research Day (for spring semester) or the MPH Research Day (for fall semester).

### **By End of Fourth Month of the Capstone**

The student is required to give an oral presentation and must submit the final project report to the Capstone coordinator on or before the oral presentation day.

# Capstone Project Key Deliverables

## 1. Capstone Project Proposal (initial & full)

A form for the initial project proposal is available in Appendix B and the project proposal should include the following sections:

- A. Introduction - background information of the research to provide the context of the project.
- B. Literature review
  - Subsections might address the need for assessing the topic as presented in the aims of your project, the environment in which the project is important.
  - An analysis of the strength and weaknesses of the published literature is crucial.
- C. Goals/Objectives
- D. Methodology – study design, data sources, variables, and analytical framework Note: Data analysis must be performed using one or more statistical applications
- E. Significance/implications of the project from a public health perspective

The initial Capstone project proposal must be approved prior to the Capstone semester. The student is responsible for making any suggested changes to the proposal, based on the recommendations of the advisor/mentors and re-submitting the proposal in a timely manner. The approval of the proposal MUST occur before the end of the preceding semester.

## 2. MPH Competencies Forms

The student is required to discuss how the proposed project would address core competencies as well as other relevant competencies (in interdisciplinary cross-cutting and concentration) outlined in Appendix A.

## 3. Periodic Progress Reports

Students are required to submit progress reports to the project advisor as well as the Capstone coordinator approximately every two weeks. These reports should summarize:

- Key activities conducted or completed during the period
- Status of and progress on stated project objectives
- Progress towards the overall project goals
- Planned activities for the next period

These reports are not intended to be formal or lengthy (should be limited to 250 words); however they should be relevant, concise and succinct reports. There will be approximately 4 progress reports during the Capstone semester.

## 4. Poster Presentation

It is required to present a poster of the Capstone project at the Graduate Research Day (for spring semester) or the MPH Research Day (for fall semester). Students will be responsible to create and print the poster for presentation.

## **5. Oral Presentation**

Students are expected to give an oral presentation of their projects at the end the Capstone semester. Each student will be given 15 minutes for the presentation and an additional 5 minutes for a question and answer session. All MPH students and faculty members as well as Capstone mentors will be invited to the presentation.

## **6. Capstone Final Project Report**

Students are required to write a professional report that describes the entire capstone project. This is a substantial writing project and includes the following:

- A. A full-length paper presenting your novel approach to public health topics. This is accomplished by a thorough quantitative/qualitative assessment of the topic's characteristics, associations, and applicability.
- B. The length should be around 2,500 words, double-spaced, APA format, exclusive of abstract, figures, tables and references.
- C. Results
  - Subsections might address outcomes of each analysis of corresponding data in an orderly and logical manner, as well as overall findings including illustrative materials including graphs, charts, and maps.
- D. Evaluation Results
  - Measures of degree to which the study meets its goals and provides the desired benefits and the extent to which it may be used in target audiences. Examples include utilization and performance statistics.
- E. Discussion
  - Subsections might address a contrast summary of study results and published literature, evaluation, lessons learned, and future plans.
- F. Summary and conclusions
- G. References

# Method of Evaluations

## Evaluation Criteria

All final capstone deliverables, including the poster, oral presentation, and final paper, will be assessed based on the student's ability to integrate core competencies and concentration-specific competencies through the project and to demonstrate the attainment of those competencies. Correspondingly, all final evaluation rubrics for the Capstone are designed to ensure the student's integration and attainment of core and concentration competencies. (Appendix B contains a full set of Capstone evaluation forms and rubrics for reference)

## Advisor Evaluation of the Project

At the end of the project, the Capstone advisor is required to complete an evaluation of the project he or she has advised.

## Final Grading by Capstone Coordinator

The final grade will be determined by the Capstone coordinator in consultation with the Capstone faculty advisor (and the project mentor if applicable). The following criteria will be used in evaluating the performance of the student:

- Initial proposal abstract
- Full project proposal
- Progress report(s)
- Seminar attendance and participation
- Poster presentation
- Oral presentation
- Final project report
- Competencies forms

The final grade will be calculated using the sum of scores achieved from the above components. The grade-point distribution will be as follows:

A =	100 – 90%
B =	89 – 80%
C =	79 – 70%
D=	69 – 60%
F=	59% and below

# **APPENDIX A**

## AU MPH Program Core Competency Model

# Master of Public Health (MPH) Program

## Core Competency Model



**Adapted From: ASPPH Education Committee (2006).** Master's Degree in Public Health Core Competency Development Project; Version 2.3. Supported under a cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPPH) Grant Number U36/CCU300430-23/24.

