

CRITERION I.: MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

I.1. A clear and concise mission statement for the Graduate Programs in Public Health.

The Graduate Programs in Public Health are located within the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biometrics (PMB), F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS). The USUHS mission statement reflects its uniqueness as a federally-supported institution of higher learning in the health sciences established by P.L. 92-426 in 1972: “The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences is the nation’s federal health sciences university and is committed to excellence in military medicine and public health during peace and war. We provide the nation with health professionals dedicated to career service in the Department of Defense and the United States Public Health Service and with scientists who serve the common good. We serve the uniformed services and the nation as an outstanding academic health sciences center with a worldwide perspective for education, research, service and consultation; we are unique in relating these activities to military medicine and military readiness.”

The Department of Preventive Medicine and Biometrics is one of the largest departments within the School of Medicine and its standing follows from the prominence of public health in the mission of the parent institution. The mission of the PMB Department is “to enhance health in human populations through medical education, research, and service that support and improve programs of preventive medicine, community health, and health promotion in the uniformed services.” The Department engages in teaching preventive medicine and public health to medical students, as well as offering six graduate degree programs in public health (Master of Public Health, Master of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Master of Science in Public Health, Doctor of Public Health, Doctor of Philosophy in Medical Zoology and Environmental Health Sciences).

The mission of the PMB Graduate Programs in Public Health is to enhance and protect the health of members of the Uniformed Services by producing knowledgeable and highly skilled public health professionals and by promoting evidence-based policy making, research, and service initiatives that support the global mission of the Uniformed Services.

I.2. One or more goal statements for each major function by which the program intends to attain its mission, including instruction, research and service.

To achieve the PMB Graduate Programs’ mission of addressing public health issues of importance to the Uniformed Services across local, national, and global settings, the following primary goals have been identified for the four major functional areas (instruction, training, research, and service):

Instruction: In the area of instruction, our goal is teaching and learning excellence to enhance the knowledge, skills, and practice of uniformed and civilian public health professionals.

Training: In the area of training, our goal is to establish and/or support advanced professional training in medical specialty programs with a public health focus (e.g., preventive medicine residency, occupational and environmental medicine residency, preventive psychiatry fellowship) to meet the needs of the Uniformed Services and encourage multidisciplinary collaborations.

Research: In the area of research, our goal is to improve the knowledge and practice of preventive medicine and public health by conducting research on key public health issues, especially those relevant to the Uniformed Services in support of combat operations or disaster relief/humanitarian assistance missions.

Service: In the area of service, our goal is to support our University's mission and to respond to the needs of our local, national, and international communities through consultative services, offering continuing education programs or training opportunities, volunteerism, and community partnerships to improve public health.

I.3. A set of measurable objectives relating to each major function through which the program intends to achieve its goals of instruction, research and service.

Measurable Objectives Based on PMB Graduate Programs' Instructional Goal

- The PMB Graduate Programs in Public Health has developed programmatic learning objectives for each of its six graduate degree programs (MPH, MTM&H, MSPH, DrPH, PhD in Medical Zoology and PhD in Environmental Health Sciences), as well as for each area of specialization within programs. These learning objectives are based on the desired outcomes or professional competencies developed for each graduate degree program and for each area of concentration. Since the central component of our accreditation by CEPH is the MPH program, the core competencies required of all MPH graduates serve as the foundation for other degree programs or areas of specialization within these programs.

In order to achieve the instructional goal of teaching and learning excellence to enhance the knowledge, skills, and practice of uniformed and civilian public health professionals, the PMB Graduate Programs in Public Health is committed to the following overall objectives for the MPH program:

- Require all students to successfully complete a core public health curriculum, which includes at least one course from each of the five disciplines of public health (biostatistics, environmental health, epidemiology, health services administration, and social and behavioral sciences)
- Promote excellence in teaching and innovative teaching methods by providing faculty with continuing education opportunities, periodic feedback on performance and opportunity for improvement, and recognition of outstanding teaching efforts based on performance evaluations
- Promote ongoing faculty participation in continuing education programs