# **Section 1**

## **Learning Objectives under each of the TEN MPH Core Competency Domains**

Including:

FIVE Disciplinary Core Competencies

FIVE Interdisciplinary Cross-Cutting Competencies

## **FIVE Disciplinary Core Competency Domains (and Learning Objectives)**

<b>STAT 7010 Biostatistics</b>	<b>STAT 8130 Epidemiology</b>	<b>MPHC 7101 Health Management &amp; Policy</b>	<b>MPHC 8600 Health Promotion [Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences]</b>	<b>MPHC 8700 Environmental Health</b>
Describe the role biostatistics serves in the discipline of public health.	Identify key sources of data for epidemiologic purposes.	Identify the main components and issues of the organization, financing, and delivery of health services and public health system in the US.	Describe the role of social and community factors in both the onset and solution of public health problems.	Describe the direct and indirect human, ecological and safety effects of major environmental and occupational agents.
Describe basic concepts of probability, random variation and commonly used statistical probability distributions.	Comprehend basic ethical and legal principles pertaining to the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of epidemiologic data.	Describe legal & ethical bases for public health and health services.	Identify critical stakeholders for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs, policies, and interventions.	Describe genetic, physiologic and psychosocial factors that affect susceptibility to adverse health outcomes following exposure to environmental hazards.
Distinguish among the different measurement scales and the implications for selection of statistical methods to be used based on these distinctions.	Describe a public health problem in terms of magnitude, person, time and place.	Evaluate the policy process for improving the health status of populations.	Identify basic theories, concepts, and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines that are used in public health research and practice.	Describe federal and state regulatory programs, guidelines, and authorities that control environmental health issues.
Apply descriptive techniques commonly used to summarize public health data.	Evaluate the strengths and limitations of epidemiologic reports.	Apply principles of program planning, development, budgeting, management, and evaluation in organizational and community initiatives.	Identify individual, organizational and community concerns, assets, resources and deficits for social and behavioral science interventions.	Specify current environmental risk assessment methods.
Apply basic informatics techniques with vital statistics and public health records in the description of public health characteristics and in public health research & evaluation.	Calculate basic epidemiology measures.	Communicate health policy and management issues using appropriate channels and technologies.	Apply evidence-based approaches in the development and evaluation of social and behavioral science interventions.	Specify approaches for assessing, preventing, and controlling environmental hazards that pose risks to human health and safety.
Interpret results of statistical analyses found in public health studies.	Communicate epidemiologic information to lay and professional audiences.	Demonstrate leadership skills for building partnerships.	Specify multiple targets and levels of intervention for social and behavioral science programs and/or policies.	Explain the general mechanisms of toxicity in eliciting a toxic response to various environmental exposures.

**FIVE Interdisciplinary Cross-Cutting Competency Domains (and Learning Objectives)**

<b>Communication &amp; Informatics</b>	<b>Diversity &amp; Culture</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>Systems Thinking</b>
Describe how the public health information infrastructure is used to collect, process, maintain, and disseminate data.	Discuss the importance and characteristics of a sustainable diverse public health workforce.	Describe the attributes of leadership in public health.	Embrace a definition of public health that captures the unique characteristics of the field (e.g., population-focused, community-oriented, prevention-motivated and rooted in social justice) and how these contribute to professional practice.	Identify characteristics of a system.
Describe how societal, organizational, and individual factors influence and are influenced by public health communications.	Use the basic concepts and skills involved in culturally appropriate community engagement and empowerment with diverse communities.	Engage in dialogue and learning from others to advance public health goals.	Apply evidence-based principles and the scientific knowledge base to critical evaluation and decision-making in public health.	Explain how systems (e.g. individuals, social network, organizations, and communities) may be viewed as systems within systems in the analysis of public health problems.
Apply legal and ethical principles to the use of information technology and resources in public health settings.	Differentiate among availability, acceptability, and accessibility of health care across diverse populations.	Demonstrate team building, negotiation, and conflict management skills.	Apply the core functions of assessment, policy development, and assurance in the analysis of public health problems and their solutions.	Explain how the contexts of gender, race, poverty, history, migration, and culture are important in the design of interventions within public health systems.
Demonstrate effective written and oral skills for communicating with different audiences in the context of professional public health activities.	Cite examples of situations where consideration of culture-specific needs resulted in a more effective modification or adaptation of a health intervention.	Apply social justice and human rights principles when addressing community needs.	Distinguish between population and individual ethical considerations in relation to the benefits, costs, and burdens of public health programs.	Analyze inter-relationships among systems that influence the quality of life of people in their communities.
Use information technology to access, evaluate, and interpret public health data.	Develop public health programs and strategies responsive to the diverse cultural values and traditions of the communities being served.	Use collaborative methods for achieving organizational and community health goals.	Appreciate the importance of working collaboratively with diverse communities and constituencies (e.g. researchers, practitioners, agencies and organizations).	Analyze the effects of political, social and economic policies on public health systems at the local, state, national and international levels.
Use informatics methods and resources as strategic tools to promote public health.		Develop strategies to motivate others for collaborative problem solving, decision making, and evaluation.		Assess strengths and weaknesses of applying the systems approach to public health problems.

## **Section 2**

**Courses through which the TEN MPH Core Competencies are Met**

<b>Courses through which MPH core competencies are met</b>								
P = competency is primarily gained, R = competency is reinforced								
<b>FIVE Core disciplinary competencies</b>	<b>STAT 7010</b> Biostatistics I	<b>MPHC 8700</b> Introduction to Environmental Health	<b>STAT 8130</b> Introduction to Epidemiology	<b>MPHC 7101</b> Health Management & Policy	<b>MPHC 8600</b> Fundamentals of Health Promotion	<b>MPHC 7209</b> Health Law & Ethics	<b>MPHC 8722</b> Internship	<b>MPHC 8999</b> Capstone
<b><u>Biostatistics</u></b> — Apply statistical techniques and concepts to understand and address public health challenges.	P	--	R	--	--	--	R	R
<b><u>Environmental Health Sciences</u></b> — Evaluate the environmental conditions that affect the health of individuals, communities, and populations.	R	P	R	--	R	--	R	R
<b><u>Epidemiology</u></b> — Apply epidemiologic principles to study the etiology and control of disease in populations.	R	--	P	--	--	--	R	R
<b><u>Health Services Administration</u></b> — Evaluate and impact health system characteristics, problems and policies in order to improve population health and ensure equitable health care delivery.	--	R	--	P	--	R	R	R
<b><u>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</u></b> — Apply social and behavioral theories to develop innovative and effective public health intervention programs.	--	R	R	--	P	--	R	R

<b>FIVE Interdisciplinary “cross-cutting” competencies</b>	<b>STAT 7010</b> Biostatistics I	<b>MPHC 8700</b> Introduction to Environmental Health	<b>STAT 8130</b> Introduction to Epidemiology	<b>MPHC 7101</b> Health Management & Policy	<b>MPHC 8600</b> Fundamentals of Health Promotion	<b>MPHC 7209</b> Health Law & Ethics	<b>MPHC 8722</b> Internship	<b>MPHC 8999</b> Capstone
<b><u>Communication &amp; Informatics</u></b> — Utilize communication and informatics methods and resources as strategic tools to promote public health.	R	--	R	P	R	--	R	R
<b><u>Leadership</u></b> — Apply evidence-based principles to strategic and operational decision-making and performance management.	--	--	--	P	R	R	R	R
<b><u>Diversity &amp; Culture</u></b> — Identify the characteristics of a sustainable diverse public health workforce.	--	--	R	R	P	--	R	R
— Develop public health programs and strategies responsive to the diverse cultural values of the communities being served.	--	P	R	R	P	--	R	R
<b><u>Professionalism</u></b> — Apply ethical principles to professional practice.	--	--	--	R	R	P	R	R
— Apply evidence-based principles and the scientific knowledge base to critical evaluation and decision-making in public health.	--	--	--	P	R	R	R	R
<b><u>Systems Thinking</u></b> — Analyze inter-relationships among systems that influence the quality of life of people in their communities.	--	R	R	P	R	--	R	R
— Assess strengths and weaknesses of applying the systems approach to public health problems.	--	R	R	R	P	--	R	R