- Administer and track student course evaluations and provide regular and timely feedback to Course Directors and Division Directors, as well as summary reports to the PMB Chair
- Monitor admissions procedures to ensure a high-quality applicant pool and a reasonably diverse student body within the limits of our unique educational mission as a federally-sponsored institution of higher learning for members of the Uniformed Services
- Develop curricula and specialty areas in response to the expressed needs of the Uniformed Services and relevant emerging public health issues, such as emerging infectious diseases, bioterrorism preparedness, and risk communication
- Facilitate placement of students at practicum sites within local, state, national, or international settings to achieve core public health competencies
- Develop and/or expand programs that facilitate information exchange among the Services, foster interaction among students and faculty, and provide academic counseling and support
- Promote the evolution of a continuous quality improvement process through periodic review and evaluation with feedback to evolve program content and procedures

Measurable Objectives Based on PMB Graduate Programs' Training Goal

The PMB Department houses two residency programs, (1) General Preventive Medicine and Public Health and (2) Occupational and Environmental Medicine, both part of the National Capitol Consortium and fully accredited by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). In addition, the Department provides opportunities for graduate studies leading to the MPH degree for fellows in General Internal Medicine, Infectious Diseases, and Preventive Psychiatry, among others. Residents in Aerospace Medicine and General Preventive Medicine based at other institutions may also attend USUHS for the academic portion of their residency training.

In order to meet our training goal of establishing and/or supporting advanced professional training in specialty areas with a public health focus to meet the needs of the Uniformed Services and encourages multidisciplinary collaborations, the PMB Graduate Programs in Public Health is committed to the following objectives:

- Develop competency-based curricula that meet ACGME requirements
- Recruit and appoint faculty having the necessary education and experience to teach in post-graduate training programs
- Partner with Department of Defense and other federal agencies to evaluate the need for specific training programs that meet public health workforce requirements
- Provide postgraduate program trainees with opportunities for teaching and research
- Develop instructional programs in specialty areas, such as parasitology and tropical medicine, to support the global mission of the Uniformed Services and other federal agencies
- Provide unique opportunities for practical field experience related to public health that differ from or add to the clinical experiences gained during subsequent residency or fellowship rotations

Measurable Objectives Based on PMB Graduate Programs' Research Goal

In order to meet our research goal of improving the knowledge and practice of preventive medicine and public health by conducting research on key public health issues, especially those relevant to the Uniformed Services in support of force health protection, whether during combat operations or disaster relief/humanitarian assistance missions, the PMB Graduate Programs is committed to the following objectives:

- Foster a military-relevant research program, consistent with the mission of the PMB Graduate Programs, through which faculty and students contribute to the knowledge base of the public health disciplines
- Recruit, appoint, and promote faculty with demonstrated competence in public health research
- Provide an environment conducive to individual creativity and scholarly inquiry by all faculty and students interested in basic or applied research with public health relevance
- Support interdisciplinary and/or interagency research collaborations
- Offer opportunities for student involvement in ongoing research activities that meet educational program requirements
- Foster professional public health values and ethics in research

Measurable Objectives Based on PMB Graduate Programs' Service Goal

We seek to be a positive influence on the communities we serve (particularly uniformed service members and their families), while enriching the academic and personal lives of both faculty and students.

In order to meet our service goal of supporting the mission of our University and responding to the needs of our local, regional, national, and international communities through consultative services, offering continuing education programs or training opportunities, volunteerism, and community partnerships to advance public health, the PMB Graduate Programs is committed to the following objectives:

- Provide consultative services to DoD and other federal agencies, local and state health departments, and other public and private organizations with a public health mission
- Encourage faculty participation in the development and teaching of continuing medical education programs that meet the public health needs of our community
- Support faculty participation in instructional activities outside the University that foster public health capacity-building within the broader community
- Support faculty involvement in community service activities in general, as well as community partnerships that promote public health
- Support faculty involvement as peer-reviewers for scientific journals, members of external committees or advisory boards, and/or leaders within professional associations/societies related to public health
- Recognize faculty with outstanding service records

- Encourage and provide opportunities for students to participate in service-related activities that support the PMB Department's Graduate Programs
- Provide opportunities for students to voluntarily participate in classroom instruction or mentoring activities
- Support student involvement in community service activities
- Encourage student's active participation in professional associations/societies related to public health

I.4. A description of the manner in which mission, goals and objectives are developed, monitored and periodically revised and the manner in which they are made available to the public.

Development of Graduate Programs' Mission, Goals, Objectives

At the time of the last CEPH site visit in October 1998, this criterion was judged to be “met with commentary.” Because the majority of PMB faculty time was devoted to supporting the Graduate Programs and the mission and goals of the PMB Department and Graduate Programs were closely aligned, a separate and distinct mission statement for the Graduate Programs did not exist.