## **Section 3**

**Courses through which MPH “Concentration-Specific” Competencies are Met**

## **MPH – Health Informatics (HI) Concentration**

<b>Concentration-specific MPH competencies</b>							
P = competency is primarily gained, R = competency is reinforced							
<b>Health Informatics concentration competencies</b>	<b>MPHI 8000</b> Computerized Health Information Systems	<b>MPHI 8001</b> Public Health Informatics	<b>MPHI 8100</b> Health Information Content, Structure, & Standards	<b>MPHI 8400</b> Health Data Management & Knowledge Discovery	<b>MPHI 8500</b> Health Information System Analysis & Project Management	<b>MPHC 8722</b> Internship	<b>MPHC 8999</b> Capstone
Appropriately select and utilize information technology tools and resources.	P	P	R	R	R	--	R
Strategically utilize health information technology to promote public health.	--	R	--	P	R	R	--
Integrate multiple sources of data & information to create new knowledge, and support decision making in public health.	R	--	R	--	P	R	--
Compose, develop and manage information technology systems.	--	R	--	R	--	--	
Apply the principles of good database design.	--	P	--	R	R	--	R
Apply healthcare standards and regulations effectively in health care facilities to achieve full integration and exchange of organizational health information system	R	--	P	--	--	R	--
Apply informatics principles in managing IT projects.	R	R	--	R	P	--	R
Integrate informatics research findings into public health practice.	--	P	--	--	--	R	R

## **MPH – Health Management (HM) Concentration**

<b>Health Management concentration competencies</b>	<b>MPHM 7102</b> Human Resources Management	<b>MPHM 7104</b> Health Care Financial Management	<b>MPHM 7210</b> Health Care Performance Improvement	<b>MPHM 8220</b> Strategic Management of Healthcare Organizations	<b>MPHM 8280</b> Quantitative Methods in Health Administration	<b>MPHC 8722</b> Internship	<b>MPHC 8999</b> Capstone
Describe the main characteristics, components, and issues of the organization, financing, and delivery of health services and public health systems in the U.S.	--	P	P	R	--	R	--
Understand the process of achieving an organization’s mission and goals, and utilize strategic, technical, and interpersonal skills to advance population health.	P	R	R	P	--	R	--
Articulate the principles of leading organizational change, including assessment and measurement of organizational change efforts.	R	--	P	--	R	R	R
Apply appropriate statistical tools, techniques and procedures to health management and policy.	--	R	R	--	P		R
Develop public health programs and strategies responsive to the diverse cultural values and traditions of the communities being served.	R	R	--	P	--	--	--
Demonstrate a high standard of ethics, sound professional practice, social responsibility, and community stewardship.	P	--	R	R	R	R	R

## **MPH – Environmental Health (ENH) Concentration**

<b>Environmental Health concentration competencies</b>	<b>MPHE 8900</b> Fundamentals of Air Pollution	<b>MPHE 8902</b> Environmental Toxicology	<b>MPHE 8903</b> Occupational & Environmental Hygiene	<b>MPHE 8904</b> Environmental Aquatic Sciences	<b>MPHE 8905</b> Environmental Impact Risk & Exposure Assessment	<b>MPHC 8722</b> Internship	<b>MPHC 8999</b> Capstone
Assess environmental health threats that affect the health of the public.	R	P	--	--	P	R	--
Understand the interplay between theory and practice of environmental health management.	P	R	P	R	--	R	R
Understand environmental protection strategies and approaches to reduce environmental health risk.	--	--	R	P	P	--	--
Analyze quantitative and qualitative data to describe environmental conditions that impact human health.	P	--	R	--	P	--	R
Understand the regulatory and legislative framework associated with occupational health practice.	R	R	P	R	R	R	--
Apply an appropriate research approach to an environmental health problem based on constraints and available resources.	--	--	--	R	R	--	R

## **Appendix B**

### **Capstone Evaluation Forms and Rubrics (full set)**

## MPHC 8999 Capstone Project Brief Proposal

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name) (Signature) (Date)

Capstone Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Optional)** (Print Name) (Signature) (Date)

Project Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Project Proposal (max. 300 words)

This form must be signed by your advisor(s) and turned in by [Date]. If you are using primary data, this form is due by [Date]. Please email by the deadline to the Capstone coordinator.

## MPHC 8999 – Capstone Project Competencies Assessment

You are required to provide self-assessment indicating how you would achieve core and concentration-specific competencies through your Capstone project. This will provide information about how your project activities are related to the knowledge and skills you should demonstrate your proficiency upon the completion of the project.

### **Core Competency Domains**

Please select at least three core competency domains from below that are most relevant to your project and describe how the project would help you attain these competency areas (see attached MPH competency model for detailed information). The description of each selected competency domain should be limited to 200 words. Check the boxes below for any competency domains you submit the descriptions.

- Biostatistics
- Epidemiology
- Health Management & Policy
- Social & Behavioral Sciences
- Environmental Health

Please note that, for core competencies not selected for providing descriptions, you are required to submit an essay for each core competency at the completion of your project (by the oral presentation deadline), reflecting your thoughts and experiences in the context of your project.

### **Interdisciplinary / Cross-cutting Competencies**

Please describe with specific examples how you would become skilled and competent in the following areas through your project.

- Communication and Informatics
- Diversity and Culture
- Leadership
- Professionalism
- Systems Thinking

### **Concentration-Specific Concentrations**

Please describe with specific examples how you would become skilled and competent in the following areas through your project.

Student Name:

Concentration:

Project Title:

Date:

My Capstone project ensures achieving the following core competency: **Biostatistics**

Description (max. 200 words)

Advisor:

Approval:  Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria  
 Exceed the criteria

Comments:

Student Name:

Concentration:

Project Title:

Date:

My Capstone project ensures achieving the following core competency: **Epidemiology**

Description (max. 200 words)

Advisor:

Approval:  Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria  
 Exceed the criteria

Comments:

Student Name:

Concentration:

Project Title:

Date:

My Capstone project ensures achieving the following core competency: **Health Management & Policy**

Description (max. 200 words)

Advisor:

Approval:  Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria  
 Exceed the criteria

Comments:

Student Name:

Concentration:

Project Title:

Date:

My Capstone project ensures achieving the following core competency: **Social & Behavioral Sciences**

Description (max. 200 words)

Advisor:

Approval:  Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria  
 Exceed the criteria

Comments:

Student Name:

Concentration:

Project Title:

Date:

My Capstone project ensures achieving the following core competency: **Environmental Health**

Description (max. 200 words)

Advisor:

Approval:  Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria  
 Exceed the criteria

Comments:

Student Name:

Concentration:

Project Title:

Date:

My Capstone project ensures achieving the **Interdisciplinary / Cross-cutting Competencies**

Description (max. 200 words)

Advisor:

Approval:  Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria  
 Exceed the criteria

Comments:

Student Name:

Concentration:

Project Title:

Date:

My Capstone project ensures achieving the **Concentration-Specific Competencies**

Description (max. 200 words)

Advisor:

Approval:  Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria  
 Exceed the criteria

Comments:

## Competency Essay

*(Must be submitted by the oral presentation deadline)*

Student Name:

Advisor:

Concentration:

Project Title:

Date:

My thoughts on and experiences with the project in the context of the **Core Competency**

Description (max. 200 words)

**MPHC 8999 Capstone Progress Report**  
**(Semester, Year)**

Student Name:

Advisor:

Project Title:

Date:

The progress report must include the following:

1. Research activities you have conducted during the past two weeks.
2. Key outcomes of these activities related to your research goals and objectives
3. Planned activities for the next two weeks.
4. Statistical tables and analysis may be attached if needed.