Following the site visit, the PMB Department convened an *ad hoc* committee to develop the mission, goals and objectives of the Graduate Programs in Public Health, distinct from the overall goals and objectives of the Department. The committee was composed of 12 faculty members with broad representation across the core areas of public health, as well as the two on-site residency programs, and met on a weekly to bimonthly basis for about a year. Draft versions of the Mission, Goals, and Objectives document were circulated among the Department faculty and resulting comments and suggestions were integrated into the final version. The document contained a mission statement, a description of underlying values, and goals and objectives for each of the four functional areas within the PMB Graduate Programs. For instructional programs, detailed learning objectives were developed by core public health discipline and also by MPH area of concentration. This document was submitted to CEPH in 1999, along with other documentation, as part of an interim report.

Process of Monitoring and Revision

The process used to monitor and periodically revise the Graduate Programs Mission, Goals, and Objectives encompasses activities at multiple levels within the Department and is linked to the charters of PMB standing committees that support the Graduate Programs. See *Criterion III*, Governance, *Table III-1*, which summarizes the roles and responsibilities of these committees.

PMB Chair and Vice-Chairs Committee - Department level

Following the selection of a new Chair of the PMB Department in October of 2002, the executive level leadership was expanded to include a Principal Vice Chair, a Vice Chair for Research, and a Vice Chair for Graduate Education. The Vice Chair/Chief of Staff also remained part of the PMB executive leadership. This organizational restructuring led to new

opportunities to review the Graduate Programs' Mission, Goals, and Objectives at the Departmental level.

The PMB faculty participated in an off-site, strategic planning meeting in November 2003. At that time, a major agenda item was the CEPH self-study. Faculty members in charge of each of the criteria for accreditation gave brief presentations, including an assessment of current status and requirements and timeline for completion of the self-study for each of the criteria.

In addition, a working group consisting of Program and Division Directors (PADD) was established. This group meets twice a month to discuss key issues related to Department activities, including those relevant to the major functional areas of the Graduate Programs. Actions resulting from this working group's deliberations that support Graduate Programs include the following:

- Expansion of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences
- Distance learning initiative
- CEPH Self Study planning
- PMB committee assignments
- Clinical research track discussion
- Selection of PMB seminar speakers

Director of Graduate Programs

The Director of Graduate Programs reports to the Chair and Principal Vice Chair and is advised by the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) and its Subcommittees through the GAC. The Director has dedicated administrative support from a program administration specialist and is assisted in program and policy development and implementation by a Deputy Director. After completion of the last self study, an active duty Air Force Officer, with relevant clinical, teaching, and research expertise and experience, was selected to be the new Director in 1999, following a period of transition with the former Director. Continued growth in Service-specific programs, advancement of the practicum and capstone experiences (Practicum and Independent Project or "PIP" program), major improvements in program evaluation (course evaluations with feedback loop, annual exit surveys, and development of alumni survey), as well as active involvement in the Council of Graduate Program Directors have been accomplished since 1999.

The PMB Graduate Programs Director participated in the year-long process of developing the mission, goals, and objectives and used them to guide his stewardship of the educational programs. During the past decade, there have been three transitions in PMB Department leadership, which included the Graduate Programs' Director serving as Interim Chair. Because of these transitions, organizational changes took place incrementally. However, even within these constraints, Graduate Programs' initiatives included competency-based curriculum development, the incorporation of distance learning tools to enhance traditional coursework, and the creation of new areas of concentration or new programs, for example, occupational ergonomics and the international health specialist program.

Just recently, the Director of Graduate Programs retired from the Air Force, and a new Director was appointed. This transition has been relatively seamless since the current Director is an experienced, senior member of the faculty with broad knowledge of the Graduate Programs. He has also led the self-study effort over the past year and-a-half. The Director of Graduate Programs also serves as Vice Chair for Graduate Education, which places him on the PMB Executive Committee.

Centers for Preventive Medicine and Public Health

Because PMB faculty members constitute the majority of Center personnel, opportunities exist for students of the PMB Graduate Programs to participate in ongoing research within the eight Centers of Preventive Medicine and Public Health. Regular Center updates provide information on activities that support student research for MPH independent projects, as well as Masters' or Doctoral dissertation research. Interim and annual reports document faculty and student research activities and products and provide a basis for assessing Graduate Programs' research objectives.

Supplemental Program Review

Two reserve officers, Earl Lynch, MD, MPH, Director, Physician Assistant Program, Marywood University, Scranton, Pennsylvania, and Georgia Harris, PhD, a recent graduate of Rutgers University in Program Administration, spent their active Reserve time at USUHS working on supplemental program review activities. Dr. Lynch completed a PMB Department Self-Assessment Manual, which included sections on evaluation components, elements evaluated, an assessment matrix, and an evaluation timetable. Major Harris reviewed the findings from the previous PMB Graduate Programs' self study and conducted an assessment of the current status of the Graduate Programs with respect to identified areas of weakness.

Self-Study Review

The 1999 mission, goals, objectives document was distributed to members of the self-study committee; faculty leaders of core disciplines, areas of concentration within degree programs, and new programs; and members of key standing committees to provide updates and suggestions for revision. The faculty has completed the task of mapping core and concentration-specific objectives to course curricula for the MPH and MTM&H degree programs. A similar process has been accomplished for the draft core competencies developed by CEPH. Our goal is to complete mapping of objectives and competencies across other degree programs for those components that build on the MPH curriculum.

Dissemination of Graduate Programs' Mission, Goals, Objectives

The Graduate Programs' mission statement can be found on the USUHS website at the following: <http://cim.usuhs.mil/geo/departments/preventivemedicine.htm>. Phone and email inquiries are referred to the website.

It is also included in the following publicly available materials:

- Information Handbook for Graduate Medical and Public Health Programs
- Office of Graduate Education (GEO) Brochure, 2005
- 2005 USU Journal, Office of the Vice President for Administration and Management

I.5. Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met.
--

I.5.a. Strengths

In the midst of extraordinary program growth and many challenges due to major transitions in the leadership of the PMB Department and the School of Medicine, the Graduate Programs in Public Health have remained a robust educational enterprise and graduated 217 public health practitioners from 1999 to 2004 in diverse career fields within the Uniformed Services. The PMB Graduate Programs have initiated quality improvement activities and responded to the needs of its community, including the addition of two new areas of concentration in the MPH program and a new PhD program. Since the last accreditation site visit, the Graduate Programs' mission, goals, and objectives were developed and distributed, a new faculty member was hired to establish a practicum program for the MPH and MTM&H graduate students, the Graduate Programs' leadership has fostered advancement of a competency-based curriculum and developed and launched a process to assess teaching/learning outcomes. Review and evaluation activities related to the Graduate Programs stated mission, as well as goals and objectives for the four major functional areas, occur on a periodic basis at many levels. Mapping of instructional objectives to courses has been accomplished for the MPH core curriculum and areas of concentration.

I.5.b. Weaknesses

1. The Program procedures for continuous quality improvement are not defined in detail and can be strengthened. This point is relevant to the MPH and MTM&H programs, as well as to other degree programs.
2. Program-level objectives are not uniformly stated in measurable terms.
3. Mapping of curricula for non-MPH and non-MTM&H degrees to mission, goals, and objectives is incomplete.

I.5.c. Recommendations

1. Institutionalize a continuous quality improvement process that measures outcomes against stated program objectives in a systematic manner and results in changes to improve the quality of the Graduate Programs. Program evaluation activities need to be incorporated into PMB Department policy and supported with appropriate resources for consistency and timeliness. Develop short- and long-term strategic plans to ensure adequate resources to meet stated goals and objectives.

2. Evolve the program objectives so that a greater number are measurable in quantitative terms. The recently piloted alumni and supervisor survey may be used to develop metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs and subsequently evolve measurable learning objectives.
3. The process of articulating competencies and mapping program learning objectives to the curriculum for the MSPH (including areas of concentration or tracks), DrPH, and PhD programs should be completed as it has been for the MPH program. Review the appropriate unit of accreditation by CEPH to ensure that all CEPH-accredited programs are aligned with overall Graduate Programs' mission, goals, and objectives.
4. Link the charters of standing sub-committees of the Graduate Affairs Committee to the Graduate Programs Mission, Goals, and Objectives for the four functional areas. In particular, the subcommittees charged with review and evaluation of the Masters and Doctoral degree programs should base their respective program evaluation activities on stated goals and objectives with similar degree of rigor across all programs.

This criterion is met.