Description (max. 250 words)

## **MPHC 8999 Capstone Final Grading Rubric (Semester; Year)**

Student Name:

Advisor:

Concentration:

Project Title:

Date:

1. Evaluation of Competencies Achieved
  - A. Evaluation of Competency Essay
2. Evaluation of Poster Presentation, Oral Presentation, and Final Paper
3. Overall Evaluation of Competencies Achieved
4. Student Self-Evaluation of Competencies Achieved

# 1. Evaluation of Competencies Achieved

## Core Competencies

- Biostatistics  
 Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria                      OR                       Essay provided  
 Exceed the criteria
  
- Epidemiology  
 Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria                      OR                       Essay provided  
 Exceed the criteria
  
- Health Management & Policy  
 Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria                      OR                       Essay provided  
 Exceed the criteria
  
- Social & Behavioral Sciences  
 Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria                      OR                       Essay provided  
 Exceed the criteria
  
- Environmental Health  
 Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria                      OR                       Essay provided  
 Exceed the criteria

## Interdisciplinary / Cross-cutting Competencies

- Does not meet the criteria
- Meet the criteria
- Exceed the criteria

## Concentration-Specific Concentrations

- Does not meet the criteria
- Meet the criteria
- Exceed the criteria

Comments:

## A. Evaluation of Competency Essay

Please provide your assessment of competency essays submitted for any core competency domains not chosen by the student in the beginning of the project.

### 1. Core Competency Domain:

Evaluation:  Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria  
 Exceed the criteria

Comments:

### 2. Core Competency Domain:

Evaluation:  Does not meet the criteria  
 Meet the criteria  
 Exceed the criteria

Comments:

## Evaluation of Poster Presentation, Oral Presentation, and Final Paper

<b>Poster Presentation (50 points)</b>	
1. The poster was easy to read, logical, and properly formatted	/10
2. The argument was clear	/10
3. The depth of analysis and insight was appropriate	/10
4. The conclusions were clear and supported by the data	/10
5. The presentation was professional and informative	/10
<b>Oral Presentation (50 points)</b>	
1. The information was presented in a logical sequence and relevant	/15
2. The depth of analysis and interpretation was appropriate	/10
3. The conclusions were clear and supported by the data	/10
4. The presentation was professional and effective	/15
<b>Final Project Paper (100 points)</b>	
1. The introduction provided sufficient background, context, and idea development	/20
2. The literature review was thorough and appropriate	/20
3. The methodology, analysis, and scope were appropriate	/20
4. The results were adequate for the purpose of the study	/20
5. The conclusions and discussions were well developed and the writing was effective and professional	/20

### Comments

<b><u>Poster</u></b>	<b><u>Final Project Paper</u></b>
9 – 10 points – Excellent	18 – 20 points – Excellent
8 – <9 points – Good	16 – <18 points – Good
7 – <8 points – Fair	14 – <16 points – Fair
0 – <7 points – Poor	0 – <14 points – Poor

### 3. Overall Evaluation of Competencies Achieved

Please provide your overall evaluation of the student in achieving the core, interdisciplinary/ cross-cutting, and concentration-specific competencies with the Capstone experience.

The evaluation score ranges from 1 to 4, where a higher score indicates a better degree of success in achieving the competencies (e.g., the lowest score “1” indicates that the student has met the criteria adequately)

- 1. Adequate
- 2. Good
- 3. Better
- 4. Outstanding

#### 4. Student Self-Evaluation of Competencies Achieved

Please provide your overall evaluation in achieving the core, interdisciplinary/cross-cutting, and concentration-specific competencies with the Capstone experience.

The evaluation score ranges from 1 to 4, where a higher score indicates a better degree of success in achieving the competencies (e.g., the lowest score “1” indicates that you have met the criteria adequately)

- 1. Adequate
- 2. Good
- 3. Better
- 4. Outstanding

# **Appendix C**

## **Examples of Past Capstone Project Topics**

- A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of counseling to promote exclusive breastfeeding
- Quality of care in management of diabetes in the U.S.
- Relationship of health insurance and poverty to weight status in youth
- Is time the only reason Americans are not exercising enough?
- Assessing the use of adjuvant chemotherapy for stage III colon cancer patients
- Faith at work: overcoming negative health outcomes through the use of spiritual healing and prayer
- Disaster preparedness in American homes
- Analysis of artificial sweetener consumption linked to consumer behaviors and health risk factors
- The impact of geography, education level, and income status in regards to cigarette smoking among obese adults in the United States
- Patient and family centered care – quantifying the results: comparison study of two intensive care units at an academic medical center
- Impact of delayed childbearing on fetal mortality: compared by education level
- Understanding health literacy: evaluating prevalence and patient socio-demographic factors
- Health information exchange: alliance to better care
- The association between smoking and arthritis prevalence and severity: A cross-sectional survey study
- Prediction of driving in individuals with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis